



EAGLE

October 2021
EAGLE Network

Wildlife Law Enforcement Briefing

- ✓ *15 wildlife traffickers arrested in 4 countries*
- ✓ *4 traffickers, including a former Deputy of National Assembly (similar to a member of congress), arrested with 11 elephant tusks in Côte d'Ivoire*
- ✓ *4 traffickers arrested with 41 African Grey Parrots in Togo*
- ✓ *2 traffickers arrested with lion skin, hyena skin, and many more in Côte d'Ivoire*
- ✓ *2 chimp traffickers arrested following the seizure of a baby chimp and arrest last month of 2 traffickers in Cameroon*
- ✓ *A trafficker arrested with 77 kg of pangolin scales in Cameroon*
- ✓ *A trafficker arrested with 2 tusks in Gabon*
- ✓ *A trafficker arrested with a freshly killed pangolin in Cameroon*



4 traffickers, including a former Deputy of National Assembly (similar to a member of congress), were arrested in Côte d'Ivoire



A trafficker arrested with 77 kg of pangolin scales in Cameroon.

Summary

4 traffickers, including a former Deputy of National Assembly (similar to a member of congress), were arrested in a hotel in Abidjan while attempting to sell 11 tusks of elephant ivory. There were initially 6 suspects, including two officers. 3 of the suspects were caught red handed in the hotel room with the tusks, while the other 3 were arrested in the hotel's restaurant and reception.

The arrest operation was quickly disrupted by the arrival of several men armed with assault rifles and equipped with bulletproof vests. They immediately tried to intimidate the UCT working with us (special unit against transnational organized crime) in order to stop the ongoing arrest, declaring to be officers of the CCDO - a special forces mixed unit of police, gendarmes and military. They had no mission orders, nor uniform or distinctive sign to identify themselves and denied colluding with the traffickers, claiming to investigate them.



2 traffickers arrested with lion skin, hyena skin and many more in Côte d'Ivoire.

4 traffickers arrested with 41 African Grey Parrots in Togo. The parrots were found in a storeroom in Lomé. The main trafficker is a Nigerian and a veteran reptile and parrots' trafficker. The ring's operation stretched from Central Africa, particularly from Cameroon, to West Africa. The Nigerian had clients all over West Africa.

2 traffickers arrested with lion skin, hyena skin and many more in Côte d'Ivoire. The middleman got arrested first and led the team to the bigger trafficker a Nigerian woman that trafficked all from Nigeria. Skins of honey badger, civet and others were seized together with 451 dried chameleons.

2 chimp traffickers arrested following the seizure of a baby chimp and arrest last month of 2 traffickers in Cameroon. One of those arrested last month denounced the 2 traffickers as the main traffickers behind the deal and a follow up of the procedure enabled their arrest.



A trafficker arrested with 77 kg of pangolin scales in Cameroon.

A trafficker arrested with 77 kg of pangolin scales in Cameroon. He transported the scales in a pickup truck. He activated several poachers in the East of the country, particularly around a new dam project called Lom Pangar and supplied pangolin scales and other wildlife products to several traffickers coming from some of the big towns in the country.

A trafficker arrested with 2 tusks in Gabon. The trafficker who is nicknamed "Apôtre" (Apostle in English) is a guard with a security company in Mitzic, the town where he was arrested.

A trafficker arrested with a freshly killed pangolin in Cameroon attempting to sell it along a major highway.



2 chimp traffickers arrested following the seizure of a baby chimp in Cameroon

Cameroon – LAGA

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coming from some of the big towns in the country. About a third of the scales were giant pangolin scales.

- A trafficker arrested with a freshly killed pangolin. He was arrested attempting to sell it along a major highway. Blood could be seen on the head of the pangolin that was probably smashed. Protected wildlife species are generally dangled by hand or hung from a piece of a wooden pole or stick along major highways in country for sale, despite their protected status and the illegality of selling them. The operation comes as a reminder that protected species remain protected and it is illegal to trade in them.
- The Deputy Director carried out a presentation on online wildlife crime during a training for some top ranking gendarmerie, police, customs, wildlife officials.
- The Deputy Director participated at a workshop organized by the British High Commission to create synergy on communication strategies for the upcoming CoP26 to be held in Glasgow.
- The Legal Team held meetings with several State Counsels to discuss cases ongoing at their various courts and to strengthen collaboration.



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Congo – PALF

- The Coordinator participated in an event organized by the US embassy to present the Deputy and Special Envoy of the United States of America on Climate Change, Jonathan Pershing and his team. The event brought together several high ranking diplomatic officials including the Ambassadors of France and Germany, the Director of Cooperation at the European Union Delegation, officials from the World Bank, the UN and conservation NGOs.
- The Coordinator held a meeting with the German Ambassador and presented some current cases.
- She held another meeting with the new EU Ambassador to discuss wildlife law enforcement in the country.
- Luc Mathot, the Founding Director of the EAGLE Network arrived in Brazzaville to support the Coordinator. They met with officials of the Ministry of Forestry Economy to discuss issues related to the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding.
- They, accompanied by the UNODC Programme Coordinator for West & Central Africa, held a meeting with the Deputy Chief of Staff of the Gendarmerie to strengthen collaboration and discuss current cases.
- Recruitment intensified and a new legal adviser started his test period.

Gabon – AALF

- A trafficker arrested with 2 tusks. The trafficker who is nicknamed “Apôtre” (Apostle in English) is a guard with a security company in Mitzic, the town where he was arrested. He arrived the scene of transaction with a green backpack. Inside the bag, 2 small tusks definitely cut from the head of a young elephant, were found. He had been a target ivory trafficker for a long time and was finally caught red handed.
- The Activities Coordinator held a meeting with the Attorney General of the Libreville Court of First Instance and another meeting with the Director of the National Police to Strengthen collaboration.
- The Legal Team held meetings with judges of the Special Criminal Tribunal, several administrative and judicial authorities including a Provincial Antenna Head of the General Directorate of Research, the Director of Wildlife and Protected Areas, the Director of Anti-Poaching, and Provincial Directors Water and Forests, among others, to strengthen collaboration, follow up cases and collaborate on future arrests.
- A legal adviser participated at a validation meeting of analysis grids for technical forest management documents. It was organized by the Ministry of Water and Forests.



Togo – EAGLE Togo

- 4 traffickers arrested with 41 African Grey Parrots. The parrots were found in a storeroom in Lomé. The main trafficker is a Nigerian and a veteran reptile and parrots’ trafficker. The ring’s operation stretched from Central Africa, particularly from Cameroon, to West Africa. The Nigerian had clients all over West Africa. One of the traffickers nicknamed “Parrot Man”. The parrots were transported in adapted cardboard boxes, passing through borders with the use of corruption.





African Grey Parrots

4 traffickers were arrested with 41 African Grey Parrots in Togo this month. The main trafficker is a Nigerian and a veteran reptile and parrots' trafficker. The ring's operation stretched from Central Africa, particularly from Cameroon to West Africa.

Grey parrots birds could be called "pangolins among birds". Why? Because they probably belong to most trafficked birds in the world.

Two species - African grey and Timneh grey parrots are very popular pets in Europe, USA but also Middle East, as well as in other parts of the world. That creates a high demand, triggering decades of trafficking. Both species live in tropical African forests, Timneh occupies a smaller area in the West Africa while African grey spreads from Côte d'Ivoire on West to Kenya on the East.

EAGLE Network's arrests have led to hitting several international traffickers' rings and rescuing more than 4,500 grey parrots since 2007, which presents just a fraction of the total number of trafficked parrots. Tens of thousands of them are trafficked out of Africa every year, which literary decimates their population. Only between 2007 and 2010 LAGA crashed large gang operating in Central Africa with members from Nigeria, Ghana, Guinea, Cameroon, with the complicity of some corrupt MINFOF officials. Many traffickers have been using false CITES permits, others just try to hide them or bribe custom officials.

Parrots are usually trafficked by air, in horrible conditions, smashed in small boxes, without food and water. It causes these highly intelligent birds enormous suffering, and often majority of them does not survive the brutal transport conditions.

In 2017 both species were moved to Appendix I of the CITES convention. Although this means that any trade with them is banned, the trafficking has not stopped yet.

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Senegal – EAGLE Senegal

- 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 Team presented various modules on combating wildlife crime during a training for 60 gendarmerie officers. They were promoted to the rank of judicial police officer.
- Leititia Bot, a super volunteer from France arrived in Dakar for a three-month long training and test in Senegal.
- The Head of the Legal Department, Bassirou Diagne, was appointed Assistant Coordinator.
- Recruitment intensified with the recruitment of a new legal adviser and an accountant.

Benin – AALF-B

- The Coordinator and the Legal Team held a series of meetings with several park, wildlife, forestry, gendarmerie and police officials to strengthen collaboration in the fight against wildlife crime. They discussed training opportunities with the police in Lokossa.

Côte d'Ivoire – EAGLE Côte d'Ivoire

- 2 traffickers arrested with lion skin, hyena skin and many more. The middleman got arrested first and led the team to the bigger trafficker a Nigerian woman that trafficked all from Nigeria. Skins of honey badger, civet and others were seized together with 451 dried chameleons. In her personal purse she kept a dead bird, probably witchcraft protection... from getting arrested. There are less than 50 lions remaining in Nigeria and this last killed one is unfortunately young. Lions are critically endangered in the whole West African region
- 4 traffickers, including a former Deputy of National Assembly (similar to a member of congress), were arrested in a hotel in Abidjan while attempting to sell 11 tusks of elephant ivory. There were initially 6 suspects, including two officers. 3 of the suspects were caught red handed in the hotel room with the tusks, while the other 3 were arrested in the hotel's restaurant and reception.
- The arrest operation was quickly disrupted by the arrival of several men armed with assault rifles and equipped with bulletproof vests. They immediately tried to intimidate the UCT (Unit against



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Transnational Crime) working with us in order to stop the ongoing arrest, declaring to be officers of the CCDO - a special forces mixed unit of police, gendarmes and military. They had no mission orders, nor uniform or distinctive sign to identify themselves and denied colluding with the traffickers, claiming to investigate them.

- The standoff became quite heated, but the UCT stood their ground and managed to arrest 4 suspects and seize the ivory. The 2 others suspects identified themselves as members of CCDO unit and couldn't be arrested by the UCT. The investigation is ongoing and can expose the role of these armed men, their unit and what was their goal and intention when they interfered on the scene.

- The Legal Team provided assistance to the UCT after they arrested a trafficker in possession of 12 parrots (including 8 timnehs and 2 grey parrots). Sory Ibrahima Balde, is a recidivist and was arrested last December for chimp trafficking. He is still on a 12-month suspended jail sentence from the chimpanzee case. He now faces up to 3 years of imprisonment.
- The Coordinator held meetings with officials of OIPR (the Ivorian administration in charge of the national parks) to strengthen the collaboration between the two structures in several regions of the country.

Burkina Faso - EAGLE Burkina Faso

- The Coordinator, accompanied by the legal adviser, held a meeting with 2 lawyers to discuss the terms of the contracts that shall guide their representation in wildlife cases initiated by Conservation Justice.

Uganda - EAGLE Uganda

- The Assistant Coordinator participated in a training on Fraud Management (detection and prevention) organized by the Institute of Certified Public Accountants Uganda.
- The Legal Team held several meetings with officials including the Head of Human Rights, Environment and Wildlife Divisions and the Legal Manager (both at the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions), the Resident State Attorney at the Wildlife Court, the Public Relations Officer at Interpol, the Officer in Charge at Aviation Police, the Public Police Relations Officer and the Assistant Commissioner Economic Crimes at CID to foster collaboration and working relations.
- Recruitment intensified and 3 new legal advisors and an investigator began their test period.

Headquarters

- Luc Mathot, the Founding Director of the EAGLE Network, travelled to Congo to support the Coordinator on external relations. Accompanied by the Coordinator, they held several meetings with officials of the Ministry of Forestry Economy to discuss issues related to the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding and with the Deputy Chief of Staff of the Gendarmerie to discuss current wildlife cases.

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.

Contacts:

1. Cameroon – LAGA - ofir@eagle-enforcement.org
2. Congo – PALF - tiffany@eagle-enforcement.org
3. Gabon – AALF - luc@eagle-enforcement.org
4. Togo – EAGLE-Togo - rens@eagle-enforcement.org
5. Senegal – EAGLE Senegal - cebloch@eagle-enforcement.org
6. Benin - AALF-B - jules@eagle-enforcement.org
7. Côte d'Ivoire - gaspard@eagle-enforcement.org
8. Burkina Faso - josias@eagle-enforcement.org
9. Uganda – EAGLE Uganda - ofir@eagle-enforcement.org