



**EAGLE**

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EAGLE Network

# Wildlife Law Enforcement Briefing

- ✓ *22 wildlife traffickers arrested in 4 countries*
- ✓ *A trafficker arrested in Cameroon with about 100 kg pangolin scales in a continued crackdown on the trafficking syndicate operating between Cameroon and the Central African Republic*
- ✓ *11 ivory traffickers arrested in Gabon in 4 operations, one of them a corrupt prison security officer*
- ✓ *5 ivory traffickers, including a local politician, arrested in Benin in two operations*
- ✓ *2 ivory traffickers arrested with four tusks in Congo*
- ✓ *3 traffickers arrested with a leopard skin in Congo*



*11 ivory traffickers arrested in Gabon in 4 operations*



*A trafficker arrested in Cameroon with about 100 kg pangolin scales*

# Summary

22 wildlife traffickers were arrested in 4 countries.

A trafficker arrested in Douala with about 100 kg pangolin scales in a continued crackdown on the trafficking syndicate operating between Cameroon and the Central African Republic. He was arrested shortly after he arrived to the Village neighborhood in Douala with the bags of pangolin scales. He closely followed the car transporting the contraband on a motorcycle and when the car stopped, the operation team swooped in. He is a member of an international network of pangolin scales traffickers dismantled in August 2018, when 6 traffickers were arrested with 700 kg pangolin scales. This trafficker was the main link in the network in Douala where he played a crucial role in generating the illegal wildlife trade from the Central African Republic. The exposed modus operandi for this international trafficking ring consisted of sourcing the scales through smaller traffickers in Cameroon, the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of Congo and exporting them to Nigeria via Cameroon. From Nigeria the contraband has been then trafficked to Asia.

11 ivory traffickers were arrested in Gabon in 4 operations. A corrupt prison security officer was arrested with two other traffickers in the capital city. The three were arrested during an attempt to sell two ivory tusks just after they arrived to the place of transaction by private bus and carried the contraband inside of a motel in a large bag. The prison officer massacred the elephant in the North-East of the country in order to trade the tusks. 4 traffickers were arrested with 22 kg of ivory. The first one, a Ghana national, was arrested in the act selling one tusk, and he denounced the second trafficker, who was arrested soon after. Further interrogation then led to revealing the whole trafficking ring, and two more traffickers were arrested. 3 ivory traffickers were arrested with 2 tusks, one of them Cameroonian, the other one Togolese. The two were arrested during an attempt to trade the tusks. They soon denounced a third trafficker that was swiftly arrested on the same day. An ivory trafficker was arrested with a tusk after two months on a run. He escaped when other members of the ring were arrested in April with 16 tusks.

5 ivory traffickers were arrested in Benin in two operations. 3 ivory traffickers, one of them a local politician, were arrested with two tusks. Two of them were

arrested in the act, then revealed a third trafficker, who entrusted them to sell the ivory. He was arrested the next day, he turned out to be an elected local chief. 2 ivory traffickers were arrested with three tusks. They were arrested shortly after they arrived to the place of transaction on a motorbike with the contraband.

2 ivory traffickers were arrested in Congo with four tusks, weighing 20 kg. One of them is a repeat offender, already arrested for the same crime two years ago, but he evaded prison due to corruption before being prosecuted. They both are long term traffickers, operating in the area near the Gabonese border. Photos from their phone revealed some of the slaughter of elephants they generated. Two days later 3 traffickers were arrested with a leopard skin in the same town. One of them is a notorious trafficker, a member of a trafficking ring, he has links to the local authorities.



*2 ivory traffickers were arrested in Congo with four tusks, weighing 20 kg.*

# Cameroon – LAGA

■ A trafficker arrested in Douala with about 100 kg pangolin scales in a continued crackdown on the trafficking syndicate operating between Cameroon and the Central African Republic. He was arrested shortly after he arrived to the Village neighborhood in Douala with the bags of pangolin scales. He closely followed the car transporting the contraband on a motorcycle and when the car stopped, the operation team swooped in. He is a member of an international network of pangolin scales traffickers dismantled in August 2018, when 6 traffickers were arrested with 700 kg pangolin scales. This trafficker was the main link in the network in Douala where he played a crucial role in generating the illegal wildlife trade from the Central African Republic. The exposed modus operandi for this international trafficking ring consisted of sourcing the scales through smaller traffickers in Cameroon, the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of Congo and exporting them to Nigeria via Cameroon. From Nigeria the contraband has been then trafficked to Asia.

■ The Deputy Director with the Director of ZSL and AWF accompanied four US Congress Members and the Ambassador to the Mefou Park where he briefed the distinguish guests on LAGA activities and some pressing conservation needs of the country.

■ The Assistant Head of the Media and External Relations Department returned to the country af-



ter a visit to the US to participate in the International Visitor Leadership Programme that focused on the theme Combatting Corruption: Promoting Transparency and Accountability.

■ The Deputy Director and the Head of Investigations Department visited and held meetings with customs officials of the three Northern regions, the Extreme Nord, North and Adamawa regions.

During the visits they held meetings with State Counsels and Wildlife Officials of the regions.

■ The Head of the Legal Department and the Assistant Head of Investigations held similar meetings with Customs officials in the East and Littoral Regions, with State Counsels and the wildlife officials in the regions.

■ The Interim Director returned to Yaoundé after participating in a management course in Nairobi.



# Congo – PALF

- 2 ivory traffickers arrested with four tusks, weighing 20 kg. One of them is a repeat offender, already arrested for the same crime two years ago, but he evaded prison due to corruption before being



3 traffickers arrested with a leopard skin



2 ivory traffickers arrested with four tusks



prosecuted. They both are long term traffickers, operating in the area near the Gabonese border. They brought the contraband to the place of transaction on a motorbike concealed in a bag. Photos from their phone revealed some of the slaughter of elephants they generated.

- Two days later 3 traffickers arrested with a leopard skin in the same town. They travelled with the skin concealed in a backpack. One of them is a notorious trafficker, a member of a trafficking ring, he has links to the local authorities.

- The Coordinator held a series of meetings with high authorities including the Director of the Cabinet of the Minister of Environment, the General Director of Water and Forests of the Ministry of Environment, the Legal Adviser and the Wildlife Advisor of the MEF, the Attorney General at the Supreme Court, the Advisers and Attachés of US Embassy, the Secretary General of the Prefecture of Brazzaville, several State Counsels and Department Directors of Water and Forest and others.

## Gabon – AALF

- A corrupt prison security officer arrested with two other traffickers in the capital city. The three were arrested during an attempt to sell two ivory tusks just after they arrived to the place of transaction by private bus and carried the contraband inside of a motel in a large bag. The prison officer massacred the elephant in the North-East of the country in order to trade the tusks.
- 4 traffickers arrested with 22 kg of ivory in South-East of the country. The first one, a Ghana nation-



3 ivory traffickers arrested with 2 tusks, one of them Cameroonian, the other one Togolese,



4 traffickers arrested with 22 kg of ivory in South-East of the country



A corrupt prison security officer arrested with two other traffickers in the capital city.

al, was arrested in the act selling one tusk, and he denounced the second trafficker, who was arrested soon after. Further interrogation then led to revealing the whole trafficking ring, and two more traffickers were arrested in their village near Doubinda forest, an area known for rampant poaching.

- 3 ivory traffickers arrested with 2 tusks, one of them Cameroonian, the other one Togolese, in the North of the country. The two were arrested during an attempt to trade the tusks. They soon denounced a third trafficker that was swiftly arrested on the same day.
- An ivory trafficker was arrested with a tusk after two months on a run. He escaped when other members of the ring were arrested in April with 16 tusks. He was arrested at his home.
- 12 ivory traffickers were condemned and sentenced to jail, however their sentences vary from one to three months only. The maximum penalty for wildlife trafficking in Gabon is 6 months, which is one of the weakest in Africa.

- Luc Mathot, the Coordinator, travelled to Niger to train the wildlife officers of W National Park on investigation techniques, intelligence analysis and managing legal cases in combating wildlife crime.
- An investigator travelled to Burkina Faso and Benin to support the investigations.



4 traffickers arrested with 22 kg of ivory

## Togo – EAGLE Togo

- The two legal advisers participated as experts invited to the national training workshop for INTERPOL's law enforcement officers on the fight against environmental crime. They presented the methods of EAGLE Togo work and supported the Ministry of Environment by preparation of interactive presentations on the provisions of the Togo Forest Code and the CITES convention. The workshop was organized by the INTERPOL Regional

Office for West Africa with the collaboration of BCN-INTERPOL Lomé. The legal advisers took the opportunity to reinforce the collaboration with the Police, Gendarmerie, Waters and Forests and Customs.

- The intensified recruitment process continued to strengthen the investigation department and improve the results of the project.

## Senegal – EAGLE Senegal

- The Coordinator met with the General Director of the National Police and his advisers. During this meeting, EAGLE Senegal initiated a partnership agreement with the General Directorate of Police (DGP) of Senegal to fight against wildlife crime.
- The Coordinator held a meeting with represen-

tatives of the Drug Enforcement Administration (D.E.A) attached to the US Embassy in Dakar.

- The recruitment process for investigators was intensified and two investigators started their test period.

## Benin – AALF-B

- 3 ivory traffickers, one of them a local politician, arrested with two tusks. Two of them were arrested in the act after they arrived with the contraband concealed in a backpack. They revealed a third trafficker, who entrusted them to sell the ivory. He was arrested the next day, he turned out to be an elected local chief.
- 2 ivory traffickers arrested with three tusks. They were arrested shortly after they arrived to the place of transaction on a motorbike with the contraband. They denounced a third trafficker, an arrest warrant on him was issued immediately.
- The coordinator trained fifteen officers of the Republican Police at the Togo-Benin border on the fight against wildlife crime.
- The coordinator held a series of meetings with high officials, including the Director of W National Park, to reinforce a collaboration between AALF-



*3 ivory traffickers, one of them a local politician, arrested with two tusks*



*2 ivory traffickers arrested with three tusks*

Benin and the managers of the Directorate of Forest Administration, several State Counsels, Commissioners and Departmental Police Directors and others.

## Côte d'Ivoire – EAGLE Côte d'Ivoire

- The legal team followed and provided a legal support to a case of a drug trafficker, a member of an international syndicate of drug traffickers, arrested by UCT, who had 7 pieces of carved ivory in his possession.
- The legal team met the commissaire of the CAAT (Cellule Aéroportuaire Anti Trafic), a special unit based at the Abidjan Airport, in order to start a collaboration with them to be involved in the legal procedure when they seize illegal wildlife products or live animals.
- One investigator continued his test period.
- Gaspard Julien-laferrière, a supervolunteer, continued his mentoring and support to the management of the project.

- A legal advisor participated to a workshop for the program for biodiversity and climate change in West Africa, to help Ivory Coast, represented by the Ministry of Waters and Forests, to identify

the primary needs to fight wildlife crimes. Alongside EAGLE Côte d'Ivoire, the NGOs ACB CI and AMISTAD were present.

## Burkina Faso - EAGLE Burkina Faso

- Intensive recruitment process continued, three investigators started their test period.
- The Burkina Faso Coordinator joined Luc Mathot, the Founding Director, who travelled to Niger to train the wildlife officers of W National Park on investigation techniques, intelligence analysis and managing legal cases in combating wildlife crime.
- The legal advisor continued follow up the case of the 2 traffickers arrested with 2 lion skins and 3 leopard skins arrested in December 2018 as the judicial system in the country became functioning after being frozen due to 6-month long strike of the Penitentiary Security Guards.

## Headquarters

- Luc Mathot, the Founding Director, travelled to Niger to train the wildlife officers of W National Park on investigation techniques, intelligence analysis and managing legal cases in combating wildlife crime. The Burkina Faso Coordinator joined him for the training.

## 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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