



EAGLE

# Wildlife Law

# Enforcement Briefing

- ✓ **15 wildlife criminals arrested in 4 countries**
- ✓ **Gabon: 7 wildlife criminals arrested with ivory**
- ✓ **Cameroon: 2 traffickers arrested with chimp skulls, pangolin scales, hippo skull and ivory**
- ✓ **Congo: 2 traffickers arrested with 2 chimp skulls and 7 threatened pangolins**
- ✓ **Togo: A trafficker arrested with fresh water and sea turtles**

## Summary

15 wildlife criminals were arrested during operations held in 4 countries this month. Although higher than in last month, the number is still below the target of the EAGLE Network, which is one significant trafficker arrested per week in each country. Investigation efforts are intensified across the Network in order to improve output for the next months.

Investigations in Gabon led to several operations, in which altogether 7 wildlife criminals were arrested. In Cameroon 2 traffickers were arrested with 2 chimp skulls, giant pangolin scales and a hippopotamus skull. LAGA assisted in case of arresting 3 ivory sellers. They were arrested one after another after the first one reported to the police a theft of ivory. Following investigations the police arrested the "owner" who reported the matter, the thief who sold the ivory and the buyer who is suspected to be a significant ivory trafficker.

A trafficker with 2 chimp skulls and crocodile skin was arrested in Congo. In the same country the sniffer dogs identified a trafficker with 4 live threatened pangolin

and 3 dead with more than 200 kg of bushmeat seized. The pangolins, today the most trafficked species globally, were rescued and later released back to the wild.



*Two traffickers arrested with pangolin scales and chimpanzee skulls in Cameroon.*

## Cameroon – LAGA

- 2 traffickers arrested with 2 chimp skulls, giant pangolins scales and a hippopotamus skull. They are known to have been in the business for some time as investigations unraveled previous incidents of ivory and python skin trafficking. The two worked as a team with one ferrying products to Batouri while the other stationed in the town and looked out for clients. One of the chimp skulls had been used for mystical ceremonies. The skull is immersed in water for a week to make rain to fall according to traditional practices of the area.
- LAGA assisted in case of arresting 3 ivory sellers. They were arrested one after another after the first one reported to the police that 2 two-meter-long tusks were stolen from his residence. During investigation the police arrested the “owner” who reported the matter, the thief who sold the ivory and the buyer who is suspected to be a significant ivory trafficker.
- 2 wildlife traffickers were sentenced to prison for 1 month, respectively 45 days. Appeal has been lodged against the judgement
- LAGA’s head of investigations department traveled to Senegal for an arrest operation while an investigator from Togo replication finished a successful training in LAGA within the EAGLE Network exchange program.

*Pangolin scales and chimpanzee skulls seized from arrested traffickers: One of the chimp skulls had been used for mystical ceremonies. The skull is immersed in water for a week to make rain to fall according to traditional practices of the area. (above)*

*Hippo skull with teeth recovered from arrested traffickers (below)*



## Congo – PALF

- A trafficker arrested with 4 live threatened pangolins and 3 dead with more than 200 kg of bushmeat seized. The trafficker was identified by the sniffer dogs during an operation near the Congolese coast. The live pangolins were rescued and released into the Tchimpounga Reserve. In spite of the pressure of PALF activists, the regional officer of the Ministry of Environment initiated the release of the trafficker after 3 days in custody.
- A trafficker with 2 chimp skulls and a crocodile skin arrested in Pointe Noire. The successful investigation was led by an international trainee as a part of his training on investigations and arrest operations.
- Following an effective legal push and media campaign on the Ikama case, it finally got a date of trial, June 11. Much effort is still needed to ensure good governance in Congo’s legal system, if we

are to succeed in getting Congo's most notorious ivory trafficker strictly sentenced for recidivist ivory trafficking.

- 3 wildlife criminals sentenced to 3 months imprisonment in Ouesso



4 live threatened pangolins and 3 dead with more than 200 kg of bushmeat were seized



Pangolins, often called “scaly anteaters,” are covered in tough, overlapping scales. These burrowing mammals eat ants and termites using an extraordinarily long, sticky tongue, and are able to quickly roll themselves up into a tight ball when threatened. These solitary mammals are nocturnal and highly secretive, thus it is difficult for scientists to study them in the wild, and many mysteries remain about their behavior and habits.

Pangolins are rapidly driven to extinction, as the booming illegal trade threatening them is on an exponential increase. All eight known species of pangolins

are at high risk, four of them live in Africa. Recent seizures reveal the increasing extent of this illegal trade, making pangolins the most smuggled mammals in the world.

Mostly intended for the Asian market, pangolins are consumed for their meat, but also for their scales, believed to have medical power. The major recent seizures of African pangolin scales originated from Cameroon, Togo, Kenya, and Uganda. The scales can be sometimes mixed with ivory and rhino horn shipments. In addition, traffickers of live animals, now include live pangolins to their list of offer.

The EAGLE Network tackles the illegal trade in Pangolins, with arrests of pangolin traffickers in most of the Network's countries. In Cameroon alone more than 15 pangolin traffickers have been arrested and imprisoned, several of them Chinese Nationals, with hundreds of Kg of pangolin scales seized. In Uganda, traffickers were arrested with 2 tons of scales. In Togo, traffickers have been arrested hiding their pangolins contraband together with the smuggled ivory.

## Gabon – AALF

- 2 traffickers and a poacher arrested for killing a leopard and attempting to trade the skin. All three of them remain behind bars, while the fourth, a 79-year-old Catholic priest, was not arrested due to his age. He was buying the skin, already hiding another leopard skin in his home.
- Another trafficker and 2 more poachers arrested in possession of 2 ivory tusks and 3 firearms fol-

lowing a good collaboration with the national parks agency and police. Prior to the recent killing, the poachers had killed an elephant a couple of weeks earlier.

- 2 ivory traffickers, a man and a woman, arrested with an elephant tusk. The man has been known to be one of the major ivory suppliers of the region.
- 2 elephant poachers arrested for killing an ele-



A trafficker and 2 poachers arrested in possession of 2 tusks and 3 firearms

phant and illegal possession of 10 kg of ivory. The family of one of them is known in the area to belong to a significant network of traffickers.

- 3 thieves arrested for stealing wood, but the operation followed by ALEFI ended with no result.
- 7 court cases were followed by the AALF legal department, in which a total of 15 criminals were charged with various wildlife crimes.
- Several meetings and discussions were held during this month with presidents of courts in Oyem and Franceville, prosecutors in Libreville, Franceville, Oyem, Koulamoutou, Mouila and Tchibanga, judge in Oyem and Deputy Chief Registrar in Mouila. More meetings were conducted with provincial directors of Franceville, Oyem, Makokou, Koulamoutou, Libreville and Mouila, Director of Fight against poaching, Deputy General Director of Wildlife and the Coordinator of the Tridom Project.
- Luc Mathot, the Director of Conservation Justice and cofounder and Director of the EAGLE Network, conducted a mission to Nairobi to work on strategic planning with members of CCU.

## 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.

## Guinea – Conakry – GALF

- Intercepting and combating the illegal release of 2 wildlife traffickers arrested in March, the main trafficker was sentenced to 6 months in prison, the accomplice to 3 months. The corrupt act has been discovered during a routine jail visit. GALF has engaged in obtaining a copy of the judgment to initiate new proceedings.
- Follow-up of the rhino horn and sea cucumbers case involving a Chinese – hearing adjourned to a later date.
- GALF held 2 training sessions in the Upper Niger National Park and the Ziama Forest for 34 trainers from the Ministry of Environment. Training focused on wildlife crime, corruption, criminal procedure and the Wildlife Protection Code. It was organized upon the request of United Nations Office for Project Services and funded by the European Union.
- GALF held a series of meetings in or-

der to increase collaboration with Customs to regularly inspect luggage at airports.

- Continued training of 2 legal advisers and testing of one investigator in a push to build GALF's capacity.



2 training sessions for trainers from the Ministry of Environment were held by GALF

## Togo – TALFF

- A trafficker arrested with one sea turtle and 22 live freshwater turtles, both totally protected species, at the outskirts of Lomé. The woman, a chicken seller, who repeatedly trades turtles and other protected species, remains in custody. The turtles were released back to the wild in the Fazao-Malfakassa National Park the next day after the seizure.
- The TALFF team's work has exceeded the agreed indicators in an IUCN audit.
- The TALFF team was present in a luncheon discussion with the Ambassador of France regarding the COP21 Climate Summit in December in Paris.
- TALFF 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 in June.

*22 freshwater and one sea turtles were rescued and released back to the wild in the Fazao-Malfakassa National Park the next day after the seizure.*



## SENEGAL - SALF

- Investigations intensified with expectations for arrests early next month.
- The head of Investigations Department from LAGA – Cameroon arrived to Senegal to strengthen the training of Salf investigator and legal adviser and to support ongoing investigation and operations.
- Recruitment efforts intensified with a push to build capacity of Salf with one legal adviser and one investigator on test period.
- 3 Palm Vultures and several giant tortoises, seized on March 7 with assistance from GALF were officially handed over to the wildlife authorities of Senegal.

*3 Palm Vultures were seized in Guinea and handed over to the wildlife authorities of Senegal.*





*The action was well covered by television and internet media.*



*Several giant tortoises, seized by GALF on 7 March, were officially handed over to the wildlife authorities of Senegal.*

## Benin – AALF-B

- Legal follow up of the case of Allada-Ouègbo, charged with trafficking of 150 royal pythons. AALF-B team obtained an evidence about a corrupt officer of the Ministry of Forest and Waters, who accepted a bribe of more than 2,000 USD pretending an official transaction, while in reality he circumvented the court decision and released the traffickers. Strategies were put in place to react.
- The coordinator met with the Minister of the Environment to discuss the agreement between the government and Tropical Nature and the ongoing operation.
- AALF-B participated at the Biodiversity Day, initiated by the Embassy of France within the framework of the COP21 climate summit in December in Paris.
- A new legal adviser was accepted for a training period

## Uganda - EAGLE Uganda

- Meeting with officers of Flying Squad Unit of police in northern Uganda, the most effective arresting team of the Uganda Police, was held. The unit agreed to work with EAGLE Uganda in all investigations of wildlife crime in the region.
- A letter sent to the Registrar General of the Uganda Registration Services Bureau to address the challenges with locating files for Ugandan registered companies involved in illegal trafficking of wildlife crime.
- 4 ongoing wildlife cases were followed up in court by the project prosecutor Mr. Massa Lenard.
- 2 investigators were recruited, one being currently on testing period and the other one undergoing orientation and training with the team in order to reinforce the investigation unit.

# Headquarters

- Luc Mathot, one of the founders of the EAGLE Network and member of the Steering Group arrived to Nairobi to support the activities of the Central Coordination Unit.
- The temporary finance officer helped CCU in May to set up standards for financial reporting.
- EAGLE Network Facebook profile and Twitter account launched.

[www.EAGLE-enforcement.org](http://www.EAGLE-enforcement.org)



# International Media Coverage

- “Sniffer dogs fight ivory trade in Congo”, in Standard Tribune, Cameroon. Rick, Shon and Cama, the sniffer dogs, trained to identify ivory, pangolin scales, bushmeat and alive animals, also weapons and ammunition, help PALF in Congo to fight wildlife crime.

[Link to the article in Standard Tribune](#)

- “Dog Happily Catches Elephant Poachers”, The Dodo. The Sniffer Dogs Unit of PALF helps to get wildlife traffickers behind bars in Congo.

[Link to the article at Dodo](#)

- “Des Chiens pour lutter contre le trafic d’ivoire”, in ZOOM DisneyNature. Rick, the dog from the Sniffer Dogs Unite of PALF, Congo, just found a well hidden ivory bracelet...

[Link to the article at ZOOM DisneyNature](#)

# 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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