

The Last Great Ape Organization – LAGA

March 2021 Report



Highlights

- **A traffickers arrested with 109kg of pangolin scales in Bertoua in the East Region.**
- **A legal adviser provided technical assistance to customs officials following the seizure of 4.4 tons of pangolin scales in the North of the country that was being smuggled to Nigeria.**
- **An investigator from Gabon arrived the country for an experience sharing mission.**

General

The month was marked by the **arrest of a trafficker with 109kg of pangolin scales**

A trafficker arrested with 109kg of pangolin scales in Bertoua in the East Region. He was arrested as he offloaded two bags of pangolin scales from his car. A search of his home found smaller quantities of pangolin scales concealed in a black plastic bag and hidden inside his kitchen. He activated several smaller traffickers in a number of localities in the area and regularly supplied the scales in the bigger cities.

Following the seizure of 4.4 tons of pangolin scales by the customs in the North of the country, a legal adviser travelled to Garoua where he assisted customs officials with some technical aspects of the matter.

An investigator travelled from Gabon for a three-week experience sharing mission with the investigation department. He returned safely to Libreville after a successful mission.

Investigations

- **16 investigation missions** out in **5 Regions** out of 10 of Cameroon including: Littoral, West, South, Centre and East Regions.
- Good investigation in Bertoua led to the arrest of a pangolin scale trafficker with 109kg of pangolin scales in Bertoua.
- Good investigation in Mengong led to the recovery of 36kg of pangolin scales but failed to arrest the main traffickers in Mengong who fled as the arresting team approached.
- The department hosted an investigator who came in from Gabon and spent three weeks with the team, sharing experiences.

Investigations Table

Investigation Missions	Regions	No. of Operations	No of traffickers arrested
16	5	3	1

Operation

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

9/3/2021 – A trafficker arrested in Bertoua, East Region with two bags full with pangolin scales weighing 109kg. He activated several smaller traffickers in a number of localities including Mampang, Mendim, Moutcheboum and Nkolesseng in the East Region and regularly supplied the scales to bigger traffickers who came in from Yaoundé and Douala. He had loaded the pangolin scales in two rice sacks and was just about offloading the scales when he was arrested.

Operations Table

No of Operations	Regions	No of Traffickers Arrested	Contraband
1	1	1	109kg of pangolin scales

Legal

- LAGA Legal Department carried out **10 missions** out of Yaoundé - Centre Region: 1 in Garoua (North), 5 in Bertoua (East), 2 in Ebolowa (South) and 2 in Douala (Littoral).
- There are **13 traffickers behind bars this month**: 4 in East region, 2 in Centre region, 1 in Littoral, and 6 in West region.

- **28 cases** were followed up by the Legal Department this month.
- **23 cases** were scheduled in court this month.
- **No trafficker** was convicted this month.
- A legal adviser provided technical assistance to customs officials following the seizure of 4.4 tons of pangolin scales in the North of the country that was being smuggled to Nigeria.
- 36kg of pangolin scales were recovered as some traffickers who were about to be arrested fled.

Legal Table

No of Missions (Out of Centre Region)	No of Court Judgements	No of Traffickers Given Prison Sentence	Prison term (in months)	No of Traffickers Sanctioned (No prison sentence)	No of Appeals lodged	No of Cases Tried in Courts
10	0	0	0	0	0	28

Media

- **46 media pieces** were produced and pushed through to written press, internet and the radio, including: 25 written press materials (14 in English and 11 in French), 11 internet publications (8 in French and 3 in English), and 11 radio news flashes (8 in French and 3 in English).
- Quotes were from Pricelia Tumenta, a Cameroonian Lion specialist and Director of the Lion Recovery Fund
- Subjects focused on wildlife law enforcement including: the Yaoundé court hearings of two people arrested with one leopard skin and one lion skin, the Ambam Customs official arrest for unlawful possession of a live mandrill, and the Bertoua arrested of a man with more than 100kg of pangolin scales.
- 25 media pieces in the French language and 21 in the English language making a percentage of 54.3% in French and 45.7% in English.
- The Head of the Media Department and the Media Assistant held a meeting with the Head of the Communication Unit at the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife to discuss some wildlife communication issues and the strengthening of collaboration between LAGA and MINFOF as far as communication is concerned.

Media table

<i>No of media pieces</i>	TV	Radio	Newspapers	Internet
46	0	10	25	11

External Relations and Policy

- The Deputy Director and the Head of the Legal Department held meetings with some regional wildlife officials to strengthen collaboration with the Centre Regional Wildlife Delegation.
- He participated at a Zoom meeting organized by Save Pangolins to introduce to the pangolin conservation community in Cameroon, the new Senior Manager of Pangolin Crisis Fund. Discussions focused on the presentation of their areas of activities by the various participants and avenues for collaboration.
- The Head of the Legal Department held a meeting with the Attorney General of Douala to discuss legal strategies concerning matters pending at his court and he held another meeting with the Bertoua State Counsel for a similar purpose.
- A legal adviser held a meeting with the State Counsel in Ebolowa to discuss legal strategies.
- A legal adviser held a meeting with the Bertoua Attorney General to discuss two cases on appeal.

Management

- The planning, hosting and departure of the investigator from Gabon was carried out.

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>.

Activism Front

The month of March was marked by the celebration of International Women's Day which is held on March 8 of each year. This day was an opportunity for Cameroonian women to ask several questions related to their gender including female leadership roles. LAGA held a family dinner to celebrate women's right.

Finance

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

Link of the month

The online news site Alwihda info treated the arrest of a Customs official with live mandrill in his possession. The site says trafficking in primates is becoming recurrent in the country and the suspect used his status of Customs official to carry out his illegal activities. The news site also laid emphasis on the importance of the species that needs absolute protection.

https://www.alwihdainfo.com/Cameroun-Un-commis-de-douane-arrete-avec-un-mandrill-vivant-a-Ambam_a101256.html

This Month in Pictures



Arrested for trafficking in 109kg of pangolin scales



Pangolins are totally protected in the country and these scales represent up to 250 pangolins to have been massacred in the wild