



EAGLE

# Wildlife Law

# Enforcement Briefing

- ✓ **27 traffickers arrested this month in 4 countries**
- ✓ **4 corrupted enforcement officials were arrested or are under investigation for involvement in wildlife trafficking**
- ✓ **3 ivory traffickers arrested in Uganda in two operations with 89 kg of ivory**
- ✓ **3 ivory traffickers arrested with 40.5 kg ivory in Gabon**
- ✓ **3 cybercriminals arrested in Cameroon with falsified CITES permits advertising lions and cheetahs for online sale**
- ✓ **A trafficker arrested in Togo with 80 kg of shark fins**
- ✓ **9 leopard skin traffickers arrested in 3 operations in Uganda**

## Summary

The New Year started with intensive push arresting 27 traffickers in 4 countries.

EAGLE Uganda in the amazing run to combat the illegal wildlife trade brought 13 traffickers behind bars. 2 ivory traffickers were arrested with 69 kg ivory in an operation, carried out by EAGLE Uganda team and Police forces. At the time of the arrest, one of the traffickers was driving the contraband and the others in the company of a corrupt policeman, who escorted the consignment and provided security for the dealers. The traffickers then confessed that this police officer was assigned by his superior to participate in the crime. The two police officers are under investigation. Uganda operations continued with and an arrest of an ivory trafficker with 20 kg ivory, a 25 year old Guinean citizen, during an attempt to sell two large elephant tusks. In 3 separated operation in Uganda 9 leopard skin traffickers were arrested with 6 leopard skins.

2 successful operations in Gabon led to arresting 3 ivory traffickers with 40.5 kg ivory and 4 leopard skin traffickers with 2 leopard skins.

A trafficker arrested in Togo with 80 kg of shark fins. TALFF team and the Togolese authorities done great work in intercepting this Ghanaian based in Nigeria



*4 traffickers arrested in Uganda with 4 leopard skins, 2 of them corrupt members of different kind of defence forces.*

on the Togo - Benin border hiding the fins in travel bags. He travelled with them from Nigeria to Ghana with intention to sell them.

Luc Mathot from Steering Group and Nicolas Charron from CCU conducted a supporting mission to Congo

to work on reconstruction of the team, recruitment process, to train the team on procedures and security and to conduct meetings with the government authorities, embassies and NGOs in the country.

## Cameroon – LAGA

- 3 cybercriminals were arrested after advertising for sale two lion cubs and two cheetah cubs through the internet. After months of collaborative efforts and days of patience in Douala waiting for the cybercriminals to make a move, LAGA, the team of wildlife officials and the police carried out the operation at the last day of January. The first two criminals were arrested in bank trying to get the money for their transactions, the third one, the boss of the whole group, was arrested soon afterwards. This was not the first attempt by the three who are all family members: two brothers are law students at the University and a cousin of theirs who is an accountant and the boss of the gang. They had used forged CITES permits with a fake signatures of the wildlife minister among other forged documents. Though they are most likely scammers, since the profit from the illegal trade exceeds the one from scamming, this is established as a gateway to real illegal trade.
- A meeting was held with colleagues from the Pangolin Mentor Programme of the US Fish and Wildlife Service. LAGA is one of the Mentors and shall be training legal advisers of the programme on wildlife law enforcement.



*One of the 3 cybercriminals arrested after advertising for sale two lion cubs and two cheetah cubs through the internet.*

## Congo – PALF

- PALF team is under reconstruction. Luc Mathot from Steering Group and Nicolas Charron conducted a supporting mission to recruit new team members, to train the team on procedures and to conduct meetings with the important government officials, ambassadors and NGOs in the country.
- Legal team continued in follow up of several cases and jail visits
- Legal, Investigator and media departments were trained on the procedures, data security, managing ICS, recruitment, security analysis and activism.

- Several meetings were held during the mission of Luc Mathot. Meeting with the Director of Cabinet of the Minister of Forest Economy and Sustainable Development on repositioning PALF through improving the quality and level of communication with the supervisory ministry and the consortium (Wildlife Conservation Society and The Aspinall Foundation). The main goal was to clarify the situation and future for PALF, to start the process of the renewal of the Memorandum of Understanding and to revive the project on a new base.
- Meetings were held with the representatives of Wildlife Conservation Society and The Aspinall

Foundation about the ways of future cooperation and practical steps in managing PALF, to prepare and formulize the new Consortium WCS-TAF-EAGLE.

- Meeting with the Ambassador of the Delegation of the European Union to seek support from the EU not only to repositioning and project sustainability, but also for support in the arrest operation, convicting the traffickers arrested and executing the sentences.
- More meetings were held with representatives of UN, Ministry of Justice, wildlife officers and conservators and other officials.

## Gabon – AALF & ALEFI

- 3 ivory traffickers arrested with 40.5 kg ivory in Gabon. AALF team conducted this operation together with Juridical Police while the coordinator was in Congo helping PALF project. The 3 were arrested during an attempt to sell 4 ivory tusks.
- 5 traffickers arrested trying to sell 2 leopard skins. The first four of them (2 traffickers, a poacher and their driver) were arrested in a swift operation carried out by the Judicial Police with the assistance of the Provincial Directorate of Water and Forests and AALF team. After arrival to the police station they named a fifth accomplice as a bigger trafficker. After he was also arrested, all of them pleaded guilty. A weapon with calibre of 12, used to killing big mammals, leopards and other wildlife was also seized during the operation.
- 2 traffickers, arrested in December 2015 in a joint operation of AALF and police with 206 kg of ivory were sentenced to 6 months of imprisonment and 35,000 USD in damages. As one of them is a forest official, he is going to be charged also for the

offense of corruption, which is still going to the judge's office.

- The coordinator of AALF conducted a mission to PALF Congo to support the process of PALF transformation, to meet with the important partners in the country and to help train and stabilize the team.



*3 ivory traffickers arrested with 40.5 kg ivory in Gabon.*



# Guinea – Conakry – GALF

- The Monitoring and Evaluation Officer travelled to Guinea to train the GALF team on security, reporting, following procedure manual and fostering activism.
- Charlotte Houpline, the director of WARA and Cecile Bloch, the assistant of coordinator of SALF arrived to Guinea to meet with government authorities and international community, to train new accountant and provide support with reporting.
- The process of recruitment of new legal advisers and investigators started.
- WARA director met with the representatives of the Delegation of EU, to participate at the evaluation of the report on the progress of the country on the implementation of recommendations made by the CITES secretariat in 2011, .
- WARA director met with the Ambassador of the United States of America to discuss strengthening of collaboration between the Ministry of Environment and GALF Project.
- Meeting with the Political Counselor of the US Embassy in Conakry was held to discuss further cooperation.

# Togo – TALFF

- A trafficker arrested with 80 kg of shark fins. TALFF team and the Togolese authorities done great work in intercepting this Ghanaian based in Nigeria on the Togo - Benin border hiding the fins in travel bags. He travelled with them from Nigeria to Ghana with intention to sell them.
- A trafficker arrested with 3 sea turtle shells. He is a notorious trafficker and long term illegal fisherman, who used to offer the illegally hunt animals to various customers.
- An ivory trafficker arrested with relatively small quantity of carved ivory - pipes and a cylinder
- Several meetings were held with different authorities to establish relations with them and in order to keep track of court cases, namely with the Prosecutors of the courts of Lome and Sokode; the



judge of the 7th cabinet of the court of Lome; the Representative of the administration (an official of the National Agency for Environmental Management: ANGE) court in wildlife matters; the Director and the Head of the Operations of OCRTIDB; the representative of INTERPOL and the representative of the West African Development Bank.



*A trafficker arrested with 80 kg of shark fins.*



The fins represent only 3% of the weight of sharks, but the illegal trade is focused on these high-valued parts for the preparation of soup in Asia. Fishermen throw the live finless sharks to the sea to die of suffocation, so there is more space on the ship for more fins, in a cruel and wasteful act.

Some estimates consider that over 100 million sharks are killed annually in the world. In recent decades, due to shark finning many shark species have already lost more than 50% of their population, or even 98% for some species. 25 species of sharks and rays can be extinct in our lifetime!

13 shark species are listed in the appendixes Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), which bans or regulates trade with them.

In spite of recently reduced consumption of shark fin in China shark fins are often trafficked in large quantities at the West Africa coast and illegally shipped to Asia.

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## SENEGAL - SALF

- The 3 bird traffickers arrested in November 2015 with 4 threatened Timneh parrots, 2 white pelicans and 10 turtles and convicted by the High Court of Dakar to serve 6 months in prison, were released in early January 2016 following a presidential pardon. Only for them?
- After obtaining the authorization to exist and operate in Senegal, SALF continued the procedure of reaching compliance with local legislation. The process of recruitment of activists for different departments (legal, investigation, accounting, media) is running.
- The coordination assistant of SALF travelled to Guinea for 10 days to support the training of GALF accounting department. The coordinator and director of WARA arrived to Guinea to meet with Government authorities and ambassadors.

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## Benin – AALF-B

- The legal team followed the case of ivory traffickers arrested in Cotonou by the Juridical police this January.
- A case of 400 kg of ivory seized by the Gendarmerie in Cotonou was followed.
- The assistant of the coordinator was invited to the Radio Ocean to speak about the role of the civil society in fighting poaching and environmental crime, and to the TV station BB24 to talk about the topic of punishments in wildlife crime.

- An event was held to celebrate the 20th anniversary of Nature Tropicale, the executive NGO of AALF-B project. The event included the day of Open Doors and was visited by wide public.
- 2 investigators were recruited and are on the test period. The recruitment process for legal advisers

and media department continues.

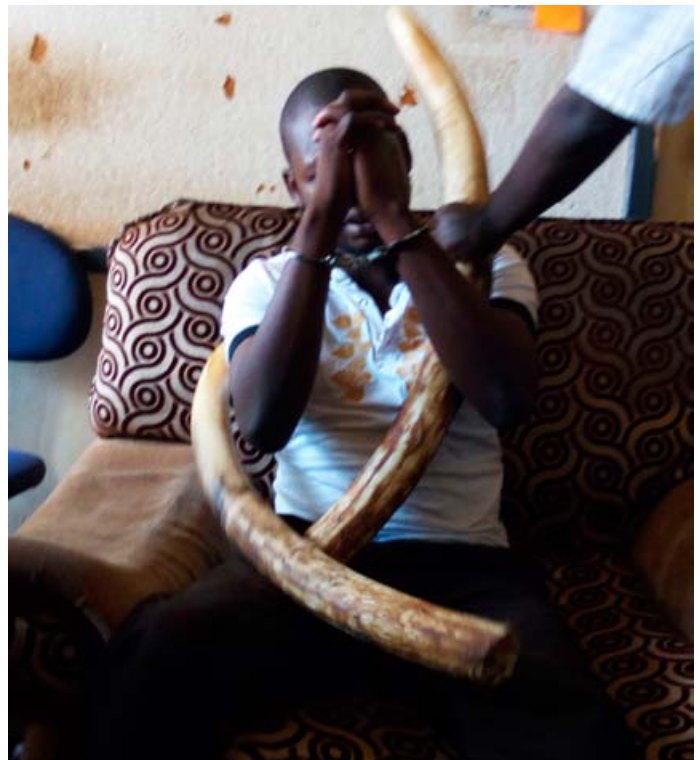
- A series of meetings were held to discuss and strengthen the fight against wildlife crime with the Procurator of Porto-Novo, the police commissioner, GIZ/PROAGRI, Interpol and French Embassy

## Uganda - EAGLE Uganda

- 2 ivory traffickers arrested with 69 kg ivory in an operation, carried out by EAGLE Uganda team and Police forces. The traffickers were finally arrested after many months of investigations, having brought 20 tusks as a sample of 200 kg which they were willing to sell in case of a successful agreement with the buyers. At the time of arrest, one of the traffickers was driving the contraband and the others in the company of a corrupt policeman, who escorted the consignment and provided security for the dealers. The traffickers then confessed that this police officer was assigned by his superior to participate in the crime. The two police officers are under investigation, the General inspector of police and the General inspector of Government were contacted with an appeal to have the two officers investigated for their alleged involvement in the crime.
- An ivory trafficker with 20 kg ivory arrested in a joint operation of EAGLE Uganda and Police in Kampala. The trafficker is a 25 year old Guinean citizen, he was arrested during an attempt to sell two large pieces of pure elephant tusks. He brought these two tusks as a sample of the two tons which he and his accomplices were promising. His visa had expired 5 month before, he was staying in the country illegally. Joint investigation started with our GALF team in Guinea to find the links between the two countries.
- A trafficker arrested with a leopard skin. He was a head of a gang of traffickers, killing wildlife in Kidepo Valley National Park and terrorizing the rangers there. Though he is a son of a bishop, the moral code has obviously no influence on him, as when he was brought to the police station, first what he heard was: "You? Again?" as he is repeat offender who was arrested for illegal trade in ivory but because of his high level connection with the politicians and military officers his case was never

brought to court.

- 3 Rwandese traffickers crossing the border with a leopard skin were arrested. They will be charged of both wildlife trafficking as well as illegal crossing the border.
- 4 traffickers arrested in the east of the country with 4 leopard skins, 2 of them corrupt members of different kind of defence forces. Two separated investigations ended up in one joint operation of EAGLE Uganda and police forces in a well prepared ambush. The four traffickers travelling in one car were stopped on their way to the town, where they wanted to sell the skins. All were immediately arrested.
- A trafficker arrested with 89 kg of hippo teeth in the west of the country. He was swiftly prosecuted, found guilty and sentenced to 12 month imprisonment.



*An ivory trafficker with 20 kg ivory arrested in a joint operation of EAGLE Uganda and Police in Kampala.*



onment or pay a fine of 50 USD. The legal team of EAGLE Uganda immediately made an appeal against such a low punishment.

- The coordinator met the EU Ambassador in Uganda to discuss his support in addressing wildlife trafficking. A presentation on EAGLE Network's work was shared with him. The Ambassador agreed to support the work of the organization in Uganda.
- Another meeting with the same goal was held with an Attaché to the British High Commission, who was also pleased to support EAGLE Uganda's work.
- 2 new legal advisors and 3 new investigators started their test period.



3 Rwandese traffickers crossing the border with a leopard skin were arrested.

## Headquarters

- Luc Mathot from Steering Group and Nicolas Charron from CCU conducted a supporting mission to PALF, Congo, where the team is in reconstruction.
- Nicolas focused on recruitment of new team members and training the team on procedures, data security, managing ICS, recruitment, security analysis and activism.
- Luc Mathot held several important meetings, a meeting with the Director of Cabinet of the Minister of Forest Economy and Sustainable Development on repositioning PALF through improving

the quality and level of communication with the supervisory ministry and the consortium (Wildlife Conservation Society and The Aspinall Foundation); more meetings with the representatives of Wildlife Conservation Society and The Aspinall Foundation about the ways of future cooperation and practical steps in managing PALF, to prepare and formulize the new Consortium WCS-TAF-EAGLE, with Meeting with the EU Ambassador, representatives of UN, Ministry of Justice, wildlife officers and other officials.

## 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: investi-*

*gations, 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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