



**EAGLE**

May 2021  
EAGLE Network

# Wildlife Law Enforcement Briefing

- ✓ *15 wildlife traffickers arrested in 5 countries*
- ✓ *3 traffickers arrested with 8 elephant tusks and some pieces of ivory in Togo and an international ivory trafficking network crushed*
- ✓ *A trafficker arrested with 5 elephant tusks and 14 ivory pieces in Gabon*
- ✓ *3 traffickers arrested with 110kg of pangolin scales in Côte d'Ivoire*
- ✓ *A trafficker arrested with a baby chimp in Cameroon*
- ✓ *2 traffickers arrested with 72kg of pangolin scales in Cameroon*
- ✓ *3 traffickers arrested with a human skull in Congo*
- ✓ *2 traffickers arrested with a leopard skin and a piece of ivory in Congo*



*A trafficker arrested with a baby chimp in Cameroon.*



*3 traffickers arrested with 8 elephant tusks and some pieces of ivory in Togo*

# Summary

3 traffickers arrested with 8 elephant tusks and some pieces of ivory in Togo, dismantling an international ivory trafficking network. The network of Togolese, Malian and Nigerien nationalities used trafficking routes crisscrossing Burkina Faso and Benin. 5 of the ivory tusks were smuggled from Burkina Faso and received by the Togolese who was also in charge of searching for buyers in Togo. The remaining 3 ivory tusks were smuggled from Benin and motorbikes were used to moving the ivory around the three countries.

A trafficker arrested with 5 elephant tusks and 14 ivory in Gabon. Information on the illegal activity was first received by the General Research Directorate (DGR). The trafficker concealed the contraband carefully inside his backpack when arrested. He was later transported to the Libreville Special Tribunal and remanded in custody

3 traffickers arrested with 110kg of pangolin scales in Côte d'Ivoire. This seizure alone represents the killing of up to 550 pangolins (depending on the species). They posed no resistance as the arresting team moved in to apprehend them in the capital city. They were taken to Abidjan to be auditioned. The traffickers belong to a regional network. 2 of them collected the scales and the third assisted with transporting them.

A trafficker arrested with a baby chimp in Cameroon. The baby chimp was rescued during a high risk, nerve-racking cross river operation. Courage and initiative saved our investigator and the chimp from the hands of a trafficker. He traveled dozens of kilometers to the banks of the Sanaga River (the longest

in Cameroon) and camped there holding our investigator captive, refusing to cross over from the wild and lawless side of the river. It needed tremendous courage and initiative of our Head of Operations to cross the river on a canoe and confront the trafficker saving our investigator from possible kidnap or harm.



*3 traffickers arrested with 110kg of pangolin scales in Côte d'Ivoire.*

2 traffickers arrested with 72kg of pangolin scales in Cameroon, representing up to 360 slaughtered pangolins (depending on the species). When the arresting team arrived the home of one of the traffickers, they found a grain bag with full pangolin scales in the corner of the living room. The traffickers operated at a strategically important road junction, a gateway to the towns in the south of the country where wildlife traffickers are very active.

3 traffickers arrested with a human skull in Congo. The first trafficker was arrested with a human skull. This led to the arrest of the second who was hiding around a nearby hotel. The third trafficker, who is the owner of the plot where the remains were dug out, was arrested immediately following the first two arrests. They belong to a vast network, trafficking and smuggling various contraband including human bones, wildlife products and hard drugs such as cocaine

2 traffickers arrested with a leopard skin and a piece of ivory in Congo. The contraband was rolled up very tightly in a black plastic bag and concealed inside a backpack to avoid detection by law enforcement. They arrived the scene of transaction carrying the parcel.



*3 traffickers arrested with a human skull in Congo*

# Cameroon – LAGA

■ A trafficker arrested with a baby chimp. The baby chimp was rescued during a high risk, nerve-racking cross river operation. Courage and initiative saved our investigator and the chimp from the hands of a trafficker. He traveled dozens of kilometers to the banks of the Sanaga River (the longest in Cameroon) and camped there holding our investigator captive, refusing to cross over from the wild and lawless side of the river. It needed tremendous courage and initiative of our Head of Operations to cross the river on a canoe and confront the trafficker saving our investigator from possible kidnap or harm. The arresting team stormed in later to take the chimp and trafficker to the safer side of the river. As the team, wildlife officers and the authorities got to the sta-





tion and prepared for interrogation, the criminal suddenly made a run into the bush attempting to escape. He was hotly chased and captured. The baby chimp, a survivor of the slaughter of his family, was smuggled in a tiny closed box, and was pulled out frightened and stressed. He was given special first aid attention and care by the team. The chimp is in the Sanaga Yong Sanctuary for his lifetime care.

- 2 traffickers arrested with 72kg of pangolin scales, representing up to 360 slaughtered pangolins (depending on the species). When the arresting team arrived the home of one of the traffickers, they found a grain bag full with pangolin scales in the corner of the living room. The traffickers operated at a strategically important road junction, a gateway to the towns in the south of the country where wildlife traffickers are very active. They are

experienced pangolins scales traffickers. One of the traffickers tried every trick in the book to avoid arrest saying he has been arrested in the past.

- The Deputy Director participated at a meeting of the Cameroon Pangolin Working Group to put in place an action plan for the protection of the pangolins.
- The Legal Team held meetings with several State Counsels to discuss cases pending at the various courts.
- The Head of the Legal Department did presentations on the wildlife law enforcement process during a training workshop for wildlife rangers of the Mberé Valley National Park.

## Congo – PALF

- 2 traffickers arrested with a leopard skin and a piece of ivory. The contraband was rolled up very tightly in a black plastic bag and concealed inside a shopping bag to avoid detection by law enforcement. They arrived the scene of transaction carrying the parcel. They appeared confident as they moved in to carry out the deal, indicating they were very experienced traffickers. They belong to a trafficking network in the country.

- 3 traffickers arrested with a human skull. The first trafficker was arrested with a human skull. This led to the arrest of the second who was hiding around





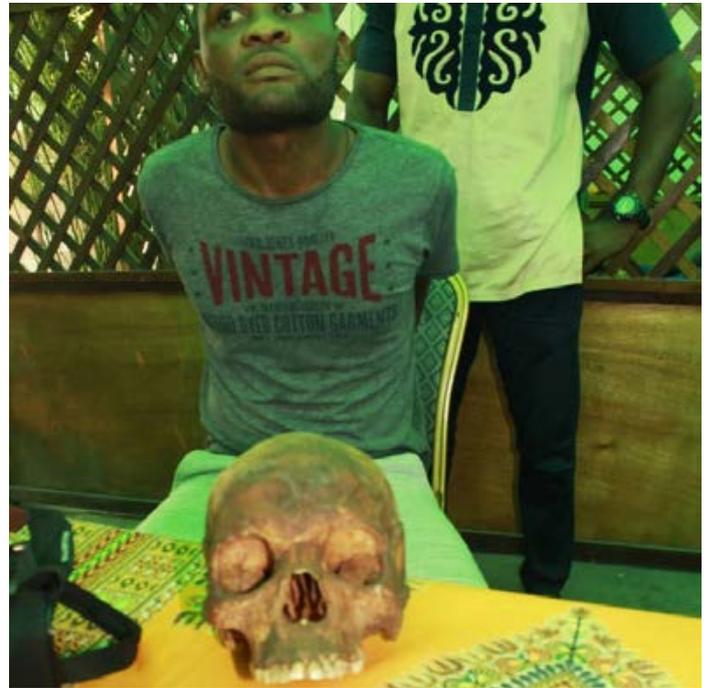
a nearby hotel. The third trafficker, who is the owner of the plot where the remains were dug out, was arrested immediately following the first two arrests. They belong to a vast network, trafficking and smuggling various contraband including human bones, wildlife products and hard drugs such as cocaine. A piece of leopard skin and a tomb cross were found under the bed of one of the members of the network. The network seems to be spread across the country with many members based in Brazzaville. These arrests indicate that wildlife traffickers are often part of other illegal activities and networks. Human body parts are in high demand in the Central Africa sub region to be used by occultists for sacrifices in black magic.

- Corruptions attempts by a high ranking gendarmerie commander were fought off by the Team. The official tried to get the release of a trafficker using the false pretense of sickness. He had been in prison for one year for ivory trafficking.



The Team fought hard and the court ordered a counter medical examination that proved that the medical diagnosis presented was false.

- The Coordinator travelled to Nairobi for a 3-week working session with the CCU on new strategies, targets and goals for higher efficiency.



## Tiffany Gobert PALF New Coordinator

Tiffany has been passionate about wildlife and fighting injustice since she was a young girl in France.

After doing her Masters in Project Management in Development and Humanitarian Action in Quebec, Canada, she did her internship in Bolivia in 2017 where she stayed for almost one year, working with an NGO taking care of trafficked wildlife. The next year she was taken on by WWF as a volunteer on their Primate

Habituation Program in Dzangha Sangha, Central African Republic.

The first experience enabled her to see first-hand the devastating consequences of wildlife trafficking and the incredible difficulties and often impossibility of reintroducing these traumatized animals into their natural habitat. The second showed her the beauty of raw nature by being able to follow groups of habituated gorillas in their natural habitat, accompanied by the local Bayaka people and discover the wonders of the almost untouched biodiversity of the Central African Republic. These two very different experiences affected her deeply and reinforced her determination to fight wildlife trafficking.

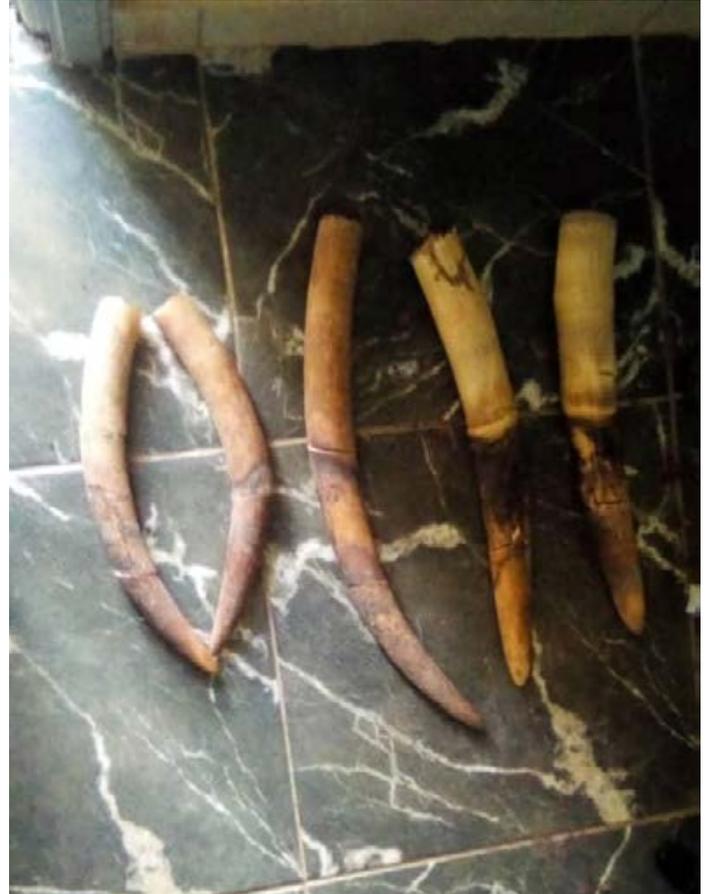
This is when she met Luc Mathot and discovered the EAGLE Network and the real, tangible results of its actions. After a 2-year recruitment process with many challenges, and training with different teams in the field, Tiffany has now become PALF coordinator in Congo.



## Gabon – AALF

- A trafficker arrested with 5 elephant tusks and 14 ivory pieces. Information on the illegal activity was first received by the General Research Directorate (DGR). The trafficker concealed the contraband carefully inside his backpack when arrested. He was later transported to the Libreville Special Tribunal and remanded in custody. He awaits trial.
- 2 ivory traffickers were sentenced to one year in prison. They were arrested in April 2021.
- 2 ivory traffickers were sentenced to one and a half years in prison. They were arrested in April 2021
- The Activities Coordinator held meetings with the Attorney General of the Libreville Court of First Instance, the Commander-in-Chief of the Judicial Police and the Commander in Charge of Investigations at DGR to discuss legal procedures and strengthen collaboration.
- He also held a meeting with the Deputy State Counsel of the Libreville Court of First Instance to plan for the organization of a training workshop for over 20 Judicial Police Officers. The Team presented two modules on combatting wildlife crime during the training.
- The Legal Team held meetings with some State Counsels and Judges of the Special Chamber in

charge of Forestry and Wildlife Offences, the Director of Wildlife and Protected Areas and the Director of the Anti-Poaching Unit to discuss collaboration in ongoing cases and arrest operations.



## Togo – EAGLE Togo

- 3 traffickers arrested with 8 elephant tusks and some pieces of ivory and an international ivory trafficking network crushed. The network of Togolese, Malian and Nigerien nationalities used trafficking routes crisscrossing Burkina Faso and Benin. 5 of the ivory tusks were smuggled from Burkina Faso and received by the Togolese who was also in charge of searching for buyers in Togo. The remaining 3 ivory tusks were smuggled from Benin and motorbikes were used to moving the ivory around the three countries. In order to avoid arrest, they moved the illegal transaction away from the capital city. To get to the place of transaction, two of the traffickers transported the ivory on a luxury motorbike belonging to one of them. The contraband was securely packed in a parcel and concealed in a grain bag when it was seized.



- The Coordinator held meetings with the Director of Forest Resources Inspection Directorate and with some officials in Kara including the State Counsel, the Sector No 4 Police Director, the Regional Director of Environment and Forestry Resources to strengthen collaboration in the fight against wildlife crime.
- Recruitment was intensified and an online investigation started his test period.



## Senegal – EAGLE Senegal

- The Coordinator held meetings in Dakar with the Urban Security Police Commissioner and the Central Police Commissioner to discuss wildlife crime and to strengthen collaboration.
- The Legal Team followed up the various pending issues with MoUs with the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, the General Directorate of Customs and the General Directorate of the National Police where meetings were held
- The Coordinator and the Legal Team participated at a zoom training organized by GIABA (Inter-governmental Action Group against Money Laundry in West Africa) that focused on the illegal wildlife trade and financial investigation in the region
- An accountant and a new head of the media department were recruited

## Benin – AALF-B

- An ivory trafficker was sentenced to 4 years in prison. He was arrested in March 2021.
- The Coordinator and the Legal Team held a series of meetings with some high officials including State Counsels, Court Registrars, Police Commissioners, Gendarmerie, Forestry, Park, CITES and NGO officials.
- The Director did a talk at the Directorate of Waters, Forests and Hunting on the fight against wildlife crime in the country.
- Recruitment of investigators resumed with renewed intensity and interviews conducted.

## Côte d'Ivoire – EAGLE Côte d'Ivoire

- 3 traffickers arrested with 110kg of pangolin scales. This seizure alone represents the killing of up to 550 pangolins (depending on the species). They posed no resistance as the arresting team moved in to apprehend them in the capital city. They were taken to Abidjan to be auditioned. The traffickers belong to a regional network. 2 of them collected the scales and the third assisted with transporting them. They used a taxi car in transporting the scales.
- The Coordinator and the Deputy Coordinator held a meeting the UCT (Unité de lutte contre la Criminalité Transnationale) to collaborate on some important investigations.
- Gaspard Julien Laferriere was appointed as the new Coordinator. He was formerly the Assistant Coordinator.
- The recruitment of investigators was intensified.



## Burkina Faso - EAGLE Burkina Faso

- The Coordinator and the Legal Team held a meeting with the State Counsel and Regional Director of Water and Forests of Manga to discuss some ivory trafficking cases.
- The Coordinator held a meeting with the Director of Operations at the Ministry of Environment to discuss on collaboration on some investigations.
- One of two legal advisers on test was retained to continued her test.

# Uganda - EAGLE Uganda

- The Legal Team provided technical support in the prosecution by the Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) of 2 arrested traffickers. The Team also provided support to the URA in the transport of the 2 from the Kidepo National Park.
- One the Rwandese nationals arrested for ivory trafficking in March 2021, continues serving his sentence at Kitalya maximum-security prison. The second convict was released following the payment of his fine.
- The Legal Team followed up a case on sexual abuse to provide legal support to the victims to ensure that justice prevails.
- Recruitment was intensified with some interviews carried out. One investigator on test was rejected and a second retained to continue their test.

## Headquarters

- PALF Coordinator, Tiffany Gobert, arrived in Nairobi for a 3-week working session with the CCU on new strategies, targets and goals for higher efficiency.

## 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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