



Wildlife Law

Enforcement Briefing

- ✓ **39 traffickers arrested in 6 countries**
- ✓ **13 traffickers arrested in Uganda, 9 of them trafficking pangolin scales**
- ✓ **7 traffickers arrested in Cameroon, 3 of them trafficking ivory**
- ✓ **9 ivory traffickers arrested in Gabon**
- ✓ **7 international traffickers of elephant hair bracelets arrested in Senegal**

Summary

This month brought excellent results in most of the countries. A record of 39 traffickers arrested in 6 countries was achieved, a fruit of reacting to weaker results in previous months. EAGLE Uganda, established only in February this year, reached a significant number of 13 traffickers arrested, 9 of them in one operation, aiming to stop a wide network of traffickers in pangolin scales. 2 traffickers were arrested during an attempt to sell 2 young ostriches, a totally protected species in Uganda.

AALF team in Gabon succeeded in a crackdown arresting 9 ivory traffickers and seizing about 200 kg of ivory during four operations in different parts of the country. The fight against complicity intensified as 3 of the traffickers are military officers. During one of the operations 6 exceptionally large tusks were seized, each of them weighs about 25 kg. Another ivory trafficker was arrested with 5 tusks and 19 pieces, which were already prepared for making Hankos (Chinese name seals).

In a spectacular crackdown of a network of international traffickers in elephant hair bracelets in Senegal, 7 traffickers were arrested in Dakar and 459 bracelets seized with a minimum value of 65,000 USD. 3 significant ivory traffickers were arrested in Cameroon during 2 operations. They were trafficking ivory internationally, and were using trade in artifacts

as a cover for their illegal business. They were painting ivory pieces as wood to traffic the contraband across borders more easily. 4 ape traffickers were arrested in Cameroon with 11 chimpanzee skulls, a testimony for a massacre generated regularly by these traffickers

EAGLE trained a large group of officers from 6 African countries in ethics and anti-corruption in the International Law Enforcement Academy (ILEA).



2 traffickers arrested in Gabon with 150 kg of ivory, 6 tusks of 25 kg each.

Cameroon – LAGA

- A significant ivory trafficker arrested in Duala, with 44 carved ivory pieces. He had photos and images on his phone of the collection of ivory contraband. He used another trade - art dealing, as a front business for selling ivory products and he admitted painting ivory tusks and other contraband as wood to evade law enforcement efforts and traffic the contraband across borders. He has been in the business for a very long time.



Arrested trafficker has been sensitizing village communities on protecting the environment, perfect cover for his trafficking in ape skulls.

- 2 significant ivory traffickers were arrested in Yaounde, with 2 worked tusks and 27 other carved ivory pieces. They had built a formidable ivory trafficking team that had been functioning for over 20 years. They belong to an even bigger ivory trafficking ring made up by suppliers and middlemen. The two arrested are middlemen who get ivory from others and equally proceed to sell both nationally and internationally. Their phone contacts show many international links that are still being investigated. They equally use the front business of dealers in wood arts to cover their ivory trafficking.
- An ape trafficker arrested with 4 chimp skulls and one of a protected mandrill in a successful operation carried out in Bafia. Two of the chimp skulls were very fresh, of recently killed chimpanzees, and he admitted buying these couple of days earlier in a different town to sell them for a handsome profit in Bafia. The trafficker is said to be a community leader known for sensitizing local people on the necessity to protect the environment and apparently used this to cover wildlife trafficking.
- A trafficker arrested in Yaounde with 6 fresh chim-

panzee skulls. He travelled from Nanga Eboko, some 166 km from the capital city with the skulls firmly sealed in a cardboard box to protect the stinking skulls to draw attention to the nature of the contraband he was transporting. He planned to sell the skulls and move on to another town to buy pangolin scales as he is known to deal in many different types of wildlife contraband. He analyzed the prices of a kg of pangolin scales in rural and urban areas, indicating the profit margins to be obtained. He supplied ammunition to local poachers who fetched the wildlife species he requested.

- 2 traffickers arrested with 8 turtle shells and a chimp skull in Edea. One of the traffickers doubled as a commercial bus driver using this position to traffic protected species. They used to travel to the Douala-Edea reserve to buy contraband that has been poached in the reserve.. They are suspected of supplying larger quantities of wildlife including elephant parts.
- An Indian activist and conservationist completed a two-week long working visit at LAGA.



Expert trafficker at police station after arrest, he paints ivory to look like wood to evade law enforcement detection.

- LAGA's head of the investigation department returned to the country after a very successful trip to Senegal under the EAGLE exchange program.

A Senegalese investigator travelled to Cameroon for training and working session under the same program.

Congo – PALF

- A Senegalese ivory trafficker arrested in Brazzaville, selling ivory jewelry. 16 bracelets, 4 necklaces, 13 rings and 20 cigarette holders were among the ivory seized.
- 3 ivory traffickers were sentenced in Pointe-Noire thanks to an intensive work of PALF legal department. The procurator was proposing one year sentence, but while the jury was deliberating, they tried to flee. The PALF legal adviser followed them and together with Court Gendarmes brought them back to the court. They were then slammed to 2 years in prison.
- 380 kg of bushmeat including several totally protected species were seized and 5 traffickers arrested. In spite of the pressure of PALF activists, the traffickers were released, and the officers involved settled with fines. A number of the seized animals were Integrally Protected Species (the highest level of protection in Congo), namely gi-

ant pangolin and water chevrotain - species that often go unnoticed but for whom population data is limited.*



A Senegalese ivory trafficker arrested in Brazzaville, selling ivory jewelry.

* These arrests are not counted in the number of arrested traffickers for not meeting EAGLE Network's criteria.

Gabon – AALF

- AALF team in Gabon succeeded in a crackdown arresting 9 ivory traffickers and seizing about 200 kg of ivory. The fight against complicity intensified as 3 of the traffickers are military officers.
- An ivory trafficker was arrested for trafficking 5 tusks and 19 pieces of ivory in Port-Gentil in operation. The small pieces were already prepared for making Hankos (Chinese name seals). The pieces were to be sold to another trafficker who works with a Chadian trafficking ring, but the final destination was China, which was evident from the manufacturing the ivory pieces for future use. In total 22 kg of ivory was seized in this operation.
- 2 ivory traffickers were arrested with 4 tusks, weighing about 10 kg, in Libreville during a swift operation prepared by AALF team together with Judicial Police and the anti-poaching department. One of the traffickers is an air force soldier. According the Gabon law, he should be prosecuted



2 traffickers arrested in Gabon with 150 kg of ivory, 6 tusks of 25 kg each.

- and sentenced as any other citizen.
- 3 notorious ivory traffickers arrested in Oyem with 2 tusks, cut into 4 pieces during a joint operation of AALF, WWF and National Parks Agency toge-



An ivory trafficker was arrested with 5 tusks and 19 pieces of ivory already prepared for making Hankos (Chinese name seals).

ther with the police unit OCLAD. They declared that the ivory belonged to a military member, who was arrested 5 days later and is behind bars.

- 2 traffickers arrested in possession of 12 pieces of sawn ivory equal to 6 tusks totaling nearly 150 kg of ivory. Both of them remain in custody until a court hearing, which will start at the beginning of July. A military officer of major rank was involved and will be held responsible in front of the court for this crime. The elephant tusks of this size (each of them had about 25 kg)



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are in the illegal trade valued higher per kg than smaller pieces.

- The legal department followed-up 9 cases, 9 traffickers were arrested, 7 judgments obtained and 15 criminals were sentenced. Several others are awaiting trial.
- A legal adviser from Gabon travelled to Benin, where he started training of one legal adviser from AALF-B Benin and two from GALF Guinea within the EAGLE Network exchange program.

Guinea – Conakry – GALF

- GALF team participated in a national seminar revising environmental codes in Guinea, organized by the ministry of environment and led by the Canadian firm CERFO to address the gaps and increase the weak penalties, which are currently one year in prison maximum.
- GALF took part in a joint airport control operation at the Conakry International airport. GALF team participated in control of luggage for any illegal wildlife contraband while other collaborators controlled other aspects of legality and its inspection in commercial and private flights.
- In the fight against the illegal release of Yusuf Donzo and his accomplice, some success has

been achieved. The case was transferred to the Court of Appeal in Conakry and was referred to the General Counsel, the first hearing is expected to be scheduled soon.

- Following the trial of Chinese in the case of rhino horns and sea cucumbers, hearing was postponed to a later date for the purposes of an expert witness.
- Training of legal advisers continued, two of them traveled to Benin to be trained by a legal adviser from Gabon within EAGLE Network exchange program.
- Newly recruited investigator was put on a test period.

C.A.R – RALF

- RALF project is frozen due to security problems in the country, no real activity was undertaken. This situation may continue for the next few months.

Togo – TALFF

- A trafficker arrested with fake skins and heads of lion and leopard. 6 leopard heads and 3 skins as well as 1 lion head and 2 skins were falsifications, made of dogs' skins and heads with painted spots, but the trafficker wanted to sell them as real skins and scam buyers. He was arrested and transferred to the civil prison of Lomé, where he will be prosecuted for fraud, forgery and use of forgeries.
- A trafficker arrested with 38 terrestrial tortoises and 4 skins, which he wanted to sell as cheetah skins. In reality they were of genet or similar species. The terrestrial tortoises are partially protected species, trade of which is subject to a permit.
- TALFF legal team followed up 7 cases and provided legal support to the judge, who is in charge of the case of seizure of 2,215 kg of ivory in the port of Lomé. This case is ready for prosecution.
- 2 team members participated at the international seminar on organized transnational crime (CTO) in Cotonou, Benin.
- TALFF team member made a presentation during the Press conference of the Ministry of Environment and Forest Resources on COP21 in Paris.



A trafficker arrested with 38 terrestrial tortoises, partially protected species, trade of which is subject to a permit.

SENEGAL - SALF

- 6 coordinated operations led to a spectacular crackdown of a network of international traffickers in elephant hair bracelets. 7 traffickers were arrested in different location in Dakar and 459 bracelets seized with a minimum value of 65,000 USD. The elephant tails were from Cameroon, Gabon, Central Africa, DRC. Part of this long term investigation was done in collaboration with French government. When some dealers trafficking this contraband between Senegal and France regularly were identified, a judicial investigation was opened. The traffickers are well connected and

powerful, one of them being a son of a well known Senegalese celebrity.

- This case is followed since 2013, when the French Central Office of Fight against Environmental Damage and Public Health - OCLAESP and national French police, started focusing on wildlife crime and identified some of these traffickers. Then an investigation was opened on illegal trade between Dakar and Paris. The case is continuously followed by legal advisors of SALF.
- 6 days later, unfortunately, after much trafficking in influence and corruption attempts, the Ministry of Environment decided to compromise and accept a penalty of 10 million FCFA (18,000 USD), which led to stop further prosecution, 7 traffickers were immediately released after six days of detention.
- This case and its disappointing outcome triggered two letters. A letter to the Minister of Justice was sent by UNODC and its global program against wildlife crime. Also a letter from the Embassy of France to the Minister of Justice was sent.
- Head of LAGA investigations department arrived to Senegal for training of the SALF team and to support the operation. He helped to test and train legal advisors and investigators of SALF.
- New investigator was recruited after the 2 months test period.



7 international traffickers in elephant hair bracelets were arrested in different location in Dakar and 459 bracelets seized with a minimum value of 65,000 USD.

Benin – AALF-B

- 2 traffickers, sentenced to 3 years in prison, were released, after almost a year in prison, by the Appeal court in Parakou. They were sentenced in September 2014 by the Court of 1st instance in Natitingou for trafficking 56 kg of ivory. The appeal court contravened procedure when deciding about the appeal 9 months after the conviction, while the deadline for an appeal is 15 days. Strategies have been put in place to pursue this case

and investigate, if the decision was influenced by pressure or corruption.

- Meeting with the Ambassador of France at the opening of Yann Arthus Bertrand's exhibition "60 solutions" for global warming, issues of wildlife law enforcement and corruption in the country were discussed with him.
- AALF-B team met with consultants from Proagri / GIZ, who are aiming to establish an independent

observer to the Pendjari National Park to monitor the situation after latest wildlife massacre of elephants in March in this National Park.

- The ALLF-B Coordinator and Director of Nature Tropical spent one week at the Central Coordination Unit of EAGLE Network in Nairobi, where he

was trained in team management and other aspects of EAGLE Network's work.

- The legal adviser from AALF Gabon arrived to Benin for 7 days to provide training to 2 legal advisers from Guinea and 3 legal advisers from Benin.

Uganda - EAGLE Uganda

- 13 wildlife traffickers were arrested this month in a renewed push for results.
- 9 traffickers were arrested during an attempt to sell pangolin scales. They were collecting the scales from smaller dealers and then came to one place to sell them and hoping to get their pay. They remain in prison instead. 50 kg of pangolin scales were seized, which presents about 100 animals killed.
- 2 traffickers were arrested during an attempt to sell 2 young ostriches, a totally protected species in Uganda. They attempted to sell them at the price of 3,500 USD. Ostriches are often poached for their feathers, meat, skin, but also to be kept as pets. Unfortunately during the transport to Kampala the male succumbed to death, but the female survived and was handled to UWA for rehabilita-

tion. She will be released to the wild when she is able to survive by herself.

- An operation, focused on 7 wildlife traffickers, led to arrest of one trafficker, a primary school teacher. 6 kg of pangolin scales and 23 horns of Uganda kob were seized. The other traffickers were ex-policeman, local leader, both armed, and four others. They remain in the focus of EAGLE Uganda team.
- A trafficker arrested with horns of several antelope species. She is facing maximum of 3 month imprisonment, as hunting, possessing or trading in these species is illegal in Uganda. The trafficker, a craft dealer, tried to hide 6 Oribi horns, one Uganda Kob horn, 10 Bushbuck horn and one Bushbuck skin among craft. She remains in prison.

2 traffickers were arrested during an attempt to sell 2 young ostriches, a totally protected species in Uganda.



9 traffickers were arrested with 50 kg of pangolin scales.



Headquarters

- EAGLE trained a large group of officers from 6 African countries on ethics and anti-corruption in the International Law Enforcement Academy (ILEA) in Botswana. ILEA - the International Law Enforcement Academy is a US Government prestigious training program for enforcers from all over Africa. EAGLE has been asked to develop a training on ethics and anti-corruption for ILEA's Wildlife Crime Course, which is now conducted for 5 years.
- The ALLF-B Coordinator and Director of Nature Tropicale spent one week at the Central Coordination Unit of EAGLE Network in Nairobi, where he was trained in team management and other aspects of EAGLE Network's work.

International Media Coverage

- A radio talk show about protection of wildlife and National Parks in Gabon includes also Luc Mathot, Director of Conservation Justice and Founding Director of EAGLE (in French).

[Link to Radio France Internationale](#)

- Radio France Internationale and BBC (in French) also interviewed Luc Mathot after the seizure of 150 kg of ivory. BFMTV, a French TV channel, also mentioned this case during their news. Finally, Agence Française de Presse also diffused this case that has been published in many Internet medias.

[Link to Radio France Internationale](#)

[Link to Tribune de Genève](#)

- An interview with Jana Hajduchova, CCU, in the Czech internet media Ekolist; "Poaching in Africa are steps, which must be swept from the top" (in Czech).

[Link to Ekolist](#)

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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