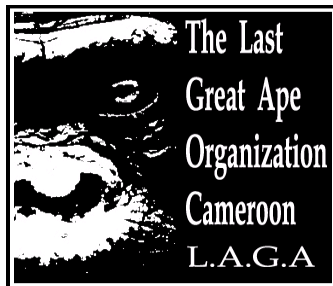


# **THE LAST GREAT APE ORGANIZATION, CAMEROON LAGA**

**SECOND SEMESTER REPORT JULY - DECEMBER 2021**



## **Executive Summary**

The Covid-19 pandemic continued to pose challenges, although not as last year and the restrictive measures were a bit relaxed. Despite this challenge and several others, the LAGA team obtained tangible achievements in its collaboration with the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife (MINFOF) in the fight against wildlife crime. Achievements were obtained in the fields of investigations, arrest operations, prosecutions, media exposure and government relations with focus on the fight against the trafficking in live primates, pangolin scales and parrots. 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. Trafficking in primates and pangolin scales drew much of the attention. 9 traffickers were arrested for trafficking in live primates.

15 major traffickers were arrested and 67% stayed behind bars from the day of arrest and 33% were released on bail as the trials started. Corruption was observed and combated in two cases. 15 new cases were brought to the courts and two of the cases were initiated from an arrest carried by the police. 12 traffickers were found guilty and damages totalling 11,585,000 FCFA (about \$23,170). were ordered to be paid by the convicts to the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife (MINFOF). Media exposure was at a rate of one media piece per day.

74 traffickers were arrested across all 9 countries of the EAGLE network. LAGA continued to provide technical assistance to some of the EAGLE projects during investigations and operations.

Meetings were held with government and diplomatic officials and other stakeholders despite the challenges posed by the health crisis.

The organisation continued to observe strict internal measures and regulations to ensuring the Covid-19 infection was kept at bay. So far, no member of the team has tested positive for Covid 19.

**The work of LAGA was supported by: Wildcat, The Born Free Foundation, and The Elephant Crisis Fund**

**LAST GREAT APE ORGANISATION, CAMEROON (LAGA)**  
**SEMESTER REPORT**  
July - December 2021

**OVERVIEW**

**Investigations**

- A total of 88 investigation missions of varying lengths were carried out in 5 regions.
- The network of informants continued producing results leading to a couple of good operations.

**Operations**

- Operations were carried out in 5 regions arresting 15 major traffickers and 15 court cases were started. LAGA provided legal assistance in 2 of the cases following the arrest of 2 ivory traffickers by the police.
- The illegal trade in primates was the major focus with primate traffickers accounting for 60% of the total arrest with chimp traffickers at 26%, drill at 20%, and mandrills at 14%. Pangolin scales trafficking accounted for 26% of the total arrest while parrot trafficking stood at 14%
- The rate of imprisonment of arrested offenders was 67%,

**Legal**

- 15 new cases were brought to court and represented. Many of the 15 cases began during the period have not yet reached the judgement stage but trials are ongoing. 2 of the cases were from arrest made by the police
- 10 court judgements were passed during the 6-month period.
- 12 traffickers were found guilty and handed at least two of the following: prison sentences, suspended prison sentences, fines, damages and penalties and one suspect was found not guilty Damages amounted to some 11,585,000 FCFA (about \$23,170). to be paid to MINFOF.
- The period was marked by a couple of weak court rulings and an acquittal
- An appeal was lodged during this semester in one of the cases.

**Media**

- A total of 230 media pieces were produced in national media (TV, radio, press and internet) achieved at a rate of more than one media piece per day.
- The Deputy Director was guest on a TV news programme that discussed pangolin scales trafficking following the arrest of an international trafficker with 331kg of pangolin scales.

**Management**

- The first semester report of 2021 was made available online.
- Internal collaboration amongst the departments was very effective, especially after a meeting that was held specifically for this purpose.

**External Relations and Policy**

- Although restrictive measures against the Covid-19 pandemic were relaxed, the possibility of holding meetings were limited as people still harboured apprehensions about meeting physically. Nevertheless, some meetings were held with MINFOF officials, the diplomatic community, national and international NGOs to discuss issues on collaboration, governance, wildlife law enforcement among others.

### **Strategic Highlights**

- The strategic focus over this period was cracking down on the illegal live primate trade that collectively represented 60% of the operations carried out. Trafficking in pangolin scales represented 26% and leopard skins were seized from one of the arrested pangolin scales traffickers
- Attention was also concentrated on pushing on and getting operations carried out while respecting organisational and government's measures put in place to prevent coronavirus infections.

### **EAGLE Activities**

- A total of 74 traffickers were arrested across 9 countries of the network during this semester.
- LAGA provided technical support during investigations to some of the projects across the network

## CONTENTS

- Executive Summary.....	1
- Overview .....	2
- Contents & List of Figures.....	4
- Narrative Report .....	5
1 Investigation .....	5
2 Operations .....	6
3 Legal .....	8
4 Media .....	10
5 Management.....	11
6 External Relations and Policy.....	12
7 LAGA and the EAGLE Network.....	13
8 Fostering Activism .....	13
9 Strategic Overview of Wildlife Crime in Cameroon and Operations’ Impact .....	13
10 Corruption and Wildlife Crime.....	14

### Annexes

Annex I – The Semester in Pictures .....	17
Annex II – Semester Media Links 2019.....	21

### Charts & Tables

1 Figure 1: Number of investigation missions per month .....	5
2 Figure 2 Operations Table .....	7
3 Figure 3: Case Profile.....	8
4 Figure 4: Rate of locking accused behind bars before prosecution ... ..	10
5 Figure 5: Number of media pieces published.....	11
6 Figure 6: Split of media pieces.....	11
Overview of international trade in Cameroon and operation sites .....	16

### Also available:

1. Annual Financial Statement and Semester I 2021
2. Monthly Financial and Activity Reports July to December 2021
3. Media archive – Excel database linked to recorded media pieces
4. Photo archive for media use

For copies contact email; [eric@laga-enforcement.org](mailto:eric@laga-enforcement.org)

## **NARRATIVE REPORT**

This report covers the organisation’s activities from July to December 2021. The report includes the progress in the activities of each department, specifically the investigations, operations, legal, media departments and management. It also looks at the strategic overview of and the impact of our operations on wildlife crime in Cameroon, the progress in relations with the Cameroonian Government, non-governmental bodies, activities in the international arena, as well as non-enforcement initiatives undertaken by the organisation.

### **1. Investigations**

LAGA’s investigation unit carried out 88 investigation missions in 7 regions of the country. Weekly meetings were held in the department to develop and implement investigative strategies and techniques, plan activities, promote team spirit so as to identify and cover key trafficking areas, in order to improve on results. Restrictions to fight off the Covid 19 pandemic were relaxed and this greatly contributed to progress in the implementation of strategies that were put in place. There was full collaboration between the department and the CCU’s Investigation Officer and this greatly improved investigation standards and results.

The Head of the Investigations Department held meetings with some customs and security officials at the Nsimalen International Airport and s officials at the Douala International Airport to enhance collaboration. He was accompanied by the Head of the Legal Department to some of the meetings. .

No arrests were done during the month of August and December. Nevertheless, September and November were very successful as each week a trafficker was arrested. The department continued to improve on investigative techniques and strategies as the traffickers become more aware of law enforcement activities and the dangers of trafficking. They have consequently improved their trafficking and transactional skills, making it very difficult to investigate and arrest them.

The department provided technical support to other EAGLE projects including Congo, Uganda and Cote d’Ivoire.



**Figure 1: Number of Investigations Missions per Month**

## **2. Operations**

LAGA assisted the Government of Cameroon in carrying out arrest operations in 5 regions against 15 individuals resulting in 15 court cases with 2 cases initiated following police arrest in the South. Old and new strategies were used during this period and this equally produced good results. Collaboration with an external partner produced one high quality arrest.

One of the major highlights was the arrest of an international trafficker with 331.5kg of pangolin scales and 3 leopard skins in a dangerous neighbourhood in Yaounde. 32 bags of pangolin scales were found in a storeroom in the neighbourhood during the operation. He had links to several traffickers in Nigeria. Several live animals including 20 African grey parrots, 2 mandrills, a baby chimpanzee, a baby drill and a baby baboon were rescued during operations carried out in 3 regions.

In July, three operations were carried out and during the first, a trafficker was arrested in Kribi, South Region with a live mandrill. The female mandrill was found chained to a very inhospitable cage and placed in open space at the residence of the trafficker. She was immediately released and moved to the zoo for further care. The trafficker bought the animal from a small town called Bipindi, situated some 78km from Kribi. He was advised to hand over the animal to wildlife officials but he refused, rather opting to sell the her.

During the second operation, a trafficker was arrested in Djoum in the South Region with another live mandrill. He was arrested at Melen, a village not far from Djoum and the animal sustained injuries inflicted by a cord that was tied around the waist of the little female. Immediately, the rescue team released the animal of the unbearable chain and instant first aid measures applied. A veterinarian was brought to apply treatment to the animal before she was moved to the Yaounde zoo for special care and comfort. He worked in collaboration with a poacher who is on the run, to get the mandrill which he intended to travel to Djoum to sell before his arrest.

During the last operation of the month, a trafficker was arrested in Yaounde in the Centre Region with 331.55kg of pangolin scales and 3 leopard skins, following a wildlife crime investigation carried out in close collaboration with the CCU and other partners. He was found in possession of 32 bags of pangolin scales and 3 leopard skins hidden in several storerooms at the Briqueterie neighbourhood in Yaounde. The neighbourhood is known to hide several wildlife law offenders and their illegal products. The arrest is part of an intricate investigations into this major criminal group that has tentacles in the Central African sub region and in Nigeria. It could provide a trove of valuable information into the ring that involves several traffickers including some closely related family members. The trafficking ring had regularly been sending huge quantities of pangolin scales to Nigeria. Some of its members are based near the Cameroon, Gabon, and Equatorial Guinea borders raising possibility that some of the contraband is coming in from these countries.

In September, 2 traffickers were arrested with 20 African grey parrots in their hideout in Ebolowa, South Region. The traffickers were attempting to sell the parrots at a place where they had been hiding and keeping parrots in the South Region. when they were arrested. They are part of an even bigger parrot trafficking network in the country that includes foreign nationals. The 20 parrots were crammed into a box which was clearly not large enough. The parrots were captured at the Campo Ma'an National Park.

During a second operation in September, 2 traffickers were arrested and a baby chimp rescued in Douala in the Littoral, Region. The chimp was found in a large storeroom close to a Chinese tiles shop in the country's economic capital Douala. The 2 traffickers were arrested on the spot and a third, who is considered to be the brain behind the trafficking and was not present during the operation, and efforts continue to apprehend him. The chimp was found with wounds inflicted by

the traffickers all over his body as he was cruelly kicked and tossed. He was not given food regularly. The chimp was rescued and taken to the Pongo Songo Chimpanzee Sanctuary where it is receiving lifetime care and support.

In October, 2 more chimp traffickers arrested in Douala, Littoral Region following the seizure of a baby chimp and arrest in September of 2 traffickers.

Still in October, a trafficker was arrested in Bertoua, East Region with 77kg of pangolin scales. He transported the scales in a pickup truck. He activated several poachers in the region, particularly around the Lom Pangar Dam and Deng area. He supplied pangolin scales and other wildlife products to several traffickers coming from some of the big towns. He is a commercial car driver plying the road between Bertoua and Lom Pangar and used this activity to illegal transport and sell pangolin scales. He understood when to move the scales from the smaller localities where he bought them, knowing exactly when checkpoints manned by wildlife officials were functioning and for how long.

During a third operation, a trafficker arrested with a freshly killed pangolin along the Yaounde – Bafoussam highway, close to Ndikinimiki. Blood could be seen on the head of the pangolin that was probably smashed. Protected wildlife species are generally dangled by hand or hung from a piece of a wooden pole or stick along major highways in country for sale, despite their protected status and the illegality of selling them. The operation comes as a reminder that protected species remain protected and it is illegal to trade in them.

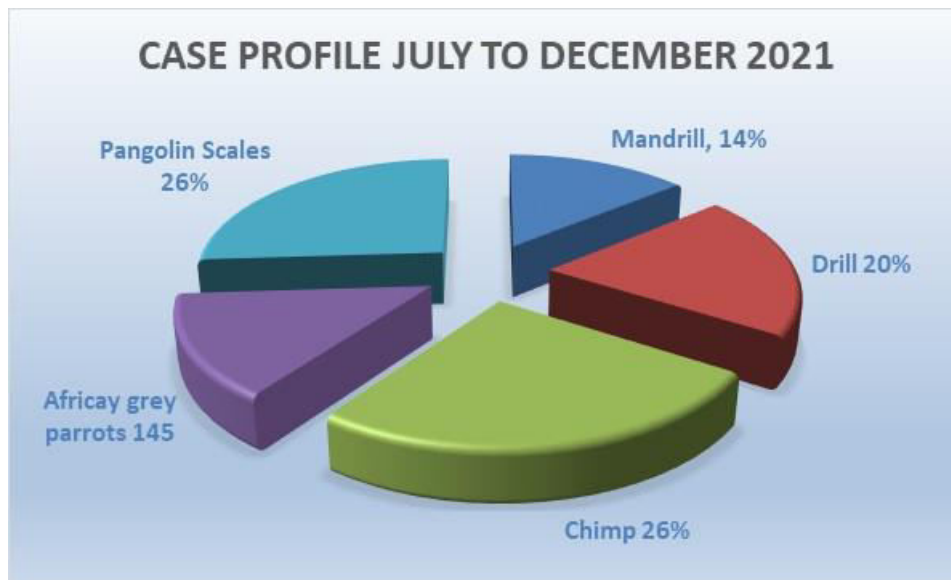
In November, two operations were carried with 4 traffickers arrested. During the first operation, 3 traffickers arrested in Bafang, West Region with a baby drill. The animal was quickly transported to the Limbe Wildlife Centre where he shall be getting specialist care from veterinarians and join a family of drills. The traffickers bought the baby from a poacher and they attempted to sell when they were arrested.

During the second operation, a trafficker was arrested in Nkoteng, Centre Region with 86kg of giant pangolin scales and a baby baboon rescued. The animal was found leashed around the waist and tied to a tree at the premises of the trafficker. He bought the young baboon from a poacher who trapped and killed the mother around Yoko, where he got most of his supplies of illicit products. The scales are from giant pangolins which is more threatened with extinction than the two other species in the country. Seizures are almost always composed of scales from all three species. The trafficker belongs to a bigger group illegally trafficking several wildlife products including elephant ivory around Yoko and Nkoteng in the Centre Region

***Operations Table***

<b><i>Number of Operations</i></b>	<b><i>Number of Traffickers</i></b>	<b><i>Contraband</i></b>
7	15	331.55kg of pangolin scales, 3 leopard skins. 2 live mandrills, 20 African grey parrots, baby chimp, 77kg of pangolin scales and one dead pangolin, a baby drill, a young baboon and 86kg of pangolin scales

***Figure 2: Operation Table***



**Figure 3: Operations profile**

### **3. Legal**

During this period, 15 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. The 13 of the cases resulted from operations assisted by LAGA. The organisation provided legal assistance to 2 cases following arrest of 2 ivory traffickers by the police. Most of the cases initiated within this period have not yet reached the judgement stage and 67% of the arrest stayed behind bars before trial started.

A total of 68 missions were carried out of the Centre Region for the follow-up of new cases and the creation and strengthening of relations with wildlife and judicial authorities. The missions were focused on cases that were initiated during the semester as well as other cases that had been ongoing for some time now and initiated over time.

During this period, 10 court judgements were passed with 12 traffickers found guilty and given prison sentences or suspended jail terms. While one was found not guilty. A very high number of weak sentences were witnessed and this is a continuing trend that has been witnessed over a couple of years now. An appeal was lodged. The court gave an 8-month jail sentence to a wildlife trafficker who was arrested with 77kg of pangolin scales in the East of the country in October. The department assisted the Ministry and Customs in the follow up of an ivory seizure in the South Region. Damages awarded to MINFOF amounted to some 11,585,000 FCFA (about \$23,170).

The Abong-Mbang Court of First Instance found the accused NFENJOU YAYA guilty and sentenced him 2 months in prison and to pay 2,285,000 FCFA (about \$4570) as damages. He was arrested in Dimako on the 03/06/2021 for illegal possession, circulation and commercialization of 58kg of pangolin scales.

In the case of the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife against ANGO Jean and ENDELE NANGA Venant, the South Court of Appeal ruled against the judgment delivered by the Djoum Court of First Instance, and declared that the Djoum Court was competent to hear the matter. On the 26/11/2019, the Djoum Court of First Instance had declared itself incompetent to hear the matter in favour of the Military Tribunal. They were arrested in Djoum for the illegal possession and circulation with 216 elephant tusks and 81 elephant tails.



The Yaounde Centre Administratif Court of First Instance found the accused NDZANA Célestin not guilty. On the other hand, the Court found NKWASSI Sylvester and BEKOMBO GUIWA Bruno guilty and sentenced them 5 months in prison and to pay 30,975 FCFA (about \$80) each as court fees. They were also ordered to pay 100,000 FCFA (about \$200) jointly as damages. Two of them were arrested in Yaounde on the 24/09/2020 for the illegal possession, circulation and commercialization of two African grey parrot and three red-fronted parrots.

The South Court of Appeal maintained the 6-month jail term given to PEKASSA Adamou and MAH MVOMO's by an earlier court and to pay 66,500,000 FCFA (about \$133,000) as damages. They were arrested in Djoum on the 12/12/2017, for illegal possession and transport of 216 elephant tusks and 81 elephant tails.

The Nanga-Eboko Court of First Instance found the accused EKANGA Jean de Dieu guilty and sentenced him to pay 100,000 FCFA (about \$200) as fines and 500,000 FCFA (about \$1000) as damages. He was arrested in Nanga-Eboko on the 10/05/2021 for illegal possession of a live chimpanzee.

The Ebolowa Court of First Instance found the accused GAMBO Mouhamadou and TCHAPCHET Christian guilty and sentenced them to one year suspended sentences during 3 years and to pay 1,500,000 FCFA (about \$3000) as damages. They were arrested in Ebolowa on the 17/09/2021, for illegal possession of 20 grey parrots.

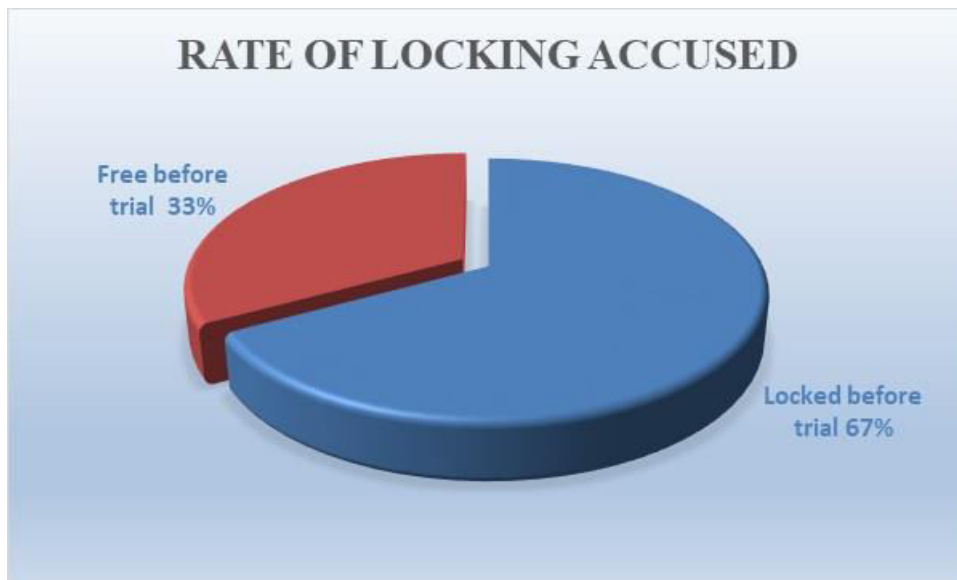
The Douala Bonanjo Court of First Instance found the accused KAMDEM Eric and KAMHOUA KAMDEM Serge guilty and sentenced them to 3 months suspended sentences during 3 years and to pay 1,500,000 FCFA (about \$3000) as damages. They were arrested in Douala on the 08/10/2021 for illegal possession of a chimpanzee.

The Djoum Court of First Instance found the accused NKOLO Josiane and BIDJA Vincent guilty and sentenced them to 3 months suspended sentences during 3 years and to pay 2,000,000 FCFA (about \$4000) as damages. They were arrested in Mintom on the 29/06/2021 for unlawful possession of a Mandrill.

The Bertoua Court of First Instance found the accused TAPA KOUOKAP Guy Rostand guilty and sentenced him to 8 months in prison and to pay 400,000 FCFA as fines and 222,345 FCFA as court fees. He was also ordered to pay 3,500,000 FCFA (about \$7000) as damages. He was arrested in Bertoua on the 14/10/2021 for the illegal possession of 77 kg of pangolin scales.

The Kribi Court of First Instance found the accused KOUMBA Rene guilty and sentenced him to pay 25,000 FCFA as fines and 200,000 FCFA (about \$400) as damages. He was arrested in Kribi on the 07/07/2021 for illegal possession of a mandrill.

An appeal was filed in the case of NDZANA Célestin, NKWASSI Sylvester and BEKOMBO GUIWA Bruno in the Centre Court of Appeal.



**Figure 4: Rate of locking accused behind bars**

#### **4. Media**

A total of 230 media pieces were produced and pushed into media including numerous articles in all media – TV, radio, television, written press and the internet; achieved at a rate of more than one media piece per day. July, October and November months witnessed the highest number of media pieces recorded while the rest of the months witnessed the normal monthly production of media pieces. Slightly more than one media piece was produced a day and the department needed to work very hard this semester to make up for the low number of media pieces published during the first semester.

Subjects focused on the Dschang arrest of 4 traffickers with 3 leopard skins and a crocodile skin; the Mintom arrest of a mandrill trafficker; the Djoum arrest of a trafficker with a baby mandrill; the city council worker arrest in Kribi with a mandrill; the Yaounde arrest of a trafficker with 331 kg of pangolin scales and 3 leopard skins; the arrest of two traffickers with 20 African grey parrots in Ebolowa; the Douala arrest of 2 chimp traffickers; the arrest of a trafficker with over 77kg of pangolin scales in Bertoua; the Bafia arrest of trafficker with a freshly killed pangolin; the arrest of three traffickers with a baby drill in Bafang; the Nkoteng rescue of a young baboon

Interviews and quotes used in the various media pieces were from The Centre Regional Control Chief of Brigade at the Delegation of Forestry and Wildlife, the Divisional Officer of Yaounde 1, the Commander of Nlongkak Gendarmerie Brigade, the Director and the Deputy Director of LAGA

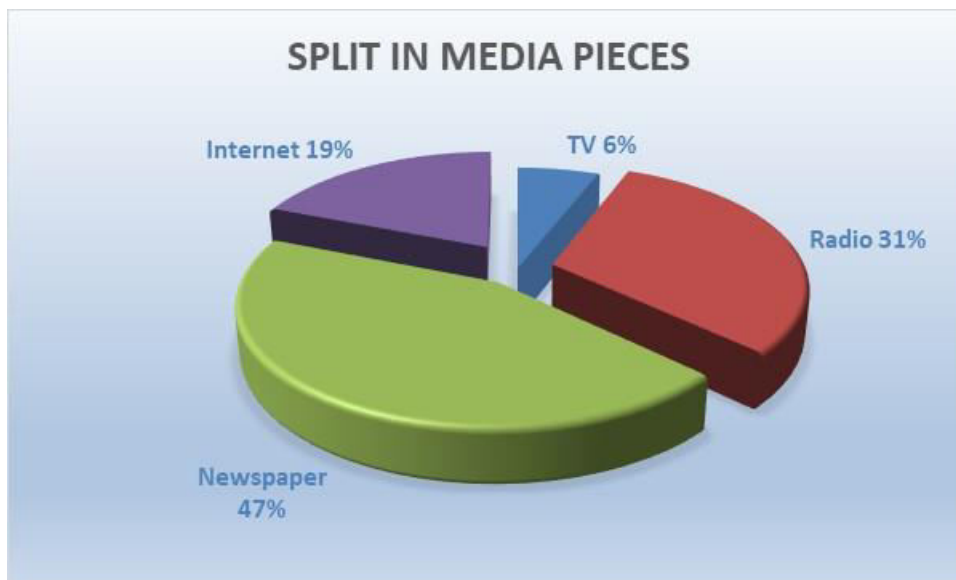
The Deputy Director was a guest on prime-time news programme on the CRTV News channel. The national TV channel broadcast the arrest of a pangolin trafficker with 331kg of pangolin scales.

The Deputy Director gave an interview to an American based conservation news site Mongabay.com, on wildlife trafficking and conflicts in Cameroon.

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 of Media Pieces**

## **5. Management**

The fight against the Covid 19 pandemic continued relentlessly. Special efforts were made to providing face masks and hand sanitizers as well all other items needed to protect against the pandemic. Several guidelines that aligned with government’s measures were enforced. The restrictive measures were gradually relaxed as the situation improved and this enabled freer movements, almost getting back to normal. Two other regions of the country that are seared by security problems continue to pose a challenge but plans have been put in place to quickly cover the regions once the situation on the ground improves.

Sustained efforts were made by management to ensuring efficient and effective use of resources and skills available to the organisation. A couple of team building activities were carried out during the period and included common office lunch and a visit to the seaside resort town of Kribi.

An external team of auditors from Moore Stephens came to the end of an audit mission to the organisation where they worked with the finance department for a complete audit.

The first semester of 2021 uploaded online. The electronic versions are available on line on the LAGA website [www.laga-enforcement.org](http://www.laga-enforcement.org). This is a result of teamwork involving all the departments in LAGA – Investigations, Legal, Media, Operations and Management.

Two general meetings were held to first of all define targeted results and activities to be carried out within the period, secondly to evaluate what had been achieved and to ensure efforts were redoubled to achieving the expected results as the year drew to a close. During the second meeting, debates focused on team spirit and collaboration.

The entire LAGA team went on annual vacation and end of year activities were carried out. Office reopens in January 2022. Everyone gathered at the table and extended season's greetings during an end of year lunch. Christmas gifts were equally distributed to every member.

An investigator from Congo was hosted during a month long experience sharing mission under the coordination of management.

## **6. External Relations and Policy**

The Deputy Director participated at the US States Department International Visitor Leadership Program which was done virtually because of the Covid 19 pandemic. The programme brought together participants from 12 African countries and focused on the theme Combatting Wildlife Trafficking.

The Deputy Director and the Head of the Legal Department held a meeting with the Head of the Legal Unit of the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife on issues related to lawyers' representation in court and to strengthen collaboration.

The Deputy Director participated at a meeting organized by the US Embassy to lay the groundwork for the creation of a taskforce for conservation NGOs.

The Deputy Director held a zoom meeting with Lucie Bird of Global Initiative Against Transnational Organised Crime to discuss wildlife trafficking hotspots and routes in the country.

The Deputy Director did a presentation on effective wildlife law enforcement during a training for customs, police, gendarmes, wildlife and other security officials of the Douala International Airport.

He held a meeting with a customs official in charge of studies at the Customs Department to discuss an ongoing wildlife case and strengthen collaboration in the fight against wildlife crime.

The Deputy Director carried out a presentation on online wildlife crime and LAGA's law enforcement initiatives and experience during a training for some top ranking gendarmerie, police, customs, wildlife officials.

The Deputy Director participated at a workshop organized by the British High Commission to create synergy on communication strategies for the upcoming CoP26 to hold in Glasgow

He held a meeting with the new Project Manager of the Tikki Hywood Foundation who recently arrived the country and they discussed several issues relating to pangolin conservation and wildlife conservation in general.

The Heads of the Legal and Investigations Departments, participated in a meeting that focused on engaging law enforcement officers in online monitoring of illegal wildlife trade in Cameroon. The Head of the Investigations Department did a presentation on the work of the organisation in that domain.

## **7. LAGA and the EAGLE Network**

LAGA's new model for NGO – Government collaboration establishes 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 and 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 that was formerly the handled by LAGA. Activities carried out with the other EAGLE projects were focussed on information sharing. LAGA provided technical advice on investigations, operations and media outreach to some other projects.

## **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/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>**

## **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 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, 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 ivory, pangolin scales, parrots and leopard skins.

### ***9.1 Primates***

The illegal trade in live primates was in focus this semester, and indeed this year despite the dangers posed by zoonosis as the Covid 19 situation clearly indicates. A baby chimpanzee, 2 live mandrills, a baby drill and a young baboon were seized from traffickers in 3 different regions of the country and all were found in terrible physical condition. Poorly treated it took the caring hands of the LAGA team on the ground with wildlife officials to bring back some confidence in human beings to the animals.

In July, a trafficker was arrested and a mandrill rescued in Kribi, South Region. The female mandrill was found chained to a very inhospitable cage and placed in open space at the residence of the trafficker. She was immediately released and moved to the Yaounde zoo for further care. During a second operation a trafficker was arrested and another mandrill rescued in Djoum in the South Region. The animal was weak, fragile and malnourished. A cord that was tied around the waist of the little female inflicted injuries on her and left a gaping wound. Immediately, the rescue team released the animal of the unbearable chain and instant first aid measures applied.

2 traffickers were arrested and a baby chimp rescued in Douala in the Littoral, Region. The chimp was found in a large storeroom close to a Chinese tiles shop in the country's economic capital Douala. 2 more traffickers would be arrested in connection with this chimp. The animal is suspected to have been trafficked out of a sanctuary.

### **9.2 Pangolin scales**

Close to half a ton of pangolin scales were seized from traffickers. International connections were once more established in one of the cases involving a major trafficker who had ties with Nigeria. Further investigations into his trafficking indicated that it involved some countries of the Central African sub region. Just as some trafficking in wildlife is more locally oriented, the trafficking in pangolin scales is generally international with the contraband ending up far beyond the country's borders. The trafficker was found with 331kg of pangolin scales and three leopard skins in a dangerous neighbourhood in Yaounde where he was protected by his kin. It took the dexterity of the arresting team and very good planning to pull the trafficker out as a crowd of acolytes surged in menacingly. Another trafficker who used his pickup car to move pangolin scales around was arrested. This arrest illustrates the skills and means used by pangolin scales trafficker who can invest hugely to moving their illegal business around the country.

### **9.3 Parrots**

The illegal trade of African grey parrots near protected areas where they are captured was put on the spotlight with the capture of 2 traffickers with 20 African grey parrots. They were fished out of their hideout in Ebolowa, South Region near the Campo Ma'an National Park. The traffickers were attempting to sell the parrots at a place where they had been hiding and keeping parrots in the region. They are part of an even bigger parrot trafficking network in the country that includes foreign nationals

## **10. Corruption and Wildlife Crime**

LAGA was 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 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 fights directly whenever corrupt practices or bribery attempts have been observed.

When a trafficker was arrested in Yaounde in July with over 330kg of pangolin scales, an entire network of people brought pressure to corrupt the brigade commander who heads the unit where he was detained. He received nocturnal visits from some members of a diplomatic mission in Yaounde who came around trying to get the trafficker released by proposing several millions of francs to the commander who simply refused the money. He has worked with us on several occasions and clearly understands our position on corruption.

When a mandrill trafficker was arrested in Kribi in September and while wildlife officials were drawing up the complaint reports, they were pressured by the family of the trafficker as well as a member of the Senate and a mayor. They suggested to the MINFOF delegate that they he should find a way to stop proceedings at his level and release the suspect, but the wildlife official stood his ground. Nevertheless, the trafficker was quickly released on bail when the case progressed.

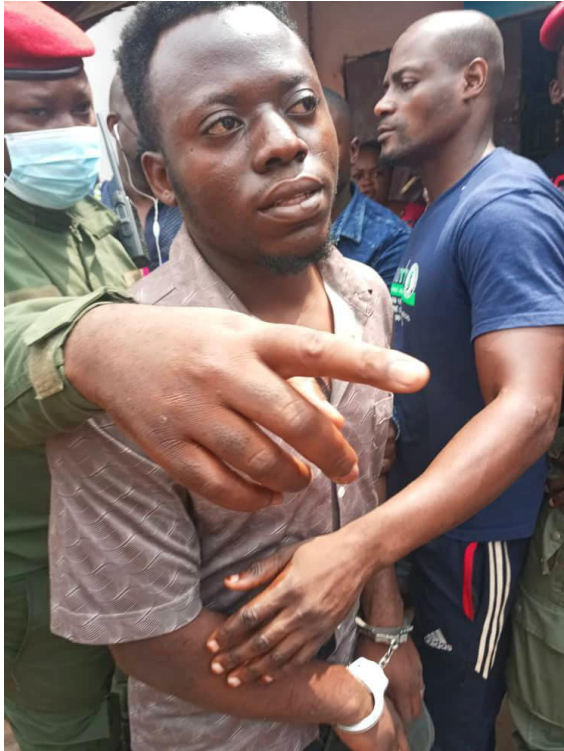


# Overview of International Wildlife Traffic in Cameroon

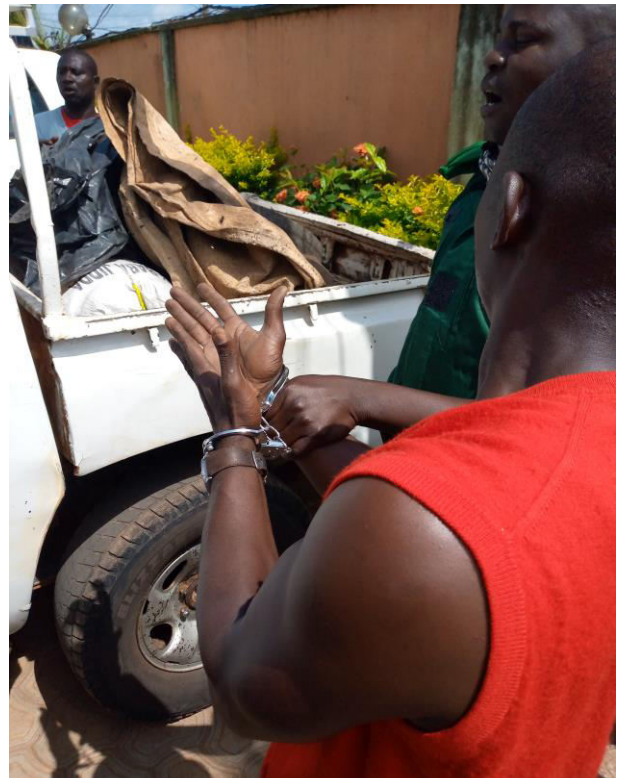




## Annex I - Semester in Pictures



*Major trafficker arrested in Yaounde for cross border trafficking, over 330kg of pangolin scales seized*



*He was found with 77kg of pangolin scales loaded in a pickup truck and was just about selling it when arrested*



*Arrested with freshly killed pangolin*



*He was arrested with 86kg of giant pangolin scales and a young baboon rescued from his home.*



*A baby drill was rescued from 3 traffickers arrested at they attempted to sell the animal*





*City council worker tried to sell mandrill and was arrested despite good advice by neighbours to hand over the animal to wildlife officials*



*Chimp rescued from the hands of traffickers who gave him cruel treatment. At the Littoral Regional Delegation where the process to rehabilitate him is just beginning.*



*Two parrot traffickers  
fished out from their  
hideout and arrested*



*The parrots were  
crammed into little  
space*

## **Annex II - Semester Media Links**

In July, the Voice of America, the renowned American broadcaster published on its website, the story of the arrest of a trafficker with 331kg of pangolin scales and 3 leopard skins in Yaounde. The report highlighted the international dimension of the illegal activity with links to Nigeria and other sub regional countries. The trafficker was arrested in one of the most dangerous neighbourhoods in Yaounde and bags of pangolin scales and leopard skins were discovered and seized by wildlife and gendarmerie officials.

<https://www.voanews.com/covid-19-pandemic/cameroon-police-intercept-pangolin-scales-trafficked-3-central-african-states>

In August, Camer.be, an online news site published the story of the court hearing of a trafficker who was arrested with a baby mandrill in Mintom. The case was heard for the fourth time.

<https://www.camer.be/mobile/87709/11:1/cameroun-a-woman-to-appear-in-court-for-mandrill-trafficking-cameroon.html>

In September, Camer be, published the story of the court hearing of a trafficker who was arrested with a baby mandrill in Ebolowa. The case was heard for the second time after being adjourned for the suspect to fully prepare his defence.

<https://www.camer.be/mobile/87925/11:1/cameroun-kribi-a-city-council-worker-to-appear-in-court-for-mandrill-trafficking-cameroon.html>

In October, Camer be, published the story of four traffickers arrested with a baby chimp in Douala. They were arrested for illegal possession of the baby chimp found in a storeroom close to a Chinese tiles shop at the Nkouloloun neighbourhood.

<https://www.camer.be/mobile/88367/11:1/cameroun-four-people-arrested-with-a-stolen-baby-chimp-cameroon.html>

In November, Came.be published the story of a trafficker arrested with a baby baboon and 86kg of pangolin scales at Nkoteng. The animal is quarantine at the Mvogbetsi botanical park.

<https://www.camer.be/mobile/88922/11:1/cameroun-a-trafficker-arrested-in-nkoteng-cameroon.html>

In December, Camer be, published the story on the court hearing of 3 traffickers arrested with a baby drill in Bafang when they were to appear in court for the third time to answer to charges of drill trafficking.

<https://www.camer.be/mobile/89131/11:1/cameroun-three-traffickers-to-appear-in-court-for-drill-trafficking-at-bafang-cameroon.html>