



EAGLE

August 2018
EAGLE Network

Wildlife Law Enforcement Briefing

- ✓ *20 traffickers arrested in 3 countries*
- ✓ *6 traffickers arrested in Cameroon with more than 700kg pangolin scales in a crackdown on a criminal syndicate involving DRC, CAR, Cameroon and Nigeria connected to Vietnam*
- ✓ *4 ivory traffickers arrested in Gabon in 2 operations*
- ✓ *5 leopard skin traffickers arrested in Gabon*
- ✓ *3 ivory traffickers including a retired military man, arrested in Benin with 8 ivory tusks.*



6 traffickers arrested in Cameroon with more than 700kg pangolin scales in a crackdown on a criminal syndicate involving DRC, CAR, Cameroon and Nigeria connected to Vietnam

Summary

20 wildlife traffickers were arrested in 3 countries.

6 traffickers arrested with more than 700kg pangolin scales in a crackdown on a syndicate involving DRC, CAR, Cameroon and Nigeria dealing in rhino horns and lion parts as well in connection to Vietnam. A couple of days to the operation, one of the traffickers sent a truck with the scales from CAR,



6 traffickers arrested with more than 700kg pangolin scales in a crackdown on a syndicate involving DRC, CAR, Cameroon and Nigeria

which arrived to Douala shortly after he had flown to the port city. The pangolin scales were then driven in two cars to a neighborhood in the town, where an illegal transaction was about to take place, but all 6 traffickers were arrested in an ambush. One of them attempted to escape but was quickly stopped. The exposed modus operandi of the syndicate consisted of sourcing the scales through lower level traffickers in Cameroon, Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of Congo and exporting them to Nigeria via Cameroon. Most of the 700kg of giant pangolin scales originated from the DRC where they have strong impunity and cover from members of the ruling elite. When the scales arrived in Nigeria, they were assembled for illegal export. An involvement of the gang in rhino horn and lion trophy trafficking is under investigation.

4 ivory traffickers arrested in Gabon in 2 operations. 3 ivory traffickers were arrested with 2 tusks in Lambaréné. The first one, a gold miner, was arrested in the act, and soon he denounced two other traffick-

ers. They were arrested the same day on the way to the place of transaction, when they wanted to pick up their share. The gang has been trafficking ivory in Gabon regularly. Another Ivory trafficker was arrested with 2 tusks. He is a member of the same network and a nephew of the first trafficker, arrested. Not knowing, that his uncle was already behind bars, he contacted him offering ivory for sale. A swift operation brought him behind bars as well.

5 leopard skin traffickers were arrested in Gabon. 2 traffickers were arrested in Lambaréné with 2 leopard skins and a skull. They attempted to sell the contraband in a motel room. The town in the eastern part of the country is still known as a hub for wildlife trafficking. 3 traffickers were arrested with 2 leopard skins in the South of the country. The first one was arrested when attempting to sell the contraband. He denounced two more traffickers, who were arrested in their village immediately.

3 ivory traffickers, one of them retired military man, another one from Burkina Faso, arrested in the North of the country with 8 ivory tusks. They were arrested in the act, with the contraband carefully packed in a jute bag and concealed in a travel bag full of clothes to evade enforcement efforts. The retired soldier organized the transaction, he had been involved in ivory trafficking for years, he used to operate in several neighboring countries including Mali.



4 ivory traffickers arrested in Gabon in 2 operations.

Cameroon – LAGA

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- The Deputy director participated as a main speaker at a conference on illegal wildlife trade at University of Kisangani in Democratic Republic



to Vietnam. A couple of days to the operation, one of the traffickers sent a truck with the scales from CAR, which arrived to Douala shortly after he had flown to the port city. The pangolin scales were then driven in two cars to a neighborhood in the town, where an illegal transaction was about to take place, but all 6 traffickers were arrested in an ambush. One of them attempted to escape but was quickly stopped. The exposed modus operandi of the syndicate consisted of sourcing

lic of Congo, where he presented the EAGLE law enforcement model, and cooperated on the inclusion of the wildlife law enforcement in the university curriculum.

- The Deputy Director participated as a guest at the Cameroon National TV news programme together with the country's Director of Wildlife.
- The Monitoring & Evaluation Officer conducted a mission to Cameroon to support the operation.

An International Pangolin Scales Trafficking syndicate Arrests in Cameroon



6 traffickers were arrested with more than 700 kg of pangolin scales in a crackdown on a syndicate involving DRC, CAR, Cameroon and Nigeria dealing in rhino horns and lion parts as well in connection to Vietnam.

A couple of days to the operation, one of the traffickers sent a truck with pangolin scales from Bangui, which arrived Douala shortly after he had flown to the port city. The contraband was then driven in two cars to a neighborhood in the town, where an illegal transaction was about to take place, but all 6 traffickers were swiftly arrested in a police operation, assisted by LAGA team. One of them attempted to escape but was quickly

stopped.

The international network was operating in four central African countries including Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Republic of Central Africa and Nigeria. One of the 6 arrested is from the Central African Republic while the rest are Cameroonians.

The exposed modus operandi of the syndicate consisted of sourcing the scales from lower level traffickers in Cameroon, the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and exporting to Nigeria via Cameroon. When the scales arrived to Nigeria, they were assembled for illegal export to Asia. Most of the 700 kg of giant pangolin scales originated from the DRC where they had strong impunity and cover from members of the ruling elite.

The traffickers are also linked to rhino horn and lion trophies trafficking, these criminal activities are under investigation.

Central Africa region is considered to be a hotspot for sourcing illegal pangolin scales which are exported mainly to Asian countries. Over the years several tons of pangolin scales have been seized in Asian cities, originated from the region. In January 2017 two Chinese nationals were arrested in Cameroon with over 5 tons of pangolin scales ready for illegal export - the largest seizure of pangolin scales in central Africa so far.

Congo – PALF

- The PALF team is fighting a difficult situation in Ouessou court, where a corrupt State Counsel repeatedly releases the arrested traffickers, sometimes even those who were sentenced to jail for several years, giving them a permission to leave often based on fake health reasons or similar excuses. The State Counsel also attacks the Ministry of Forest Economy and prevents PALF from carrying out jail visits and legal follow up. A complaint to the General State Counsel has been submitted and the problem was reported to the Inspection of the Ministry of Justice.
- The Coordinator held a meeting with several high authorities including the General Director of the Penitentiary Administration, the Director of the Cabinet of the Minister of Forest Economy, the Legal Adviser of the Ministry of Forest Economy and several State Counsels and departmental directors of the ministry of Forest Economy.
- The final text of the Memorandum of Understanding between PALF and the Ministry was agreed upon and submitted to the Minister and the date of the signature will be known soon.

- 3 legal advisers finished their test period and joined the team.
- The Assistant Coordinator participated at a workshop on the National Plan for Protection of Elephants in the Republic of Congo (PANE). The plan

serves as a framework, providing solution to the elephant poaching and ivory trafficking, the maintenance of their habitat, cross-border cooperation and the reduction of human-elephant conflicts.

Gabon – AALF

- 3 ivory traffickers arrested with 2 tusks in Lambaréné. The first one, a gold miner, was arrested in the act, and soon he denounced two other traffickers. They were arrested the same day on the way to the place of transaction, when they wanted to pick up their share. The gang has been trafficking ivory in Gabon regularly.
- Another Ivory trafficker arrested with 2 tusks. He is a member of the same network and a nephew of the first trafficker, arrested. Not knowing, that his uncle was already behind bars, he contacted him offering ivory for sale. A swift operation brought



2 traffickers arrested in Lambaréné with 2 leopard skins and a skull.



An ivory trafficker arrested with 2 tusks.

him behind bars as well.

- 2 traffickers arrested in Lambaréné with 2 leopard skins and a skull. They attempted to sell the contraband in a motel room. The town in the Western part of the country is still known as a hub for wildlife trafficking.
- 3 traffickers arrested with 2 leopard skins in the South of the country. The first one was arrested when attempting to sell the contraband. He de-

nounced two more traffickers, who were arrested in their village immediately.

- AALF legal advisers assisted the good work achieved by ANPN (Agence Nationale des Parcs Nationaux): 2 poachers arrested in Minkébé National park with 13 duikers, 12 antelopes, 2 dwarf crocodiles, a pangolin and more protected animals, and with a 12 caliber Baikal shotgun with ammunition.

- An ivory trafficker was sentenced to 1 year in jail. He was arrested in June 2018 with 2 tusks, 1 elephant tail, giant pangolin scales and an illegally held rifle with ammunition.
- Another ivory trafficker was sentenced to 5 months in jail. He was arrested in March 2018 with 5 tusks.
- The legal team held a series of meetings with State Counsels, Departmental Directors and other authorities of several departments.

Guinea – GALF

- The coordinator held a series of meetings with various authorities, including the National Director of Water and Forests, the National Director of the Body of Conservatives of Nature, the Head of Cooperation of the European Union, the State Counsel at the Kankan Court of First Instance and the Deputy State Counsel of Kankan, the CITES Focal Point and others.
- A legal adviser participated at a meeting held at the National Directorate of Water and Forests to review the status of wildlife trafficking in Guinea and to create a sub-regional database on endangered species of plants and animals. The meeting was initiated by United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).
- Juridical vacancies slowed down activities this month.

Togo – EAGLE Togo

- Jean-Claude Vignoli continued his mission in Togo to support the management of the team.
- The financial audit report was finalized.
- One investigator started his test period.

Senegal – SALF

- August has been a slow month as the team took its annual holiday.

Benin – AALF-B

- 3 ivory traffickers, one of them retired military man, another one from Burkina Faso, arrested in the North of the country with 8 ivory tusks. They were arrested in the act, with the contraband carefully packed in a jute bag and concealed in a travel bag full of clothes to evade enforcement efforts. The retired soldier organized the transaction, he had been involved in ivory trafficking for years, he used to operate in several neighboring countries including Mali.
- The Coordinator held a series of meetings with



Beninese authorities including the Director of the Judicial Police to schedule training for Special Border Surveillance Units (USSF), the Director of the W National Park, the State Counsels, Police Commanders and other officials.



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Côte d'Ivoire – EAGLE Côte d'Ivoire

- The investigation of the case of ivory traffickers arrested in January continued. The case needs a lot of further investigation of the underlying networks and different kinds of trafficking. The Côte d'Ivoire team focused on money laundering investigations and the procedures for money laundering charges in Côte d'Ivoire.
- The Coordinator held many meetings with the UCT and the bankers' association in order to support the investigation.

Headquarters

- Luc Mathot, the Founding Director of the EAGLE Network traveled to Brussels to hold a meeting with EU officers at DEVCO to discuss a potential project fighting wildlife crime in Central Africa. They discussed the financial and administrative aspects of the project.
- The Monitoring & Evaluation Officer conducted a mission to Cameroon to support the operation.
- A coordinator of the prepared project in Burkina Faso arrived to Nairobi to conduct a training with CCU in management and organization of the project.

THE EAGLE Network

EAGLE: Eco Activists for Governance and Law Enforcement, is a network of members across Africa, who are replicating effectively a program and operational model to undertake wildlife law enforcement, which is based on the LAGA-Cameroon model, trailed, practiced and tested since 2003. The EAGLE Network currently operates in nine African countries and keeps expanding.

The over-arching objective of the EAGLE Network is: *Developing civic activism and collaborating with governments and civil society to improve the application of national and international environmental legislation, through a program of activities: investigations, arrests, prosecutions and publicity. Through this, EAGLE aims to generate a strong deterrent against the illegal*

trade in wildlife, timber and related criminal activities, including corruption.

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