



Wildlife Law

Enforcement Briefing

- ✓ **20 significant traffickers arrested this month**
- ✓ **Uganda: Replication launched with first wildlife law enforcement operation; two traffickers in hippo ivory and buffalo horns arrested**
- ✓ **Congo: Two Chinese arrested for pangolin scales and ivory trafficking; one arrested for bribery and rearrested after attempts at escaping through the airport**
- ✓ **Togo: Over 150 royal pythons seized and two traffickers arrested**
- ✓ **Cameroon: Retired public official arrested for elephant parts trafficking**

Summary

This month was marked by the launch of wildlife enforcement operations in Uganda, the newest and 9th EAGLE replication of the network, with the arrest of two traffickers in hippo ivory and buffalo horns. Many good arrest operations were carried out in Cameroon, Togo, Congo, Gabon and Benin. 3 Chinese nationals were arrested during two separate operations in Congo over giant pangolin scales and ivory trafficking, one of them arrested for bribery. In Gabon, two, including a council official, were arrested for ivory trafficking. In Togo, 150 royal pythons were seized during an operation that saw the arrest of two traffic-

The PALF sniffer dogs are bringing more and more success!



kers and in Benin, two were arrested for trafficking in 34 freshwater turtles, crocodiles and Sitatunga skins. In Cameroon, 4 arrest operations were carried out leading to the arrest of 9 traffickers including 3 for ivory trafficking, one for ape skull trafficking, 2 for trafficking in primates and elephant parts and lastly 3 for trafficking in 31 sea turtle shells.

Court rulings were passed in three countries. A 3-year deterring sentence was given to the trafficker behind the seizure of 1885 kg of meat in Labe, Guinea who is presently on the run while the two others implicated in the affair were handed suspended sentences

and this was also the case in Cameroon where a court handed a one-year suspended sentence for 3 months to a leopard skin trafficker. Two court rulings in Gabon sent five to prison for wildlife trafficking and offences related to illegal wood commerce.

Cameroon – LAGA

- 9 significant traffickers arrested this month.
- Two operations carried out in swift succession led to the seizure of 31 sea turtle shells and the arrest of 3 traffickers in Kribi, South Cameroon and the uncovering of corruption attempts by the wildlife official in charge of the operations that attempted not to forward the traffickers to court.



Three ivory traffickers operating as a team with each playing a specific role were arrested. One of the three is a teacher.

- Arrest of 3 ivory traffickers in Santchou, West region following their attempts at selling two ivory tusks. The team of traffickers was discovered to be well organised and each has a specific task to carry out with a member of the team playing the role of a supplier of the tusks, a second that of a middleman or negotiator in charge of setting up the deals and the third being a salesman with marketing and pricing duties; just as sophisticated networks run their deals.
- 2 traffickers arrested in Tonga, West for trafficking in elephant and primates parts. One of the two is a retired public official. They admitted the elephant was poached in Waza national park in the north of the country, where LAGA has high suspicion for complicity for a while and where LAGA got earlier arrested a corrupt trafficker wildlife officer. The wider corruption situation protected the corrupt ecoguard and now there is another opportunity to try to clean up Waza. On top of it the area is now at risk of the terrorist group Boko haram that may look at ivory as an additional source of financing their activities, hence the need to investigate closely any ivory trafficking related to the area.

- 18 ape skulls including 14 chimpanzee and 4 gorilla skulls were recovered from an ape trafficker who was arrested in Ambam, South. He supplies ammunition to employed poachers sent to poach great apes for him to sell their parts.
- Several meetings were held with state prosecutors in Bangangte, Ambam, Dschang and Bonanjo, Douala, Ntui and Batouri. A meeting was equally held with the Littoral regional wildlife delegate and the Ngambe Tikar divisional wildlife delegate. Other meetings were also held with an official from the Deng Deng national park, with the Director of France-based association *Sauvegarde Faune Sauvage*, with an official from the Prague Zoo, two American researchers from C4ADS and the deputy director attended a dinner session at the residence of the US Ambassador in Yaounde.
- An American TV crew covered LAGA's work an arrest operations, filming a documentary on the African forest elephant crisis.



31 sea turtle shells were seized and 3 traffickers were arrested in Kribi, South Cameroon

Congo – PALF

- Chinese trafficker arrested with ivory and pangolin scales thanks to detection by one of the PALF sniffer dogs. This man was rearrested at the airport after PALF received information that he was trying to flee the country by plane.
- A Chinese man arrested for trafficking pangolin scales in northern Congo.
- Another Chinese arrested for attempting to bribe his colleague out of facing justice with 1 million CFA (about \$2,000)
- Chadian activist trained for EAGLE Replication in Chad
- Legal expert trained for Conkouati-Douli National Park, on Congo's coast



Our sniffer dogs unit nabbed a Chinese trafficker with three sacks of pangolin scales in north Congo. When another Chinese came to bribe out his accomplice with about \$2,000 The team ensured he gets arrested for corruption



Gabon – AALF

- Arrest of two ivory traffickers, one of which is a council official, in Moanda in the Haut Ogooué Province for illegal possession of two ivory tusks.
- Two ivory traffickers who were arrested in Oyem, they were found guilty of poaching protected wildlife species and illegal possession of ivory tusks. They were sentenced to 6 months imprisonment and ordered to pay a fine of 1 million CFA F and 500 000 CFA F as damages.
- Court rulings against KONATE Idrissa GUISSAGUILIBA Lawrence, MBOUNGA Jean-Yves, and Erick MATSIEGUI Hassoumi Hamani in Mouila with the first found guilty of illegal possession, circulation and commercialization of ivory and sentenced to 6 months imprisonment, the second found guilty of poaching, possession and circulation of totally protected wildlife species and sentenced to 6 months imprisonment while the third was convicted for illegal possession, circulation and complicity in the trafficking of ivory and sentenced to 3 months imprisonment. They were

given fines ranging from 200 00 to 400000 CFA F and ordered to pay damages ranging from 1 million to 3 million CFA F.

A council worker and a teacher were arrested for trafficking in these elephant tusks.



Guinea – Conakry – GALF

- Activating wildlife control at the airport in Conakry with the implication of GALF and the team consist of police officers from the Central Anti-drugs and Customs Office (OCAD) and 2 GALF workers. Random control missions put in place within the freight and luggage departments.
- Fugitive in Labe bushmeat trafficking case given 3 years imprisonment, ordered to pay 10 million GNF and the issuing of an arrest warrant against him while his co-authors, three in number, were given 6 months suspended sentence and fines of 90 000 GNF.
- Legal department was guest on Radio Renaissance FM talkshow „Parlons Environnement“ and focus was on the arrest of the trafficker in turtles, crocs and pythons.



Radio talkshow in Guinea with GALF focusing on the arrest on the of trafficker in turtles, crocs and pythons earlier

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- Within the framework of the EAGLE capacity building and exchange program, Perrine Odier of AALF-B has arrived on mission with GALF.
- Investigator exchange with another EAGLE member occurred this month.
- Support mission of the expatriate financial assistance of GALF in Guinea, Cécile Bloch
- Support mission of the coordinator of GALF in Guinea, Charlotte Houpline

Togo – TALFF

- 2 Togolese royal python traffickers arrested with 150 royal pythons found in their possession. The traffickers were arrested after investigators found out that they were importing the pythons from Ghana and selling mostly for Asian and local restaurants.
- Several investigators missions were organized on ivory, marine turtles, trafficking in manatees and pythons in Togo.
- Several meetings with the French Embassy and the European Union delegation to Togo about the need to strengthen collaboration with the TALFF project.
- 15 jail visits were organized to ensure that the traffickers are still in jail
- Several legal follow-up of

cases were done and the TALFF team met with the examining judge to discuss how to move faster with some cases.

Investigators' groundwork in Togo led to the seizure of 150 royal pythons from 2 traffickers as they were about to sell them.



C.A.R – RALF

- RALF project is frozen because of security problems in that country, no veritable activity was

undertaken. This situation may continue for the next couple of months.

SENEGAL - SALF

- Investigations into parrots, ivory and shark fin trafficking in Dakar and the identification of new traffickers.
- Legal follow-up of the case against the traffickers of Nigerien nationality arrested with 2,753 wildlife products. The judgement report has been done

and signed to be forwarded rapidly to the appeal court.

- Support mission of the coordinator of GALF and SALF in Guinea
- Support mission of the financial assistance (expatriate) of GALF and SALF in Guinea

Benin – AALF-B

- Arrest of trafficker over the trafficking of 34 freshwater turtles, 4 crocodiles and 2 Sitatunga antelope skins and follow-up at the judicial police and the procedure forwarding the matter to the state prosecutor.
- Follow-up on the matter concerning the release of seized live animals held by Nature Tropicale in a protected area.
- Follow-up of the dossier on establishment partnership with the customs department
- Recruitment process to get investigators and jurist was continued during the month.

34 freshwater turtles alongside 4 crocodiles were also seized from the trafficker in Benin



Sitatunga antelope skins were seized from a trafficker in Benin



Barrister **Vincent Opyene** has been the first wildlife prosecutor of Uganda and built the legal unit of Uganda Wildlife Authority. Following a training in LAGA, Vincent vowed to stand up against corruption and do more from the outside to all the problems he witnessed first hand from the inside.

Vincent then resigned and founded NRCN (Natural Resources Conservation Network) with the intent of starting an EAGLE replication and use his vast experience working with the court as well as wildlife authorities and forces of law and order to get major wildlife traffickers behind bars. This month this ambition started to become a reality.



Uganda - EAGLE Uganda

- NCRN led by Vincent Opyene started EAGLE work.
- Ofir Drori conducts a mission in Uganda for launching the 9th replication in the EAGLE Network.
- Recruitment of investigators was carried along training of the existing team.
- Investigations continue on the latest seizure of ivory and pangolin scales at the Entebbe airport.
- First wildlife law enforcement operation carried out within the EAGLE framework and two arrested for illegal possession of 4 buffalo horns and 38 hippo ivory tusks.



Uganda joins the EAGLE network with a startling operation: 36 hippo ivory tusks and 4 buffalo horns. Welcome to the network.

Headquarters

- Three positions out of four of the EAGLE Central Coordination Unit occupied.
- Ofir Drori conducted a mission in Uganda for launching the 9th Replication of the EAGLE Network and the first one in East Africa.
- EAGLE participated and was mentioned many times in the EU strategy for Africa meeting in Brussels.
- Three EAGLE members participated in an anti-corruption meeting in Ethiopia. The UN Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) coalition met to look at using the convention for different fights, among which is wildlife trafficking.
- Ofir Drori and Naftali Honig met in Congo and discussed EAGLE strategy and potential replications in Chad and DRC.

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 eight 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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