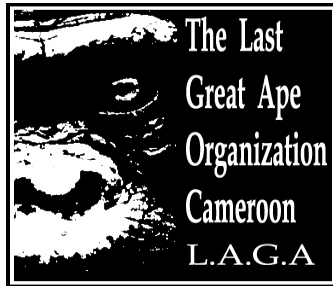


THE LAST GREAT APE ORGANIZATION, CAMEROON LAGA

FIRST SEMESTER REPORT JANUARY – JUNE 2013



Executive Summary

Despite many obstacles, tangible achievements made over this period in LAGA's collaboration with MINFOF in the fields of investigation, arrest, prosecution, media exposure, government relations and international activities with focus on the fight against corruption, wildlife trade especially international networks of ivory traffickers, Chinese traffickers of giant pangolin scales, dealers in primates, sea turtle shells etc. 24 dealers were arrested during this period.

For every 7.5 days a major wildlife dealer was arrested, 96% stayed behind bars from the day of arrest. Corruption was observed and combated in more than 80% of the cases. Regional wildlife law enforcement became more effective with good operations and prosecutions. Replication started in Togo and TALF becomes the newest member of our Regional Wildlife Law Enforcement Network. Training sessions continued in Yaounde with GALF – Guinea Conakry Investigator arriving for training; and 2 LAGA Investigators traveled to AALF Gabon to experience operations with customs and to carry out trans-boundary investigations. LAGA Director was invited by the European Parliament to speak in a joint hearing of Development Committee and Organized Crime, Corruption and Money Laundering Committee. LAGA and PALF participated in CITES 16th Conference of the Parties (CoP) in Thailand on the Cameroon and Congo government delegations.

Governance issues, lack of collaboration and breach of procedure by some MINFOF Delegations were prominent during this period - sabotaging investigations, not participating in operations and writing of PV, unprocedural release of arrested dealers etc. Because of these and other prior governance issues, a joint letter was addressed to the Minister – MINFOF by LAGA, WWF and WCS to immediately remedy the situation. Specifically for LAGA, more criminals had been illegally released by MINFOF Delegates in the past year than in the whole of 10 years of work that preceded it, combined. Two criminal investigations are held concerning ivory stock management and CITES, joining a worrying trend of unprecedented governance problems in MINFOF.

The work of the Last Great Ape Organization was supported by:



LAST GREAT APE ORGANISATION, CAMEROON (LAGA)
SEMESTER REPORT
January - June 2013

Overview

Investigations

- A total of 150 investigation missions (of varying lengths) were carried out in all the 10 Regions.
- Network of informants put in place becoming more effective giving good operations.
- LAGA Director carried out special training sessions with Investigators for better performance.
- International Investigators used to penetrate difficult networks yielding good operations

Operations

- Operations were carried out in 6 Regions against 24 individuals resulting in 23 court cases at a rate of 1 per 7.5 days.
- Half of the operations were on the busting of networks dealing in ivory.
- 38% linked to international trafficking with connections to other countries in Africa, Europe and Asia.
- The rate of imprisonment for these cases reached 96%.

Legal

- 23 new cases were brought to court and represented (many of the cases begun during the period have not yet reached the prosecution stage but procedures still on-going).
- Corruption was observed and combated in more than 80% of the cases.

Media

- A total of 189 media pieces were produced in national media (television, radio and press) achieved in a rate of more than 1 media piece per day.
- Online sensitization resulted in over 1500 visits to the LAGA website per month.

Management

- The Annual and Financial Reports for 2012 printed and distributed to all the stakeholders.
- Former Head of Legal Department went to WWF – CARPO as National Law Enforcement for Cameroon, a post he helped to create in a process of LAGA guiding WWF in stronger enforcement.
- A Jurist on trial was let go because of lack of engagement and results.

External Relations and Policy

- Several meetings were held with MINFOF officials, Diplomatic Community, National and International NGOs to discuss corruption in the NGO projects, wildlife law enforcement etc.
- LAGA Director was invited by the European Parliament to speak in a joint hearing of Development Committee and Organized Crime, Corruption and Money Laundering Committee.
- LAGA and PALF participated in CITES 16th CoP in Thailand on government delegations.

Replication of LAGA Activities

- Replication started in Togo and TALF becomes the newest member of our Regional Wildlife Law Enforcement Network. Work continues with Togolese authorities on 6 tons of ivory seized by Customs authorities in Malaysia coming from Togo.
- Good operations carried in regional enforcement projects and good prosecutions obtained – LAGA, PALF, GALF, RALF and AALF.
- 2 LAGA Investigators traveled to AALF Gabon to learn from the AALF experience of operations with customs and to carry out trans-boundary investigations.
- GALF Investigator trained in LAGA in regional exchange program.

Strategic Highlights

- This period was marked by a special focus on dismantling international ivory trafficking networks.
- Among the elephant tusks seized as a direct consequence of arrest operations, some had been seized already during past LAGA-MINFOF operations and were stolen from the National Stock.
- Collaboration with the customs yielded operations against Chinese traffickers in giant pangolin scales.
- Governance issues, lack of collaboration and breach of procedure by some MINFOF delegations were prominent during this period.
- Joint letter by LAGA, WWF and WCS addressed to the Minister – MINFOF to immediately remedy the situation i.e. governance issues, lack of collaboration, breach of procedure amongst others.

Narrative Report

Introduction

This report refers to activities from January till June 2013.

This report includes: the progress in each department of activities (Investigations, Operations, Legal, Media and Management), strategic overview of and the impact of our operations on wildlife crime in Cameroon, progress in relations with the Cameroonian Government, non-governmental bodies, in the international arena, and in non-enforcement initiatives LAGA has undertaken.

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1. Investigations

LAGA’s investigation unit carried out 150 investigation missions in all the 10 Regions during this period. The department continued with structural reorganization culminating in high improvement in its professional output. Field testing and screening of new investigators continued, a total of 6 candidates were tested with 1 giving encouraging results.

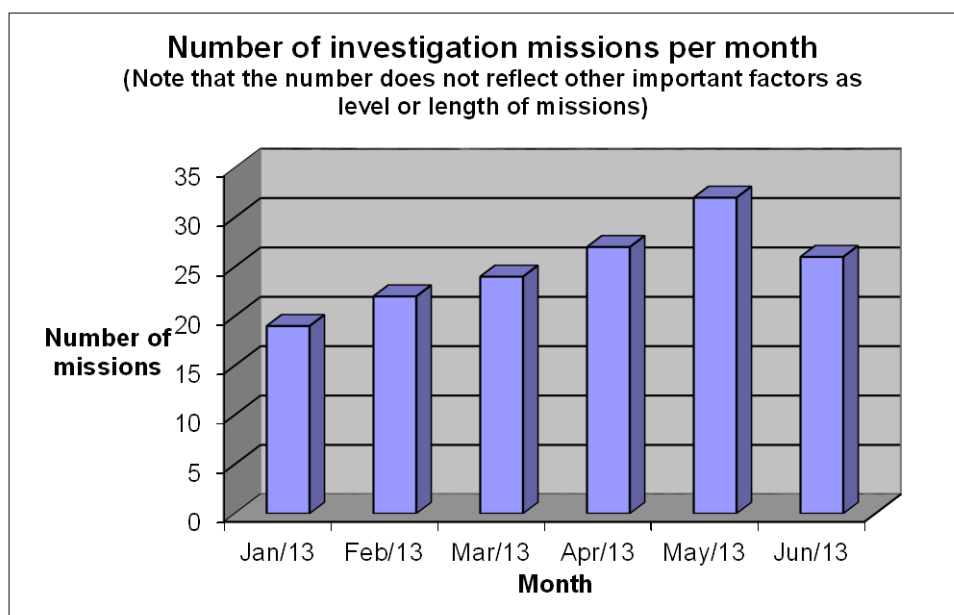
The network of informants put in place was becoming effective giving good information that led to operations in Meyomessala – South, Sangmelima – South, the Limbe Chinese arrest operation in the South West and arrests in the Douala International airport. This strategy involving the recruitment of informants in the main wildlife trade hotspots in Cameroon continued.

For further improvement and more operations in regional enforcement, training sessions continue to be held in Yaounde – Cameroon. An investigator arrived from GALF – Guinea Conakry to be trained under the regional exchange program; training and exchange of project personnel in regional enforcement will continue with the other projects in the forthcoming months.

As part of a new strategy to get credible information and to make the Investigation missions more effective, a hotline that was established is giving encouraging results and flyers produced continued to be distributed This is being distributed to a specific set of informants like those working in the airports, call box operators, security guards etc. International investigators were also used to penetrate difficult networks of ivory traffickers.

The Head of Investigations Department traveled to Gabon to tap from the AALF experience of operations, arresting traffickers of wildlife and their derivative products through the airport and the seaport. He also worked with AALF investigators on investigations and operations procedures. 1 LAGA Investigator also traveled to Gabon to carry out trans-boundary investigations as part of the strategy to arrest more international; traffickers of protected wildlife products.

LAGA Director carried out special training sessions with Investigators so as to enable a more effective performance in terms of intelligence, evidence gathering with use of equipment and reports on high level target dealers.



Operations

LAGA and the Government of Cameroon carried out operations in 6 Regions against 24 individuals resulting in 23 court cases. Operations became more difficult and sophisticated over this period and the rate of imprisonment reached 96% of the cases with the individuals behind bars while awaiting trial. Half of the operations were on the busting of networks dealing in ivory, 66% of ivory trafficking and 46% of the total number of dealers arrested had connections to other countries in Africa, Europe and Asia. Collaboration with the customs yielded good operations against traffickers of giant pangolin scales.

In January, 2 arrest operations were carried out rescuing 4 live primates including a mandrill. A well-known and well-connected dealer with a network of suppliers of live primates and his accomplice in the South Region were arrested in Meyomessala – South with 3 live primates including a live mandrill that he was illegally trying to trade in.

Another dealer in live primates arriving from Bafia - Center with a 2 weeks old baboon was arrested in Yaounde - Center. Collaboration with one of the controllers in the MINFOF Brigade – Centre Region was not good during the writing of the statement of offence as the LAGA legal advisers were being intimidated.

In February, 3 international ivory traffickers belonging to the same network were arrested in Yaounde – Center with 24 elephant tusks. The leader of the network is a Cameroonian based in Congo where he has a web of suppliers. The traffickers have connections in many other countries including Congo, Gabon, France, Belgium and Italy. They drive ivory trade in Congo, Gabon and Cameroon, exporting the products through Cameroon to Europe and Asia.

March saw a total of 7 dealers arrested, 4 dealing in elephant tusks and 3 in sea turtle shells. 2 international ivory traffickers with a base in the Republic of Congo from where they drive the illegal trade in ivory to Cameroon and other countries were arrested in Yaounde - Center with 4 small elephant tusks. One of them was caught on camera burying ivory in a small hut in his compound in Congo and both have been in the business for more than 20 years. They transport ivory using 20 litre gallons that pass for oil. In another operation, 2 major traffickers of elephant tusks with suppliers in the Eastern Region and customers based in the city of Yaounde - Center and others in the Northern part of Cameroon were arrested in Lomie – East with 2 elephant tusks. The operation was jointly coordinated by LAGA and MINFOF with LAGA responsible for the legal procedure and follow-up in court.

3 dealers were arrested with 9 sea turtle shells within 2 days in 2 different operations. One of them was arrested with 7 sea turtle shells in Campo - South. He initially resisted arrest, claiming to have high connections with MINFOF officials but he was successfully transported to Kribi for legal follow-up without any major difficulties. 2 others were arrested with 2 sea turtle shells in Kribi – South. They have a motor – bike that they use in transporting the shells.

In April, a total of 5 dealers arrested following 3 operations. A high level wildlife trafficker and repeated offender of Chinese nationality arrested with his 2 Cameroonian accomplices with 7 big sacs of Giant Pangolin scales while attempting to send them to Nigeria through the Bota Port in Limbe - South West. He has connections to and denounced other members of a big wildlife trafficking network. The Chinese with no legal stay in Cameroon was already apprehended at the Douala International airport while trying to traffick 160 kg of giant pangolin scales by the Custom Authorities. After his arrest, he attempted to bribe the LAGA Legal Adviser in the field with 500,000 FCFA (about \$1000), an act that was promptly combated. The operation was carried out with the Limbe custom officials and MINFOF Fako Delegation. This arrest follows a string of seizures and arrests clamping down on the booming trade in Giant Pangolin's scales.

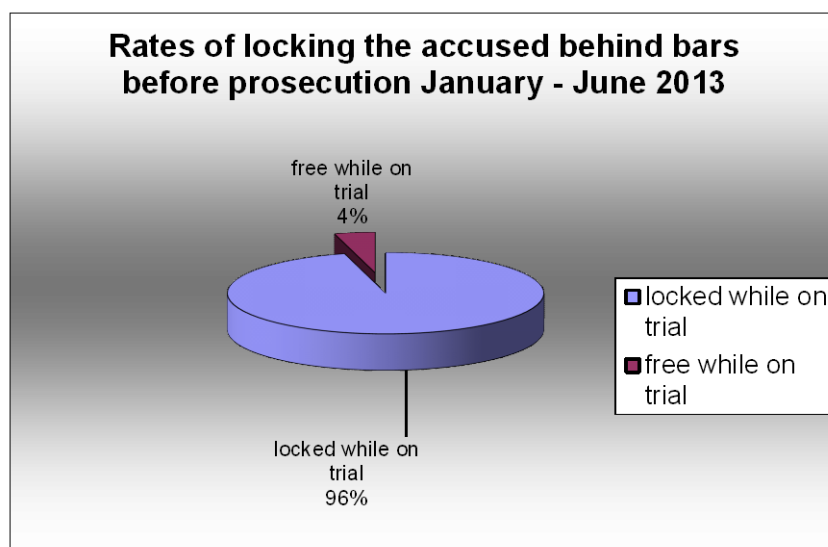
In another operation, a long time and experienced international ivory trafficker who frequents the Republic of Congo from where he has a network of suppliers especially in Ouessou was arrested with 20 elephant tusks in Djoum - South. He has connections to South Africa and Guinea Bissau. Also, a female dealer carrying out pet trade in wildlife was arrested with a live primate in Douala - Littoral. She owns a restaurant that she uses as a cover for the trade. The live primate was rescued and sent to the Limbe Wildlife Center.

In May, a long time female dealer in meat of protected wildlife species with a network of suppliers in Djoum - South and a ready market in Yaounde - Center. She was arrested with 4 large bags of bush meat containing 40 different animal carcasses including 2 full mandrills, 10 yellow-backed duikers among other protected wildlife species. She was arrested between the Djoum - Sangmelima route while attempting to take them to Yaounde.

June was marked by 2 operations being carried out within 1 hour in Douala – Littoral arresting 4 major ivory dealers. In the first operation, 2 dealers also owners of an artefacts shop were arrested with 18 elephant tusks and 16 worked ivory pieces. They are well connected to other major ivory dealers in other parts of Cameroon. Among the 18 tusks, some had been seized already during past LAGA-MINFOF operations and were stolen from the National Stock. Investigations are on-going to track the source of the stolen elephant tusks especially in MINFOF looking into complicity and corruption in that Ministry.

Barely 1 hour after the first operation, 2 other well-known ivory dealers were arrested with 16 worked pieces of ivory. They have a network of suppliers in the Eastern Region and claimed to have very good packaging methods that will facilitate the transportation of the ivory out of Cameroon if needed.

A regular dealer arrested with a leopard skin while attempting to illegally trade in it in Bafoussam – West Region. After tracking him down for 4 weeks and finally arresting him with the leopard skin, the MINFOF Regional Delegate for the Western despite the fact that the trafficker admitted he tried to sell the skin for 80,000 FCFA declared she does not work with LAGA at the same time blocking any of her sworn-in officials to establish any PV, slandering LAGA’s undercover methods (that stand on 100% court conviction rate) and without examining the nature of the case said the trafficker should be released.



3. Legal

23 new cases reached the court during this period, these cases joined old cases that were scheduled, followed-up, tried in various courts and jail visits organized. Most of the cases initiated within this period have not yet reached the prosecution stage with 96% imprisoned throughout the process.

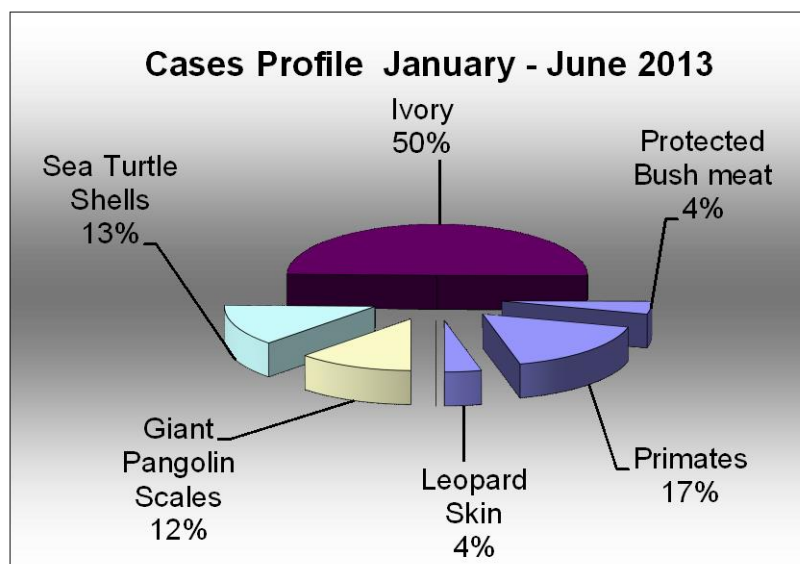
86 missions were done out of the Center Region for follow-up, new cases and the creation of relations with judiciary authorities. More emphasis as a direct result of operations was on ivory, primates, sea turtle shells, giant pangolin scales and bushmeat

During this period, 6 dealers convicted. Imprisonment sentences were obtained in March against 2 suspects dealing in protected primates and elephant tusks in Sangmelima - South; and in June against an ivory dealer arrested with 22 elephant tusks in Djoum - South. Suspended sentences, the payment of damages and fines were obtained in Bangangte – West and Douala Bonanjo – Littoral.

4 dealers were sentenced in March, 2 by the Court of First Instance of Bangangte – West for the illegally trying to trade in live primates including a chimp, drill and mangabey. 2 other dealers were sentenced by the Court of First Instance of Sangmelima – South; one received an imprisonment term of 45 days for trying to illegally trade in 3 protected primates including a De Brazza's monkey; the other was sentenced to 3 months imprisonment for trying to illegally traffic elephant tusks. All the dealers were also sentenced to pay damages to MINFOF.

In May, the Court of First Instance of Douala - Bonanjo sentenced a female dealer in live primate to 3 months suspended sentence during three years and to pay a sum of 595.000 FCFA (about \$1200) as damages and 280.000 FCFA (about \$560) as fine.

In June, the Court of First Instance of Djoum - South sentenced an ivory dealer to 3 months imprisonment and to pay a sum of 600.000 FCFA (about \$1200) as damages and 100.000 FCFA (about \$200) as fine. He was arrested in Djoum for illegal detention of 22 elephant tusks.



4. Media

A total of 189 media pieces were produced and pushed into media including numerous articles in all media – radio, television and written press achieved in a rate of more than one media piece per day. June month saw the lowest number of media pieces because of low level of operations in May.

Subjects were on a broad range of wildlife law enforcement issues including all of LAGA-MINFOF operations, prosecutions and fighting corruption. These were on – primate rescued in Yaounde, 2 ivory traffickers arrested in Gabon, live primate trafficker arrest in Meyomessala, Bafut Chief hand over primate, arrest of a lady with fresh gorilla parts, 3 Cameroonian ivory traffickers arrest in South Africa, the arrest of ivory traffickers in Yaounde, ivory trafficker prosecution in Sangmelima, sea turtle shell traffickers arrest in two different arrest operations in the Ocean division, two ivory traffickers arrest in Dja reserve, CITES, Yaounde arrest of ivory dealers, 20 ivory tusk dealer arrest in Djoum, Congo ivory dealer arrest - court hearing, Limbe arrest of a Chinese pangolin scales dealer alongside 2 Cameroonians, Yaounde 24 tusks ivory dealer arrest, Djoum-Sangmelima arrest of bushmeat dealer, 2 operations in Douala arresting ivory dealers; Sangmelima arrest of a woman dealing in huge quantities of meat of protected wildlife, the dwindling populations of big mammals especially lions, 2 operations in Douala arresting 4 ivory dealers etc.

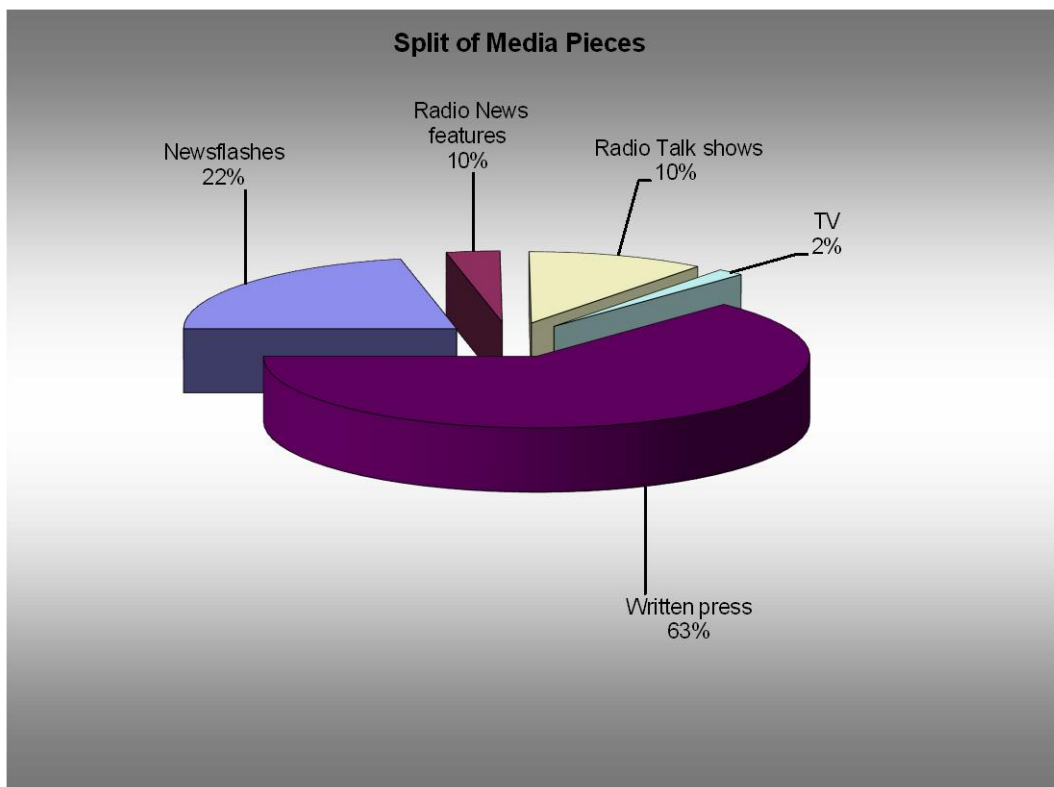
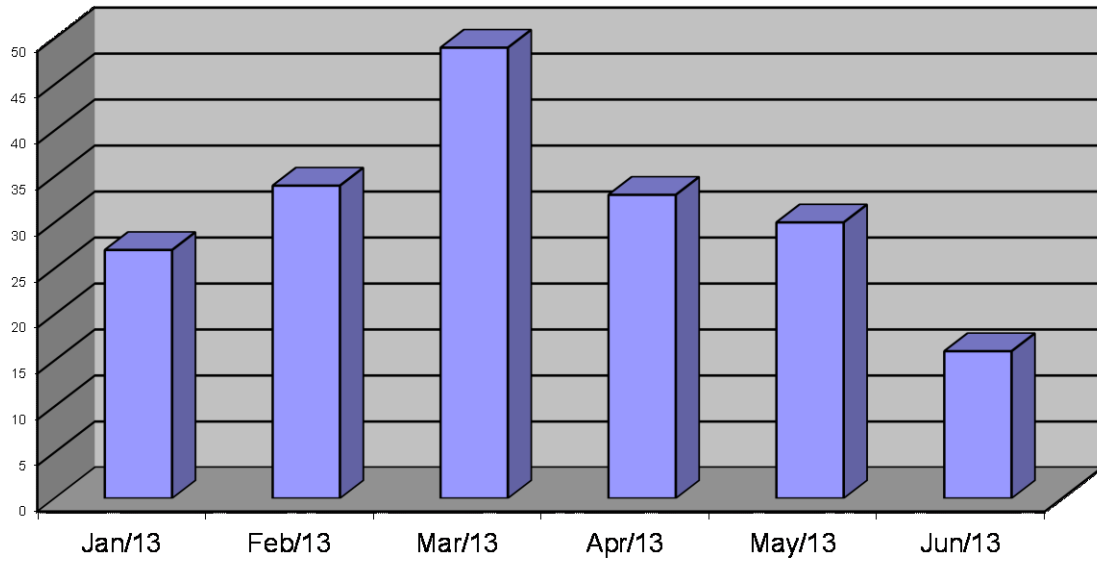
Guests included: MINFOF Lawyer, Conservator of the Limbe wildlife centre, Lecturer and Researcher at the University of Buea, Head of Law Department in the University of Buea, a lecturer in the University of Cologne in Germany, Lecturer at the Catholic University of Buea, PHD student in the University of Buea, a guest lecturer at the Pan-African Institute for Development in Buea, Fako Divisional Delegate MINFOF, The Traditional Ruler of Bafut in the North West Region, the Director of Cameroon Environmental Watch (CEW), the Executive Director of Environment and Rural Development Foundation (Erudef), and a lion researcher and Lecturer at the University of Dschang.

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

LAGA Website Analysis January - June 2013:

Visits	1,174
Page Views	2,265
You Tube Views	10,720

Number of Media Pieces Produced and Pushed



5. Management

Work on the reconstruction of LAGA continued as well as work on action plans for departments while stretching recruitment processes in two LAGA departments (Investigations and Legal); and on the other hand, a Jurist on trial was let go because of lack of engagement and results.

In April, the former Head of Legal Department and Deputy LAGA Director - Alain Ononino went to WWF – CARPO as National Law Enforcement for Cameroon, a post he helped to create in a process of LAGA guiding WWF in stronger enforcement. It is hoped that he will take along LAGA's law enforcement engagement, the fight against corruption and accountability in the NGO world. Collaboration with Alain will continue on law enforcement issues to better protect wildlife in Cameroon and in LAGA's replication projects in Africa.

The Annual Activity and Financial Reports for 2012 were printed and distributed to all the stakeholders. The electronic versions are available on line 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.

For further improvement and more operations in regional enforcement, training sessions continue to be held in Yaounde – Cameroon, 1 Investigator arrived from GALF Guinea – Conakry to be trained under the regional exchange program in June. Training and exchange of project personnel in regional enforcement will continue with the other projects in the forthcoming months. Others that had been trained before include the Coordinator of RALF – CAR, Jurists – PALF Congo, Investigator – PALF Congo, Jurists - AALF Gabon and Investigator AALF - Gabon.

The series of thought provoking sessions of presentations and debates for the LAGA Team on corruption and development introduced by the LAGA Director continued during this period. This is a part of a new project aimed to strengthen the capacity, unity and values of the LAGA family.

March saw the departure of Replication Coordinator to Zimbabwe for further studies; and preparation for maternity leave of Assistant Manager.

One Management Assistant was engaged in April to aid in management activities in the absence of the LAGA Assistant Manager who is on maternity leave.

In May, the LAGA family welcomed 2 new members this month through births – the LAGA Assistant Manager delivered a baby girl, and the wife of the Head of Media Department delivered a baby boy. We welcome the brand new babies and wish their parents the best of luck in raising them.

6. External Relations and Policy

During this period, LAGA had many meeting sessions with highly placed government and diplomatic authorities in Cameroon and out of Cameroon, local and international NGOs, and participated in conferences.

LAGA Director met with Customs' Department of Cooperation on better collaboration on wildlife arrest operations and a MoU; with BIR - Cameroon's elite unit recently tasked with fighting poaching, on strategies in the fight against wildlife crime

LAGA Director met with EU ambassador on criticism against funding strategy in the aftermath of the Bouba Ndjida massacre and applying the Donors Governance Investment Manual for more effective funding to the wildlife sector.

LAGA director played an important role in a WCS meeting in Kigali and process of shift of strategy towards a stronger NGO role in Wildlife Law Enforcement. A similar role was played in a parallel process in WWF. He also visited Nairobi and held meetings with different NGOs and Government officials on how LAGA can assist Kenya in improving arrests and prosecution of major wildlife criminals.

In March, LAGA Director participates in CITES 16th Conference of the Parties as a member of the Cameroon Government Delegation. Thailand hosted the two weeks meeting with more than 2,000 participants and 178 countries represented. LAGA was dominant on issues of enforcement, transparency and accountability, elephants and apes among others. Time was used to make more than 100 new contacts discussing with government and NGO representatives.

Some presentations were also done – LAGA participated and presented a paper in an Interpol Sub-Regional meeting on wildlife crime; he presented in the PASA education workshop on Illegal trade in apes; he was also invited to present and participate in the Symposium on Combating Wildlife Crime organized by the Asian Development Bank, talking on the links between wildlife crime and corruption; presented on wildlife crime and corruption to Nicolas Hulot - Special Envoi for the Environment for the French President.

LAGA Director was invited by the European Parliament to speak in a joint hearing of Development Committee and Organized Crime, Corruption and Money Laundering Committee. The presentation was on Wildlife crime, corruption and how conservation funding can actually encourage corruption. Other meetings with EP Members of Parliament focused on improving the EU wildlife Crime action plan, getting wildlife crime on Organized Crime Report agenda, and improving EU investment in Africa.

Several meetings were held with other International and national organizations - LAGA Director met with CED Director on land grabbing, corruption and forest transparency; with WCS on investigations issues; with Global Witness on Luc Mathot's ALEFI initiative - LAGA's replication for illegal logging in Gabon; with Birdlife international on the illegal trade in African grey parrots in the region; with GIZ and WCS on the need to get better control in MINFOF to prevent traffickers from installing their vested interest in the heart of the ministry using legal trade schemes to launder their activities; with ERUDEF on cross river gorillas and stepping up wildlife law enforcement in their habitat range; WWF CARPE on training magistrates and wildlife law enforcement; WWF and WCS on wildlife law enforcement and governance problems; with World Bank Africa Sector Manager for Environment on the LAGA approach to wildlife crime, and continued discussion with the World Bank conflict analysis team on the situation in the Central African Republic; met with Traffic on problems in CITES management as well as a network of environmental jurists; with

IUCN on wildlife law enforcement and corruption; with WCS on a new strategy integrating governance to a wildlife law enforcement objective and with TNSF on wildlife crime and the Donors' Governance Investment Manual.

LAGA Director trained in the International Law Enforcement Academy on Corruption and Wildlife Crime. He also participated in the presentation of the GRASP report on Ape trade, after contributing a preface to the report.

In January, LAGA Director travelled to Togo to concretize replication activities in that country with operations. Focused investigations continued to target the biggest dealers in Togo and an international investigator was used to penetrate major wildlife and ivory trafficking networks. Meetings were also held with highly placed government officials including the Minister of Security, the Director of Cabinet of Ministry of Justice and the Minister of Environment on wildlife law enforcement and the case concerning is a very big ivory seizure that was carried out by the Customs authorities in Malaysia seizing 6 tons of ivory.

LAGA Director also travelled to Guinea – Conakry in a bid to put strategies in place to arrest the biggest ape trafficker we know - exporting more than 500 chimps over the years, after 10 recordings of him explaining everything about his trade. Another suspect dealing in 200 kg of ivory was targeted. He is active since 1976 and was recorded talking about cheating the airport scanners.

World Customs Organization invited LAGA director to speak in its headquarters in Brussels at the annual meeting of the Ethics sub-committee on anti-corruption strategies and steps Custom authorities around the world to curb corruption. This has been a rare occasion for an NGO to appear in front of the sub-committee.

7. Replication of LAGA Activities

7.1. – General

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 trigger a paradigm shift in the way NGOs tackle wildlife crime continued in other countries. The model is essentially shifting away from targeting small-time poachers in the forest and focusing in prosecution of major dealers, fighting head the major obstacle to the application of the wildlife law in Africa – Corruption. LAGA's experience and model transferred throughout the sub-region continued to function effectively. The LAGA model is currently operating in the Republic of Congo (PALF), the Central African Republic (RALF), Gabon (AALF), Guinea – Conakry (GALF), Togo (TALF) and Chad; inroads had been made in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Nigeria.

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>

LAGA assisted other replication projects in the investigations procedure, planification of operations, legal follow-up, publication of media pieces over various media outlets, and management issues especially finance.

For further improvement and more operations in regional enforcement, training session continue to be held in Yaounde – Cameroon and trips made to other projects in the sub-region. Also, the

regional law library that was created continues to put into value what has been done before based on the LAGA model and how to proceed from there. This library with the documents therein could help in the creation of other structures in other parts of Africa and the world at large by motivated individuals.

LAGA's Annual Report including activities of all the projects (LAGA, PALF, AALF and RALF) was completed, sent to the various donors and posted on the LAGA website. The Annual Financial Reports were also completed, sent to the various donors and also posted on the LAGA website.

The replication of the LAGA model and the transfer of LAGA experience in other countries throughout the sub-region is a continuous process whereby LAGA works with other NGOs.

7.2. Gabon

During this period, the LAGA Head of Investigations Department traveled to Gabon to tap from the AALF experience of operations, arresting traffickers of wildlife and their derivative products through the airport and the seaport. He also worked with AALF investigators on investigations and operations procedures. 1 LAGA Investigator also traveled to Gabon to carry out trans-boundary investigations as part of the strategy to arrest more international; traffickers of protected wildlife products. LAGA and AALF worked on joint investigations in the South of Cameroon.

In May, LAGA collaborated with AALF-Gabon Investigators and Jurists on setting up a network of informants and joint investigations in North Gabon and South Cameroon.

For more information on AALF, go to <http://www.conservation-justice.org>

7.3. The Republic of Congo

LAGA assisted PALF in planning and coordinating missions. LAGA and PALF worked on joint investigations in the South of Cameroon and North of Congo especially Ouesso. LAGA assisted PALF in planning missions, coordinating and participating in operations arresting dealers in ivory, primates and leopard skin.

In March, LAGA Director and PALF Coordinator participated in CITES 16th Conference of the Parties in Thailand on the government delegation. Time was used to make more than 100 new contacts discussing with government and NGO representatives.

For more information on PALF, go to the new website <http://www.palf-enforcement.org>

7.4. Guinea Conakry

In January, LAGA Director travelled to Guinea – Conakry in a bid to put strategies in place to arrest the biggest ape trafficker we know - exporting more than 500 chimps over the years, after 10 recordings of him explaining everything about his trade. Another suspect dealing in 200 kg of ivory was targeted. He is active since 1976 and was recorded talking about cheating the airport scanners.

In June, an investigator arrived from GALF – Guinea Conakry to be trained in Yaounde – Cameroon under the regional exchange program for further improvement and more operations in regional enforcement.

7.5. Togo

LAGA Director travelled to Togo in January to concretize replication activities in that country with operations. Focused investigations continued to target the biggest dealers in Togo and an international investigator was used to penetrate major wildlife and ivory trafficking networks. Meetings were also held with highly placed government officials including the Minister of Security,

the Director of Cabinet of Ministry of Justice and the Minister of Environment on wildlife law enforcement and the case concerning is a very big ivory seizure that was carried out by the Customs authorities in Malaysia seizing 6 tons of ivory.

7.6. Central African Republic – CAR

LAGA Departments assisted RALF – Central African Republic on activity and financial reports; use of the LAGA Manual especially on Investigations and Operations planification and supervision. Because of security problems in that country, no veritable arrest operations were undertaken during this period. This situation may continue for the next couple of months.

LAGA played a role in developing a local solution in a security perimeter for protecting elephant population around Bayanga.

Go to <http://www.laga-enforcement.org/Replication/RALF/tabid/165/Default.aspx> for more information.

7.7. Nigeria

Replication activities in Nigeria did not progress much during this period because of security issues in Nigeria. This will be looked at during the second semester.

7.8. Chad

Follow-up of cases initiated by a Jurist sent to Chad to evaluate and initiate court cases against dealers arrested are being followed-up and controlled by the LAGA team in Yaounde. 2 cases were effectively sent to court against 7 dealers in Amtiman for illegally trafficking in ivory and other elephant products. To make law enforcement more effective, the Minister in charge of wildlife is encouraged to immediately start the replication of LAGA activities in that country.

7.9. Other Countries in Africa

Plans have developed for future replications in Zambia and DRC – Kinshasa. Advice on wildlife law enforcement and the fight against corruption continued in several other countries.

7.10. 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 do develop the project in the vision of turning it in to an independent NGO/paper/book. 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 including:

- *The Ambassador* is a documentary that unmasks some of the filthy businesses that go underneath diplomacy relationship in Africa. In other words diplomats who leave Europe, Asian etc. come to Africa not just for the purpose of diplomacy but to run businesses and other illegal transaction like trafficking of drugs. The many interests (the quest for African resources) of these European and other diplomats in Africa at times spark conflicts in the region. The film shows a high level of corruption between diplomats, the states and individuals.
- *La France contre la Chine: main mise sur l'Afrique* depicts the Chinese and French presence in Cameroon. It equally shows how both countries carry out activities in Cameroon with respect to their particular interests and the effects on Cameroon and Cameroonians.

Though the judgment of who relates well in the documentary between Chinese and French is unequal, the film exposes the care free nature of Chinese communism. The Chinese attitude of grabbing everything for themselves is highly criticized.

- *Marketing Pollution – The case of Carbon and REDD* (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation) - A power point presentation on the mechanisms of trading carbon as a means of curbing pollution from greenhouse gases. The presentation brings out the difficulties and limitations of the REDD program, ranging from projects areas found only in developing countries, no clear definition of forests, governance issues, technical problems, legal limitations, land grabbing problems, lack of enforcement, social problems etc. The conclusion was that trading forest carbon fails to address climate change because the problem is not attacked at the source. There is a need to find ways to stop burning fossil fuels, not create massive new loopholes to allow the pollution to continue; the North can delay effective and radical action to stop the burning of fossil fuels and claim that offsets of their carbon are stored in forests. The result is no net reduction in emissions and a few people become richer.

8. 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 in reducing the level of 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, LAGA-MINFOF work sheds light on the nature of illegal wildlife trade in the sub-region. The strategic focus over this period was on primates, ivory, sea turtle shells, giant pangolin scales, leopard skin and protected bushmeat.

8.1 Primates

During this period, 5 live primates were rescued and 4 dealers involved in pet trade arrested. In January, 2 arrest operations were carried out rescuing 4 live primates including a mandrill. A well-known and well-connected dealer with a network of suppliers of live primates and his accomplice in the South Region were arrested in Meyomessala – South with 3 live primates including a live mandrill that he was illegally trying to trade in. Another dealer in live primates arriving from Bafia - Center with a 2 weeks old baboon was arrested in Yaounde - Center. Collaboration with one of the controllers in the MINFOF Brigade – Centre Region was not good during the writing of the statement of offence as the LAGA legal advisers were being intimidated.

In April, a female dealer carrying out pet trade in wildlife was arrested with a live primate in Douala - Littoral. She owns a restaurant that she uses as a cover for the trade. The live primate was rescued and sent to the Limbe Wildlife Center.

8.2 Ivory

During this period, half of all the operations were on the busting of networks dealing in ivory and 66% linked to international trafficking with connections to other countries in Africa, Europe and Asia; among the elephant tusks seized as a direct consequence of arrest operations, some had been seized already during past LAGA-MINFOF operations and were stolen from the National Stock. Most of the tusks seized are small ones as the big tusks are preferred by the international ivory traffickers because they can generate more worked ivory pieces.

In February, 3 international ivory traffickers belonging to the same network were arrested in Yaounde – Center with 24 elephant tusks. The leader of the network is a Cameroonian based in Congo where he has a web of suppliers. The traffickers have connections in many other countries including Congo, Gabon, France, Belgium and Italy. They drive ivory trade in Congo, Gabon and Cameroon, exporting the products through Cameroon to Europe and Asia.

March saw the arrest of 4 traffickers of elephant tusks. 2 international ivory traffickers with a base in the Republic of Congo from where they drive the illegal trade in ivory to Cameroon and other countries were arrested in Yaounde - Center with 4 small elephant tusks. One of them was caught on camera burying ivory in a small hut in his compound in Congo and both have been in the business for more than 20 years. They transport ivory using 20 litre gallons that pass for oil. In another operation, 2 major traffickers of elephant tusks with suppliers in the Eastern Region and customers based in the city of Yaounde - Center and others in the Northern part of Cameroon were arrested in Lomie – East with 2 elephant tusks. The operation was jointly coordinated by LAGA and MINFOF with LAGA responsible for the legal procedure and follow-up in court.

In April, a long time and experienced international ivory trafficker who frequents the Republic of Congo from where he has a network of suppliers especially in Ouessou was arrested with 20 elephant tusks in Djoum - South. He has connections to South Africa and Guinea Bissau. Also, a female dealer carrying out pet trade in wildlife was arrested with a live primate in Douala - Littoral. She owns a restaurant that she uses as a cover for the trade. The live primate was rescued and sent to the Limbe Wildlife Center.

June was marked by 2 operations being carried out within 1 hour in Douala – Littoral arresting 4 major ivory dealers. In the first operation, 2 dealers also owners of an artefacts shop were arrested with 18 elephant tusks and 16 worked ivory pieces. They are well connected to other major ivory dealers in other parts of Cameroon. Among the 18 tusks, some had been seized already during past LAGA-MINFOF operations and were stolen from the National Stock. Investigations are on-going to track the source of the stolen elephant tusks especially in MINFOF looking into complicity and corruption in that Ministry. Barely 1 hour after the first operation, 2 other well-known ivory dealers were arrested with 16 worked pieces of ivory. They have a network of suppliers in the Eastern Region and claimed to have very good packaging methods that will facilitate the transportation of the ivory out of Cameroon if needed.

8.3 Giant Pangolin Scales

This period saw the booming trade in Chinese international giant pangolin scale trafficking. Collaboration with the customs yielded good operations against traffickers of giant pangolin scales. In April, a high level wildlife trafficker and repeated offender of Chinese nationality arrested with his 2 Cameroonian accomplices with 7 big sacs of Giant Pangolin scales while attempting to send them to Nigeria through the Bota Port in Limbe - South West. He has connections to and denounced other members of a big wildlife trafficking network. The Chinese with no legal stay in Cameroon was already apprehended at the Douala International airport while trying to traffick 160 kg of giant pangolin scales by the Custom Authorities. After his arrest, he attempted to bribe the LAGA Legal Adviser in the field with 500,000 FCFA (about \$1000), an act that was promptly combated. The operation was carried out with the Limbe custom officials and MINFOF Fako Delegation. This arrest follows a string of seizures and arrests clamping down on the booming trade in Giant Pangolin's scales.

8.4 Sea Turtle Shells

The illegal trade in sea turtle shells has been on-going for long and very strong in Kribi continued and the crackdown in the illegal trade also continued. In March, 3 dealers were arrested with 9 sea turtle shells within 2 days in 2 different operations. One of them was arrested with 7 sea turtle shells

in Campo - South. He initially resisted arrest, claiming to have high connections with MINFOF officials but he was successfully transported to Kribi for legal follow-up without any major difficulties. 2 others were arrested with 2 sea turtle shells in Kribi – South. They have a motor – bike that they use in transporting the shells.

8.5 Leopard Skin

Operations continued to be carried out against dealers clamping down on leopard skins trade. A regular dealer was arrested in June with a leopard skin while attempting to illegally trade in it in Bafoussam – West Region. After the arrest operation, the MINFOF Regional Delegate for the Western Region in an unprocedural manner refused that the statement of offense should be taken and the dealer to be duly locked up and taken to court. This is not the first time she is disturbing normal LAGA work for reasons best known to herself, using her position to block her colleagues from collaborating with LAGA in the fight against illegal wildlife trade.

8.6 Bush meat

Operations were also carried out against dealers who trade in meat of protected wildlife species. In May, a long time female dealer in meat of protected wildlife species with a network of suppliers in Djoum - South and a ready market in Yaounde - Center. She was arrested with 4 large bags of bush meat containing 40 different animal carcasses including 2 full mandrills, 10 yellow-backed duikers among other protected wildlife species. She was arrested between the Djoum - Sangmelima route while attempting to take them to Yaounde.

8.7 Corruption and Wildlife Crime

LAGA was an experiment field for methods of fighting corruption within a law enforcement and application process. Bribing attempts are documented in more than 85% of our field arrest operations, and 80% of all court cases within the legal system. But 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 conference, 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 fight directly whenever corrupt practices or bribery attempts have been observed.

This on-going fight is being manifested in some results either directly or indirectly. After the arrest of Chinese trafficker in giant pangolin scales in Limbe – South West Region, he attempted to bribe the LAGA Legal Adviser in the field with 500,000 FCFA (about \$1000), an act that was promptly combated. The Chinese with no legal stay in Cameroon was already apprehended at the Douala International airport while trying to traffick 160 kg of giant pangolin scales by the Custom Authorities.

Other bribery attempts were observed but what was more prominent during this period was lack of collaboration and breach of procedure was observed in 3 different MINFOF delegations this month alone. In Douala – Littoral, investigations discovered several different types of Class A life animals and parts including gorilla and chimp skulls; life crocodiles, sea turtles and African grey parrots but instead of descending to the field to carry out the necessary operation, the MINFOF Regional Delegate categorically refused to collaborate with the LAGA team stating that the suspect was “his friend” and that he has been aware of the presence of those animals.

In Bafoussam, after tracking down a dealer for 4 weeks and finally arresting him with a leopard skin, the MINFOF Regional Delegate for the Western despite the fact that the trafficker admitted he tried to sell the skin for 80,000 FCFA declared she does not work with LAGA at the same time

blocking any of her sworn-in officials to establish any PV, slandering LAGA's undercover methods (that stand on 100% court conviction rate) and without examining the nature of the case said the trafficker should be released.

In Nanga Eboko – Center, after tracking a wildlife dealer for 2 weeks, recording him while explaining his role in ape trade and the connection to export of ape meat to the US, the MINFOF Divisional Delegate and another MINFOF official (Chief of Transformation) knowingly prevented the arrest of the trafficker who had a baby chimp with him and completely sabotaged the investigation efforts. The Delegate was reluctant to contact the police as procedure demands and asked for a mission order not stipulated in LAGA's convention with MINFOF all geared to delaying the team.

In Yaounde – Center following the arrest of a dealer in live primates arriving from Bafia – Center, collaboration with one of the controllers in the MINFOF Brigade – Centre Region was not good during the writing of the statement of offence as the LAGA legal advisers were being intimidated and it is suspected that this was because he wanted to halt the legal proceedings against the arrested dealer.

Because of these and other prior governance issues with MINFOF, a joint letter (part of this report – Annex II) was addressed to the Minister – MINFOF by LAGA, WWF and WCS to immediately remedy the situation. Specifically for LAGA, more criminals had been illegally released by MINFOF Delegates in the past year than in the whole of 10 years of work that preceded it, combined. The constant correspondences highlighting the illegal behaviour of MINFOF Delegates for now remains unanswered.

Two criminal investigations are held concerning ivory stock management and CITES, joining a worrying trend of unprecedented governance problems in MINFOF.

Overview of International Wildlife Traffic in Cameroon and Operations' Sites January-June 2013



Base 802575 (R02413) 7-98

Annex I – Case Tracking System – January – June 2013

Case num.	Date of operation	Region	Location	Case name	Offence	Profile	Remarks	Countries	
								involved	Status
1	12-01-13	South	Meyomessala	Ako'o Joseph	Dealing in live primates	Pet trade	A well-known and well-connected dealer with a network of suppliers of live primates in the South Region. He has a ready market in Sangmelima - South and Yaounde - Center. He was arrested with 3 live primates including a live mandrill that he was illegally trying to trade in. His accomplice Mvogo David was the main supplier of this set of primates.		Locked while on trial
2	12-01-13	South	Meyomessala	Mvogo David	Dealing in live primates	Pet trade	Accomplice of Ako'o Joseph who frequently supplies live primates to him and at times keeps them in his home.		Locked while on trial
3	28-01-12	Center	Yaounde	Nele Kono Maurice	Dealing in live primates	Pet trade	Another dealer in live primates arriving from Bafia - Center with a 2 weeks old baboon. He said that the mother was killed so as to be able to get the baby for trade. He was arrested in Yaounde. Collaboration with MINFOF was not good during the writing of the statement of offence as the LAGA legal advisers were being intimidated and it is suspected that this was because MINFOF wanted to halt the legal proceedings against the arrested dealer		Locked while on trial
4	13-02-13	Center	Yaounde	Nouhou Ibrahim	Dealing in elephant products	Trade in Ivory	A Cameroonian based in Congo and the leader of a network of ivory traffickers with connections to many other countries including Congo, Gabon, France, Belgium and Italy. He was arrested in Yaounde together with 2 other members of his network with 24 elephant tusks weighing 27.5 kg. The network drives ivory trade in Congo, Gabon and Cameroon and export from Cameroon to Europe and Asia.	Congo, Gabon, France, Belgium, Italy	Locked while on trial
5	13-02-13	Center	Yaounde	Njiwouo Aboubakar	Dealing in elephant products	Trade in Ivory	A member of Ibrahim's network involved in ivory trafficking in the sub-region. He is responsible for searching clients in big cities in Cameroon especially Yaounde and Douala. Arrested in Yaounde while trying to illegally trade in 24 elephant tusks with.	Congo, Gabon, France, Belgium, Italy	Locked while on trial
6	13-02-13	Center	Yaounde	Mama Mfoungoup	Dealing in elephant products	Trade in Ivory	Another member of Ibrahim's network responsible for the transformation of raw elephant tusks to sculpted ivory product. The network drives ivory trade in Congo, Gabon and Cameroon and export from Cameroon to Europe and Asia. He was arrested with 2 other members of the network with 24 tusks.	Congo, Gabon, France, Belgium, Italy	Locked while on trial
7	02-03-13	Center	Yaounde	Pempene Amadou	Dealing in elephant products	Trade in Ivory	An international ivory trafficker with a base in the Republic of Congo from where he drives the illegal trade in ivory to Cameroon and other countries. He was caught on camera burying ivory in a small hut in his compound in Congo and says he has been in the business for more than 20 years. He and his accomplice were arrested with 4 small elephant tusks following the use of an international investigator.	Congo	Locked while on trial
8	02-03-13	Center	Yaounde	Mofokoue Mamadou	Dealing in elephant products	Trade in Ivory	The accomplice of Pempene responsible for the transportation of ivory from the Republic of Congo and other regions in Cameroon. He has also been in illegal ivory trafficking for a very long time, transporting the ivory in a 20 liter gallon. They were arrested in Yaounde with 4 elephant tusks while illegally trying to trade in them.	Congo	Locked while on trial
9	06-03-13	East	Lomie	Alhadji Issa Oumarou	Dealing in elephant products	Trade in Ivory	Another major trafficker of elephant tusks who has suppliers in the Eastern Region and customers based in the city of Yaounde - Center and others in the Northern part of Cameroon. He and his accomplice were arrested with elephant tusks in Lomie. The operation was jointly coordinated by LAGA and MINFOF with LAGA responsible for the legal procedure and follow-up in court.		Locked while on trial
10	06-03-13	East	Lomie	Mohamadou Aboubakar	Dealing in elephant products	Trade in Ivory	The accomplice of Issa who has also been in the business for a long time and is the main person collecting the elephant tusks from their network of suppliers. They were arrested in Lomie while trying to illegally trade in 2 elephant tusks.		Locked while on trial
11	19-03-13	South	Campo	Akono Bekale Bernard	Dealing in sea turtle products	Trade in Shells	A dealer arrested with 7 sea turtle shells while trying to illegally trade in them in Campo - South. He initially resisted arrest, claiming to have high connections with MINFOF officials but he was successfully transported to Kribi for legal follow-up without any major difficulties.		Locked while on trial

LAGA Semester Report January – June 2013

12	20-03-13	South	Kribi	Bolaha Michel	Dealing in sea turtle products	Trade in Shells	Another dealer in sea turtle products arrested in Kribi - South with 2 sea turtle shells. He had an accomplice who has a bike that they use to transport the shells.		Locked while on trial
13	20-03-13	South	Kribi	Mbome Raoul Davy	Dealing in sea turtle products	Trade in Shells	The accomplice of Michel who uses his bike to transport sea turtle shells. They were both arrested in Kribi - South while illegally trying to trade in 2 shells.		Locked while on trial
14	08-04-13	South	Djoum	Essono Ebio Martin	Dealing in elephant products	Trade in Ivory	A long time and experienced international ivory trafficker who frequents the Republic of Congo from where he has a network of suppliers especially in Ouesso. Also has connections to South Africa and Guinea Bissau. He was arrested with 20 elephant tusks in Djoum - South.	Congo, South Africa, Guinea Bissau	Locked while on trial
15	12-04-13	Littoral	Douala	Elima Florence Ebune	Dealing in live primates	Pet trade	A female dealer carrying out pet trade in wildlife arrested with a live primate in Douala - Littoral. She owns a restaurant that she uses as a cover for the trade. 1 live primate was rescued and sent to the Limbe Wildlife Center.		Locked while on trial
16	28-04-13	South West	Limbe	Wei Tao	Dealing in Giant Pangolin Products	Trade in Giant Pangolin Scales	A Chinese national and a high level trafficker in wildlife products arrested with 7 big sacs of Giant Pangolin scales while attempting to send them to Nigeria through the Bota Port in Limbe - South West. He has connections to the biggest wildlife trafficker in Cameroon, using his falsified permit. He has no legal stay in Cameroon was already apprehended at the Douala International airport while trying to traffick 160 kg of giant pangolin scales. After his arrest, he attempted to bribe the LAGA Legal Adviser in the field, an act that was promptly combated.	Nigeria, China	Locked while on trial
17	28-04-13	South West	Limbe	Azie Harrison	Dealing in Giant Pangolin Products	Trade in Giant Pangolin Scales	A collaborator of Wei Tao acting as his assistant and translator in some instances. He was charged with negotiations to facilitate the transportation of the scales to Nigeria. Arrested with Wei Tao in Limbe.	Nigeria, China	Locked while on trial
18	28-04-13	South West	Limbe	Ngamgoue Elvis Thezuo	Dealing in Giant Pangolin Products	Trade in Giant Pangolin Scales	Another accomplice of Wei Tao arrested in Limbe with 7 big sacs of giant pangolin scales. He was charged with the loading of the bags in the boat to be taken to Nigeria.	Nigeria, China	Locked while on trial
19	21-05-13	South	Sangmelima	Kamadjou Charlotte	Dealing in protected wildlife meat	Trade in Bush meat	A long time female dealer in meat of protected wildlife species with a network of suppliers in Djoum - South and a ready market in Yaounde - Center arrested with 4 large bags of bush meat containing 40 different animal carcasses including 2 full mandrills and 10 yellow-backed duiker among other protected species. She was arrested between the Djoum - Sangmelima route while attempting to take them to Yaounde.		Locked while on trial
20	21-06-13	Littoral	Douala	Tagni Ibrahim	Dealing in elephant products	Trade in Ivory	A major ivory dealer also the owner of an artifact shop arrested with 18 elephant tusks and 16 worked ivory pieces while attempting to illegally trade in them. He and his accomplice have connections to other major dealers. Among the 18 tusks, some had been seized already during past LAGA-MINFOF operation and were stolen from the National Stock. Investigations are ongoing to track the source and the highly placed ministry officials that were responsible for the kept elephant tusks.		Locked while on trial
21	21-06-13	Littoral	Douala	Moulion Yaye	Dealing in elephant products	Trade in Ivory	Another major ivory dealer and the accomplice of Tagni Ibrahim who is responsible for the transportation of ivory arrested with 18 elephant tusks and 16 worked ivory pieces while attempting to illegally trade in them.		locked while on trial
22	21-06-13	Littoral	Douala	Tcheutchoua Jean	Dealing in elephant products	Trade in Ivory	A long time dealer in ivory with a network of suppliers in the Eastern Region arrested together with his accomplice with 16 worked pieces while attempting to illegally trade in them. They have connections to other traffickers in Equatorial Guinea and Gabon.	Equatorial Guinea, Gabon	Locked while on trial
23	21-06-13	Littoral	Douala	Teguia Kamguia	Dealing in elephant products	Trade in Ivory	The accomplice of T. Jean responsible for the transportation of elephant tusks from the Eastern Region. They were arrested together with his accomplice with 16 worked pieces while attempting to illegally trade in them	Equatorial Guinea, Gabon	Locked while on trial
24	25-06-13	West	Bafoussam	Kengne Pascal	Dealing in leopard products	Trade in leopard skin	A regular dealer arrested with a leopard skin while attempting to illegally trade in it. After the arrest operation, the MINFOF Regional Delegate for the Western Region in an unprocedural manner refused that the statement of offense should be taken and the dealer duly locked up and taken to court despite the fact that the trafficker admitted he tried to sell the skin for 80,000 FCFA. She declared she does not work with LAGA at the same time blocking any of her sworn-in officials to establish any PV, slandering LAGA's undercover methods (that stand on 100% court conviction rate) and without examining the nature of the case said the trafficker should be released.		Free

Annex II – Joint Letter to the Minister on governance issues in MINFOF



**To: The Minister of Forestry and Wildlife
Yaounde - Cameroon**

Date: Yaounde, 7th June 2013

Subject: Request for audience



Your Excellency,

We, the undersigned, are writing to request an audience with you at your earliest convenience to discuss a number of issues that we see as serious threat to the long term conservation of the rich biological diversity of Cameroon. We have observed a worrying trend, concerning your Ministry's responses to effectively cope with illegal wildlife trade, that we felt are becoming major obstacles to the government of Cameroon commitment and effort for conserving the exceptionally rich biological diversity of the country and the defined policy for the sustainable management of natural resources for the benefit of present and future generations, and will like to have the opportunity to discuss some of these issues with you and where possible suggest some solutions or avenues for addressing these problems.

At this point we will be focusing attention mainly on wildlife but it is important to indicate that most of these points are valid for other sectors, as it all relate to governance, transparency and effective law enforcement, bearing in mind that all these goes together to create conditions for efficiency and effectiveness in the realization of define objectives that in our case is the long term conservation of natural resources for the benefit of Cameroon and humanity.

Conservation has long been threatened by bad governance and vested interests. Your noble task, your Excellency, is a constant fight to push back against traders who attempt to use their illicit wealth to subvert the very control systems set to regulate them. More and more policy decisions allow them to benefit from legal trade but in effect facilitate further-illegal trade.

We wish to bring to your attention several problems that fall into this context, soliciting your personal inspection and supervision.

African Grey Parrots

Last year Cameroon's CITES Management Authority requested and was subsequently accorded an export quota for the African Grey Parrot, ending a five-year moratorium on exports, imposed after Cameroon repeatedly exceeded its quota, prompting concern from the CITES Secretariat. The request was regarded by many scientists to be flawed and lacking scientific or even economic logic. The species continues to experience population decline, information on many aspects of its ecology are lacking, and

Handwritten signature and initials in blue ink.

it is exposed to 30-50% pre-export mortality (due to poor management and conditions in-country). None of these facts are accounted for in the current decision.

The close relationship between the legal and the illegal trade in Cameroon is well documented and the court cases against the "legal" dealers finding themselves in the heart of the illegal trade are known and analyzed with great concern.

The revenue to the state generated by the export of this species is a small fraction of the total accruing to the operators. It is estimated that Cameroon generates a max of \$380 000 annually. It remains minor if we consider the sale price of between \$1500 to \$2500 for a bird on the international market, and compared to the damage to Cameroon's natural heritage and international image.

The study on which the Cameroon's application was based would not pass the peer review process required for inclusion in any scientific journal, yet here it has been used to override well-documented concerns of overharvesting and reopen a trade that could very possibly threaten the species' long-term survival. Where external appraisal was sought – too late to be taken into account, – the approach and recommendations were roundly criticized: The methodology used to calculate sustainable yield is flawed. The methodology used in ecological data collection is very likely flawed, or at the very least heavily biased towards overestimation. Vital details of the methodology are omitted, obscuring what was done and precluding replicability. Furthermore, Demographic parameters are largely absent from the report, and the unrealistic adult survival rate is given with no justification.

In light of these and other criticisms, the report should be considered invalid. The document was written as a management plan, yet there have been as yet no moves to implement the recommendations made, despite these lapses, the trade was reopened.

The removal of the key markets for wild-captured birds – the USA in 1993 and the EU in 2005 – as well as developments in captive breeding elsewhere have yet to be reflected in Cameroon's position as an exporter.

Elephants

The plight of Cameroon's elephants does not need introduction. Cameroon is struggling with an escalating poaching crisis, and in the international media the Government stresses the need to fight to conserve every single elephant. Yet at the same time, legal "administrative" culling and sports hunting continue, often of already thin populations and with little ecological considerations. Worse still, we have various indications that such presumably legal use of wildlife is often linked to illegal trade and legal killing schemes systematically used for the illegal trade by known traffickers.

In February 2013 for example, four elephants were killed in the Extreme North region in an authorized administrative culling within 3 weeks. These included a female and a very young elephant, and the reasons for the culling were questionable. The individuals commissioned to hunt are suspected traffickers; one of them offered the tusks for illegal sale to a French national.

In another example, a group of American hunters went to South East Cameroon in April 2013 with authorization to hunt elephants, only a few days after the WWF announced it found 28 fresh elephant carcasses in the nearby Lobeke National Park.

Hippopotamus

Cameroon's CITES Management Authority has appealed to the Convention to remove the trade suspension on hippos and applied for an export quota, arguing that a legal killing scheme of hippos would be introduced in Cameroon. This new request for a legal way to kill hippos correlates with the growing interest of traffickers in hippo ivory. This quota was asked without any reliable scientific study to be based upon, and apparently, with no consultation with the CITES scientific Authority of Cameroon, the Garoua Wildlife School.

The latest two surveys of hippopotamus in Benoue NP (one conducted in March 2013 with the Garoua Wildlife School), shows a 50 % population decline compared to earlier surveys in this hitherto stronghold for hippopotamus in Cameroon. It should be noted that these are the only qualitative hippo population trend data available from Cameroon. During the survey, freshly poached hippos were found with their tusks removed, corresponding with data from wildlife crime investigations documenting trade in hippo tusks.

Apes

In April 2013, an endangered cross river gorilla was killed in the North West region, and to the best of our knowledge, no legal action has been taken against the killers by MINFOF. The stuffing and display of the gorilla was authorized by MINFOF without consideration of bones and skull that were likely to get to the illegal trade. The decision to reward a community that broke the law and killed a highly endangered species, and the decision to display the body as an advertisement for the value of illegal trade are both highly disturbing.

In the past few months two ape traffickers were released by MINFOF failing to forward the criminals arrested red-handed to courts.

An Illegal private collection of chimps that have attracted hundreds of international complaints in the past five years has still remained unresolved and with no legal consequences. Patricia Leschaeve has been buying and keeping chimps, thereby encouraging the illegal trade, and keeping apes in appalling conditions that often result in their death.

Ivory Burning

Wildlife traffickers in West Africa have been recorded saying that the source of their Ivory is from wildlife official from Cameroon. This is very worrying to think that wildlife official could be involved in stealing and selling ivory confiscated and stored in government storehouses, therefore confirming rumours that overtime seized ivory and other wildlife products have disappeared from the store.

With rising ivory prices it is becoming more difficult to ensure security of the ivory stock. And more and more countries are reporting their stocks have been looted. Guarding ivory stocks has become such an impossible mission that even museums in Europe are broken in to in ivory thefts from exhibits.

Cameroon's chances to legally sell this ivory are close to zero. Gabon like Kenya has burnt its ivory last year with much international media coverage and increased international investment in conservation. The Republic of Congo publicly declared it will burn its ivory stocks this year, DRC has made the same declaration not in public. Such a burn can send a very strong message to traffickers as well as broadcast Cameroon's will to protect its elephants in such dire times.

Pangolins

The illegal trade in pangolin scales to China is booming. In the past two weeks two large seizures of giant pangolin scales took place in Douala and Limbe and another seizure in the Charles de Gaulle airport in France. These three seizures alone represent hundreds of killed giant pangolins.

While the littoral MINFOF regional delegation refused to pursue the culprits, the Chinese and two Cameroon nationals, were arrested two weeks afterwards by the South West regional delegation when they continued their illegal activity. Certificates of Origin are being produced by regional delegates, and threatened Giant Pangolin scales, are described as common pangolin, facilitating a vast illegal trade network in the disguise of legal trade.

Recommendations

Your Excellency, we would like to constructively work with your collaborators on bringing quick solutions to the problems raised in this document, as well as, step up transparency and inclusion in decision making concerning legal trade schemes and obtaining better oversight of regulatory systems that are prone to be captured by traffickers and corruption.

For this purpose, we recommend the establishment of a working group to include MINFOF, the undersigned and other members of the scientific community. The working group will have to produce detailed solutions within a month and an action plan with clear deadlines.

We also recommend the establishment of a schedule for regular visits and inspections of warehouse where confiscated items including ivory other wildlife products and guns are stored. We believe that the first such visit and inspection can reasonably be organized within a week from today.

Sincerely,

On behalf of WWF – Rolf-Dieter Sprung, Conservation Director, WWF Cameroon.

On behalf of WCS – Dr. Roger C. Fotso, Country Director, Cameroon.

On behalf of LAGA – Ofir Drori, Director.



Annex III - Semester in Pictures



2 major ivory dealers arrested with 18 elephant tusks and 16 worked ivory pieces in Douala – Littoral (*left*). Among the 18 tusks, some had been seized already during past LAGA operations and were stolen from the National Stock (*right*). Two criminal investigations are held concerning ivory stock management and CITES, joining a worrying trend of unprecedented governance problems in MINFOF.



A high level wildlife trafficker and repeated offender of Chinese nationality (*left*) arrested with his 2 Cameroonian accomplices with 7 big sacs of Giant Pangolin scales (*right*) while attempting to send them to Nigeria through the Bota Port in Limbe - South West. After his arrest, he attempted to bribe the LAGA Legal Adviser in the field with 500,000 FCFA (about \$1000), an act that was promptly combated. The operation was carried out with the Limbe custom officials and MINFOF Fako Delegation.



A long time international ivory trafficker who frequents the Republic of Congo from where he has a network of suppliers especially in Ouesso, arrested with 20 elephant tusks in Djoum - South. He also has connections to South Africa and Guinea Bissau.

The leader of a network of 3 international ivory traffickers busted in Yaounde – Center with 24 elephant tusks weighing 27.5 kg. He is a Cameroonian based in Congo and has connections in many other countries including Congo, Gabon, France, Belgium and Italy. They drive ivory trade in Congo, Gabon and Cameroon, exporting the products through Cameroon to Europe and Asia.



160 kg of giant pangolin scales seized by the customs at the Douala international airport about to be exported by the same Chinese arrested in Limbe. He denounced other members of a big wildlife trafficking network. The arrest follows a string of seizures and arrests clamping down on the booming trade in Giant Pangolin's scales.



The 2 international ivory traffickers (left and above) with a base in the Republic of Congo arrested in Yaounde - Center with 4 small elephant tusks following the use of an international investigator. One of them was caught on camera burying ivory in a small hut in his compound in Congo and both have been in the business for more than 20 years.



2 other well-known ivory dealers (Left) arrested with 16 worked ivory pieces (Right). They have a network of suppliers in the Eastern Region and claimed to have very good packaging methods that will facilitate the transportation of the ivory out of Cameroon if needed.