



EAGLE

Wildlife Law Enforcement Briefing

- ✓ *27 wildlife traffickers arrested in 6 countries*
- ✓ *2 Chinese arrested and 5.4 tons of pangolin scales seized in Cameroon, largest of its kind in Central Africa history.*
- ✓ *2 Spanish traffickers arrested at airport with 500 concealed birds in Senegal*
- ✓ *3 ivory traffickers arrested with 12 kg of ivory in Congo*
- ✓ *11 wildlife traffickers arrested in 6 operations in Uganda*



2 Chinese arrested and 5.4 tons of pangolin scales seized in Cameroon



2 Spanish traffickers arrested at airport with 500 concealed birds in Senegal

Summary

LAGA was behind the biggest pangolin scales operation in the history of central Africa. 2 Chinese nationals were arrested in Douala and 5.4 tons of pangolin scales seized, ready for illegal export to China. The scales were concealed in 300 boxes inside two solidly sealed containers. The shipment was declared as broken machines for export and export formalities were well underway. Six months ago, Hong Kong officials seized over 4 tons of pangolin scales that were trafficked from Cameroon. This two seizures of 10 tons in total within a very short period demonstrate the magnitude of pangolin scale trafficking and the role played by some Chinese nationals in the country. These seizures represent between 10,000 - 20,000 killed pangolins.

2 Spanish traffickers were arrested at airport in Senegal with 500 birds. SALF was asked for assistance immediately after the arrest. The two professional traffickers concealed 500 birds of 14 protected species in their luggage in a sophisticated modus operandi trying to smuggle them to Spain. More than 300 birds were already dead from suffocation at the time of arrest.



2 Spanish traffickers were arrested at airport in Senegal with 500 birds.

In Guinea a trafficker was arrested with 22 skins and 30 more parts of skins of other protected animals including a leopard, clamping down on trafficking between 4 countries. The woman has been trafficking wildlife products since 2010 in the area near the borders with Liberia and Sierra Leone, trafficking skins cross-border. The leopard skin was trafficked from Mali.



3 ivory traffickers were arrested with 12 kg of ivory

3 ivory traffickers were arrested with 12 kg of ivory and a long time operating ring of traffickers was crushed in Congo. Two of them were activating groups of poachers and provided them with ammunition and weapons. They were carrying the 2 tusks from two different elephants in a suitcase in an attempt to conceal its transportation to a town for sale. 6 traffickers arrested in Gabon, 2 of them ivory traffickers and 4 leopard skin traffickers.

11 wildlife traffickers were arrested in Uganda in 6 operations. 6 of them were ivory traffickers. 3 ivory traffickers were arrested with 2 tusks weighting 27 kg, coming from a freshly massacred elephant. After the arrest they led the team to the place where the elephant was killed. It was at a farm belonging to Sam Childers, known as Machine Gun Preacher, who dedicates his life to help children in the war zone of Sudan. Sam accepted that his security guard was the one who shot the elephant and is cooperating with police on arresting the man, who was on the run. 3 other arrested criminals were trafficking hippo ivory.

Cameroon – LAGA

■ LAGA was behind the biggest pangolin scales operation in the history of central Africa. 2 Chinese nationals arrested and 5.4 tons of pangolin scales seized, ready for illegal export to China. The scales were concealed in 300 boxes inside two solidly welded sealed containers. The arresting team had to call in a welder who spent several

hours to cut open iron boxes welded into frames inside the containers. The shipment was declared as broken machines for export, they were ready for shipment and export formalities were well underway. Six months ago, Hong Kong officials seized over 4 tons of pangolin scales that were trafficked from Cameroon. This two seizures of 10 tons in total within a very short period demonstrate the magnitude of pangolin scale trafficking and the role played by some Chinese nationals in the country. These seizures represent between 10,000 - 20,000 killed pangolins.

■ 2 traffickers arrested with 3 zebra skins, a leopard skin and several pieces of carved ivory. One of the traffickers was selling art objects in front of a popular bank in the capital city, while the second trafficker is a sculptor who carves ivory among



2 Chinese nationals arrested and 5.4 tons of pangolin scales seized

2 traffickers arrested with 3 zebra skins

other products. The zebra skins were trafficked all the way from Tanzania, Cameroon is not a zebra range state and has no populations of zebras existing in the wild. This is the first ever arrest operation involving zebra species in the country. This operation, like several recent others in West Africa, demonstrates the wildlife trafficking connections between East Africa to Central and West Africa.

- A record breaking 8 court judgements were passed against 13 wildlife traffickers, convicting them to prison sentences of varying degree of severity with the maximum penalty of 3 years given to two ape traffickers. They were ordered to pay civil damages and fines over \$274,000 during the court rulings.

The largest seizure of pangolin scales in Central Africa history, two Chinese arrested



2 Chinese arrested and 5.4 tons of pangolin scales seized in Cameroon

LAGA's investigation led to one of the largest seizures of pangolin scales in the Central African sub-region. In January 2 Chinese traffickers were arrested in the action and 5.4 tons of pangolin scales were seized. Over 300 boxes full of pangolin scales were concealed in two solidly sealed and welded containers in a Douala-based company run by Chinese nationals.

The traffickers tried several evasion tactics to prevent the team from opening the containers despite the presentation of a search warrant. But then two pieces of pangolin scales were found in the area. The arresting team spent several hours trying to cut open the metal containers, but in the end had to engage a welder. When they

finally succeeded in cutting the metal open, they discovered iron boxes, welded into frames and covered with metal to disguise them when passed through scanners at the ports. The two managers claimed the shipment contained broken machines to be exported to China for repairs.

The containers had been packed ready for shipment out of the country since a month ago and formalities were being carried out by the traffickers to ensure smooth passage at the ports.

The arrest is another demonstration of the tragic magnitude of pangolin scales trafficking and the role played by some Chinese nationals in it. Last June over 4 tons of pangolin scales exported from Cameroon were seized in Hong Kong. These two seizures together represent between 10,000 and 20,000 pangolins slaughtered in the wild.

During the last Conference of Parties of CITES held in South Africa in September 2016, pangolins were uplisted into Appendix I. That represents the category of wildlife with the highest levels of protection. Wildlife law enforcement efforts aimed at stopping big pangolin scale traffickers became a priority after this reclassification.



Giant ground pangolin in Cameroon. Credit: Ekwoge Abwe / Zoological Society of San Diego & Drexel University.

Congo – PALF

- 3 ivory traffickers arrested with 12 kg of ivory and a long time operating ring of poaching and trafficking was crushed. Two of them were heads of groups of poachers and provided them with ammunition and weapons. They were carrying the 2 tusks from two different elephants in a suitcase in an attempt to conceal its transportation to a town for sale. In spite of an aggressive resistance, all three of them ended behind bars. One of the traffickers is a driver of a Chinese logging company.
- The coordinator met with the Minister of the Envi-

ronment to discuss ongoing cases of wildlife trafficking and to progress in the process of the signature of the agreement between PALF and the Ministry.

- Luc Mathot conducted a mission to Congo in order to support PALF in external relations and development of the project.
- Intense recruitment process continued and 3 legal advisers continued their test period. The new accountant finished his test period and became a member of the team.



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Gabon – AALF

- An ivory trafficker arrested with 2 tusks cut in 4 pieces. He brought them to the capital city concealed in a back pack, from an area with large population of elephants. He was arrested in the act during an attempt to sell them.
- An ivory trafficker arrested with 2 tusks in the northeast of the country. He concealed the contraband, weighting 10 kg, in a bag and brought it to the capital of the province where he attempted to sell it in a hotel near the airport. He was also carrying a saw, which he used to cut the tusks into 4 pieces. The investigation revealed that



An ivory trafficker arrested with 2 tusks



he was a repeat offender, already prosecuted for illegal possession of weapons.

- 4 traffickers arrested with 2 leopard skins in Lambaréné. Two of them arrived to the town, where they attempted to sell the skins, but were arrested in the act instead. Later they revealed two more accomplices, who were also arrested the same evening
- Series of meetings were held with prosecutors, the Anti-Poaching Director, the Secretary General of the Ministry of Water and Forests and other authorities.
- The coordinator travelled to Congo to support PALF in external relations and development of the project.
- The head of investigations travelled to Togo to support investigations and to train investigators.
- Cecile Bloch, the coordination assistant of SALF, joined the Gabon team for training as a part of her preparation for being appointed the Coordinator of SALF.

Republic of Guinea – GALF

■ A trafficker arrested with 22 skins and 30 more parts of skins of other protected animals including a leopard, clamping down on trafficking between 4 countries. The woman, who was arrested in the south of the country, has been trafficking wildlife products since 2010 in the area near and across the borders with Liberia, Sierra Leone and other countries. The leopard skin was trafficked from Mali.

■ A legal adviser travelled to Ivory Coast to provide a legal support in the case of Traoré family, one of the largest ape trafficking networks in Africa. The members of the gang were arrested in December.

■ The coordinator held a meeting with the British Ambassador to discuss the support of law enforcement in the case of chimpanzee traffickers in Ivory Coast.

■ He also met with the Political Advisor of the US Ambassa-

dor to discuss the support to the wildlife law enforcement and GALF activities.

- Intense recruitment process continued to strengthen the investigation and legal departments.
- GALF moved to a new office with better location which provides better security and internet connection.



A trafficker arrested with 22 skins

Togo – TALFF

- January was the kick-off for EAGLE - Togo. Ofir Drori, the founding director, arrived to support the start of the new project. Rens Ilgen, the replication assistant officer, started a long term mission to support building the project.
- A meeting was held with the Minister of Environment and Forest Resources and his collaborators (Secretary General, Director of Forest Inspection, Director of Forest Resources and Director of Protected Areas) to present him the phase II of the project and prospects for the collaboration agreement.
- A meeting was held with The Secretary General of the Minister of Justice and The Secretary General of the Minister of Security and Civil Protection to present them the new project and the prospects for collaboration.
- Series of meetings with ambassadors were organized, namely the EU Ambassador, French and German Ambassadors to inform them about the development of the project and to discuss cooperation.
- Series of meetings were held with other authorities, namely the Prosecutor of the Republic and the Judge of the 7th Office of the Court of Lomé, the Director of the Central Office for the Control of Illicit Trafficking in Drugs and Money Laundering (OCRTIDB) and the Head of the Mixed Unit for Controlling Containers (UMCC), the Director of the Central Directorate of the Judicial Police and the Chief INTERPOL, the Director of Investigation and Information Services (SRI) of the Gendarmerie and others.
- The head of investigation department from Gabon arrived to Togo to support investigations and to train investigators.
- Intensive recruitment process brought in new legal advisors, on-line investigator and an accountant, who started their test period.
- A new office was selected and the works on registration of EAGLE-Togo continued.

Senegal - SALF

- 2 Spanish traffickers arrested at the airport with 500 concealed birds. SALF was asked for assis-



The traffickers concealed 500 birds of in their luggage in a sophisticated modus operandi trying to smuggle them to Spain.

tance immediately after the arrest. The two professional traffickers concealed 500 birds of 14 protected species in their luggage in a sophisticated modus operandi trying to smuggle them to Spain. More than 300 birds were already dead from suffocation at the time of arrest. Cecile and the SALF team fought many attempts to liberate the two, as they are imprisoned while on trial.

- A meeting was held with the US Ambassador to discuss cooperation in the law enforcement and support to SALF project.

- Cecile Bloch, the coordination assistant, joined the Gabon team for training as a part of her preparation for being appointed the Coordinator of SALF.



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- Charlotte Houpline, the WARA director, conducted mission to Ivory Coast to support preparation of the new replication.

Benin – AALF-B

- 2 traffickers arrested with 16 sea-turtle shells in the capital city. They brought the shells on two motor-bikes to a bar, where they attempted to sell them, but they were arrested in the act instead. The two brothers remained behind bars awaiting the trial.
- The coordinator had a presentation at the Anti-Poaching Workshop, organized by French Cooperation. About 30 participants from magistrates, police officers, gendarmes, foresters and representatives of AVIGREF, NGOs, researches and representatives of African Parks Network used this opportunity to exchange experiences in preservation of nature and security of Benin National Parks.
- The coordinator actively participated at the Meeting of Ministers in charge of Protected Areas, Fisheries Resources and Tourism of Benin, Burkina

Faso and Niger on the management of shared W-Arly-Pendjari transboundary complex of National Parks. The objective of the meeting was better harmonization of approaches to protect, secure and enhance the biodiversity of the W-Arly-Pendjari complex.



2 traffickers arrested with 16 sea-turtle shells in the capital city.

Uganda - EAGLE Uganda

- 2 traffickers arrested in the capital city with 68 hippo teeth. The first trafficker was arrested at a gas station during an attempt to sell the contraband. A few hours later his accomplice, an insurance agent, was arrested when he went to pick up the money for transaction.
- 2 traffickers arrested in the capital city with a lion's skin and 12kg of pangolin scales. One of them is a police constable while the other one is an owner of a company. The company owner has been involved in trafficking including ivory for a long time. The lion skin was trafficked from northern Kenya.
- A trafficker arrested with 24 hippo teeth in the north of the country. He had been collaborating with poachers along the Nile River while working as a ferry clerk. He brought the contraband concealed in a plastic sac to the nearby town with an intention to sell it. However, he was arrested in the act and now remains behind bars.
- 2 ivory traffickers arrested with 58 pieces of ivory, weighting 21 kg. The traffickers admitted that the ivory was smuggled from DRC by another accomplice and then concealed underground. Later they brought it in a town with an intention to sell it.
- 3 ivory traffickers arrested with 2 tusks weighting 27 kg in Northern Uganda. The tusks came from a freshly massacred elephant. After the arrest they led the team to the place where the elephant was killed. It was at a farm belonging to Sam Childers, known as Machine Gun Preacher, who dedicates his life to help children in the war zone of Sudan. Sam accepted that his security guard was the one who shot the elephant and is cooperating with police on arresting the man, who was on the run. The traffickers remain behind bars and are waiting for trials.
- An ivory trafficker arrested in the north of the country with two tusks, weighting 10.5 kg. He was abusing a fishing permit issued by Uganda Wildlife Authority to traffic the contraband from the Karuma Wildlife Reserve. He was swiftly prosecuted and sentenced to one year imprisonment with no option of a fine.
- Another good deterring sentence was reached when 2 traffickers, arrested in September with a leopard skin, were prosecuted and sentenced to 3 years imprisonment.
- Dr. Daphne from USFWS visited the team for 5 days and together with the coordinator met with the head of the new specialized wildlife court at Buganda Road Court and officials from the ministry of wildlife Tourism and Antiquities. The discussions focused on improvement of arrest and prosecution of wildlife crime in Uganda. Dr. Daphne and the team also conducted a field trip to Murchison National Park. The visit enabled the new team members to observe in the wild the key species threatened by the illegal trade the team is set to combat.



3 ivory traffickers arrested with 2 tusks weighting 27 kg in Northern Uganda. The tusks came from a freshly massacred elephant.

Madagascar - ALARM

- The coordinator met with the Minister of Justice, the Director general of the Independent Anti-Corruption Bureau and Transparency International-Initiative Madagascar to discuss the case of the two traffickers, sentenced in November and later released during an appeal in December. The minister committed to follow closely the case, to sanction the magistrates and to speed up the judgment on the appeal.
- The recruitment process was intensified to find a coordination assistant, new media officer and to strengthen the investigation and legal teams of the ALARM project.

Headquarters

- Ofir Drori, the founding director, arrived to Togo to restart the Togo replication. Rens Ilgen, the Replication Assistant Officer, started a long term mission to support building the project.
- Luc Mathot conducted a mission to Congo to support PALF in external relations and development of the project.
- Charlotte Houpline, the WARA director, conducted a mission to Ivory Coast to support preparation of the new replication and to support the government in the case of the ape trafficking arrests

International Media Coverage

- Charlotte and the fight of the GALF team against the traffic of chimpanzees in Guinea were the heroes of the REPORTAGES on TF1 (in French)

[Link to the video](#)

- Great apes and greater challenges: Trafficking in Cameroon – article on Mongabay:

[Link to the article](#)

In January, US Fish and Wildlife Service highlighted a selection of success stories from 2016 from EAGLE Network. They published them on Facebook, Twitter and their website.

[Link to the article](#)

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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