



EAGLE

The EAGLE Network Annual Report 2023



- ✓ *Despite several challenges encountered especially at the beginning of the year, the EAGLE teams pushed forward obtaining significant results. 90 wildlife traffickers were arrested in 6 countries*
- ✓ *56 ivory traffickers were arrested with 609 kg of ivory, which include 110 tusks and 135 ivory pieces*
- ✓ *14 pangolin scales traffickers were arrested with more than 300 kg of scales*
- ✓ *12 bird traffickers were arrested in Congo, Cote d'Ivoire and Senegal where a network of parrot traffickers with international links was dismantled*
- ✓ *6 primate traffickers were arrested, 4 in Cameroon, and 2 in Cote d'Ivoire. 2 baby chimps, a mandrill, a drill were rescued and a huge consignment of 40 primates seized in Togo and returned to DRC*
- ✓ *3 big cat skin traffickers, one of them a military officer, were arrested in 2 operations with 2 leopard skins among other skins seized*
- ✓ *84 % of the arrested traffickers remained behind bars at least at the early stages of the prosecution*
- ✓ *1,262 media pieces were published in national media*
- ✓ *At least in 4 of the operations, corruption was exposed during the arrest or shortly after*
- ✓ *This year saw an improvement in sentencing in Congo with more deterring punishments handed*

1. Summary

Despite several challenges encountered during the year, the EAGLE teams pushed forward with 90 significant wildlife traffickers arrested in 6 countries. It is a good example of how team spirit and inner motivation plays a strong role in getting results and fighting obstacles. There was a drop in the number of arrests as compared to last year for several reasons. 7 projects functioned last year, although the Burkina Faso project was closed during the year. In Gabon, a magistrate strike and the change of regime limited the number of prosecutions with several cases simply adjourned.

More challenges observed at the beginning of the year were particularly tough and this stifled the smooth kick off of the various projects. Nevertheless, the teams worked very hard, especially in synergy and with the Central Coordination Unit (CCU), producing good results, tracking and arresting cross boundary traffickers. EAGLE Guinea, a new project opened its office in Conakry.

Investigations strategies and techniques were improved and the levels stepped up against international trafficking. A significant number of cross border traffickers were arrested as an indication of the improvement of investigation quality. Also, online investigations were pushed forward to produce more targets where field investigators could not find targets easily.

A structural reorganization of the EAGLE Uganda Team that has been going on for some time, to enable the project to become functional and results are expected to improve next year. Recruitment and training of activists for the EAGLE Guinea project has been done and continues

1,262 investigation missions were carried out to identify wildlife traffickers. 84 % of the arrested traffickers remained in prison at least at the early phases of the prosecution. During the year 65 traffickers were prosecuted and 38 of them handed imprisonment sentences of various time.

Corruption is prevalent in all levels of the enforcement and judicial process. In 4 cases of the operations, corruption was witnessed and exposed at the day of the arrest or shortly after. 5 traffickers arrested with 126 African grey parrots in a crackdown on a transnational live animals trafficking ring. 2 traffickers were arrested with 115 parrots in Abidjan and 3 traffickers were arrested with 11 Timneh parrots in Dakar. Documents exposed systemic corruption with bribe amounts included in calculations and a high level of complicity, including falsification of CITES documents, facilitating this transnational trafficking. 9 traffickers were arrested with 21 elephant tusks weighing 131 kg in a crackdown on a major ivory trafficking ring using hidden compartments in vehicles in August, in Gabon. The impunity driven by corruption and the light sentences given to major traffickers remains the key problem to organized wildlife crime as one of those connected to the arrest had been arrested in Cameroon and given a very light sentence.

Traffickers in ivory and other elephant parts represent the vast majority of arrests, while traffickers in pangolin scales are in second place, birds' traffickers are third and traffickers in primates are fourth.

Trafficking in ivory and other elephant parts represents most of the focus during this period resulting in the largest number of arrested traffickers. 56 traffickers were arrested trafficking in elephant tusks and other

body parts. 26 operations were carried out in 5 countries with 609 kg of ivory, which include 110 tusks and 135 ivory pieces, seized.

9 traffickers arrested in Gabon with 21 elephant tusks weighing 131 kg in a crackdown on a major ivory trafficking ring using hidden compartments in vehicles. The seizure of 21 tusks and 4 ivory pieces is a mere snapshot of the regular activities of this vast network operating for many years with representatives and stations spread all over Gabon, Congo, Equatorial Guinea and Cameroon, trafficking ivory between Central and West Africa.

4 traffickers were arrested with 21 tusks and 13 ivory statues and skins of a lion and a leopard in March in Togo. The arrest operation seizing 167 kg ivory was a hard one as the traffickers were extremely careful. One that tried to escape was captured in a good teamwork. The contraband was concealed in 2 grains bags found inside the boot of a vehicle.

3 traffickers, including a Burkinabe national, were arrested with 12 elephant tusks in May in Gabon. The Burkinabe arrived the scene of transaction on a red motorbike, unloaded a cardboard box carefully wrapped in adhesive tape from the motorbike's luggage rack. The box contained another bag where 12 ivory tusks were concealed. He was arrested shortly afterwards and he denounced another trafficker who was arrested a couple of hours later. They both denounced the third trafficker, a village chief. He was arrested 2 days later.

3 ivory traffickers were arrested with 6 elephant tusks in July, Côte d'Ivoire. A very large pair of tusks weighing 38kg belonged to an elephant killed in the Taï National Park - one of the biggest males left in the country. The park rangers had lost his tracks since January 2023. The traffickers used a taxi to transport the tusks, concealed in a bag, to the place of transaction.

14 pangolin scales traffickers were arrested in 5 operations. More than 300 kg of scales were seized. Pangolins are currently considered to be the most trafficked mammal in the world.

3 traffickers were arrested with 91 kg of pangolin scales in back-to-back arrests in September, in Cameroon. 2 traffickers were arrested as they attempted to sell a bag of pangolin scales. A third trafficker was arrested immediately after he arrived in the town where the arrest took place. He transported the pangolin scales on a motorbike from a nearby locality. They are well connected, at a significantly high level, to trafficking of pangolin scales in the area. They had links to smaller traffickers of pangolin scales.

3 traffickers were arrested with 78 kg of pangolin scales in May in Congo. They were cautious, tried a number of tricks and came around without the pangolin scales to the place of transaction. They mixed up the scales and parked it in a single bag that was transported on a motorbike. They were very knowledgeable in the illegal business and did everything they could to avoid arrest.

5 traffickers were arrested with 53 kg of pangolin scales and a hippo tooth in May in Congo. They were arrested in a complex operation that took much patience and initiatives by the arresting team. Some of the scales are of the rarer giant pangolin. The criminals were also caught trafficking two minerals - red cinnabar (mercury sulphide) and white cinnabar (mercury sulphate), the second being extremely lucrative for trafficking and toxic even for mere inhaling.

12 bird traffickers were arrested in Congo, Cote d'Ivoire and Senegal where a network of parrot traffickers with international links was dismantled. Hundreds of parrots including the Timneh parrots were rescued.

5 traffickers arrested with 126 African grey parrots in a crackdown on a transnational live animals trafficking ring. 2 traffickers arrested with 115 parrots in Abidjan and 3 traffickers arrested with 11 Timneh parrots in Dakar.

4 traffickers were arrested with 45 African grey parrots in June in Congo. The illegal network, including a DRC national, was trafficking across DRC and Congo. They arrived at the scene of transaction in a taxi. The parrots were transported in makeshift cages in the boot of the car. They proceeded cautiously as one of them lagged behind, providing cover. The parrots were crammed in two cages.

3 traffickers arrested attempting to trade an African hawk-eagle in Pointe Noire. The bird was taken to the Jane Goodall Institute for appropriate treatment and care.

6 primate traffickers were arrested, 4 in Cameroon, and 2 in Cote d'Ivoire. 2 baby chimps, a mandrill, a drill were rescued and a huge consignment of 40 primates seized in Togo and returned to DRC.

2 ape traffickers were arrested and a baby chimp rescued in a crackdown on a transnational criminal network in November, in Côte d'Ivoire. This criminal network was trafficking apes from Liberia, Ivory Coast and Guinea to China and to countries of the Arab Gulf. It applied similar *modus operandi* to previously dismantled networks in Guinea. Apes were smuggled under the cover of a legal business of live animals and connections with some of the biggest ape traffickers known in Africa are being investigated. The baby chimp was trafficked from Liberia to Ivory Coast on the night before the arrest and carried in a crate designed to transport two chimps at a time.

An ape trafficker was arrested, and a baby chimpanzee rescued; 2 more traffickers were arrested with a young mandrill in August, in Cameroon. The ape trafficker was arrested while attempting to sell the chimpanzee. The animal had been chained and caged alongside a dog in the home of the trafficker. The little female was frail and aggressive and looked like she had suffered from trauma. The trafficker talked about trying to sell the chimp to a governor. The mandrill was spotted in the street by the arresting team. The trafficker was arrested and a second detained at the police station when he showed up after police requested for his presence.

A primate trafficker was arrested and a drill rescued in November in Cameroon. The very young drill, an endangered primate, stressed and agitated, was tied with a rope in the waist. The trafficker, who works for a city council, transported the cage with the drill on his bike. He was waiting for another supply of a baby primate that was killed when local poachers shot dead its mother.

Togo stopped the smuggling of 40 primates in December. A shipment of 40 live primates locked in 3 crates, each divided to 10 tiny cells, left the Democratic Republic of the Congo and reached Togo on the way to its final destination, Thailand. After consultation with EAGLE, the CAAT at the Lomé airport stopped the shipment. Together with the EAGLE Togo team the authorities determined the illegalities of the absence of a CITES permit for 7 species and the absence of a re-export permit. The illegal shipment was seized and returned to DRC.

3 big cat skin traffickers were arrested in 2 operations in 2 countries. 2 leopard skins among other skins seized and a military officer arrested.

A trafficker was arrested with a leopard skin and other contraband in February in Senegal. The Burkina Faso national is also involved in gold trafficking in Mali. He activated several cross-border trafficking networks. He was arrested with a suitcase concealing a leopard skin, serval and crocodile skins and head, and hyena skin and head.

2 traffickers, including a military Marines officer, were arrested with a leopard skin in September in Congo. The warrant officer of the Congolese Navy transported the leopard skin in his car to Pointe Noire where he attempted to sell the contraband. After failing to conclude a deal, he contacted another trafficker, and both were arrested during attempts to sell the skin. The warrant officer resisted arrest and it took several minutes for the gendarmes to subdue the violent trafficker.

In order to maximize the deterrent effect, 1,262 media pieces were published in national media. The distribution of the media pieces on national media were 41 % on internet, 33 % on the radio, 19 % in the print media and 7 % on TV.

Content:

This report refers to activities from January till December 2023. This report includes: the activities in each area of our fight - Investigations, Operations, Legal, Media and External Relations; progress in developing the Network and strategic overview of our operations and their impact on wildlife crime.

1. Summary.....	2
2. Structure of the Network.....	7
3. Investigations	8
4. Arrest Operations	9
Corruption.....	10
Elephants	12
Big Cats.....	15
Primates	16
Pangolins	17
Birds	18
5. Legal Follow Up	19
6. Media	21
7. External Relations	24
8. Headquarters and Development of the EAGLE Network	29
9. Photos of the selected cases	31
Annex I - Summary of the Results.....	55
Annex II - List of Donors	57

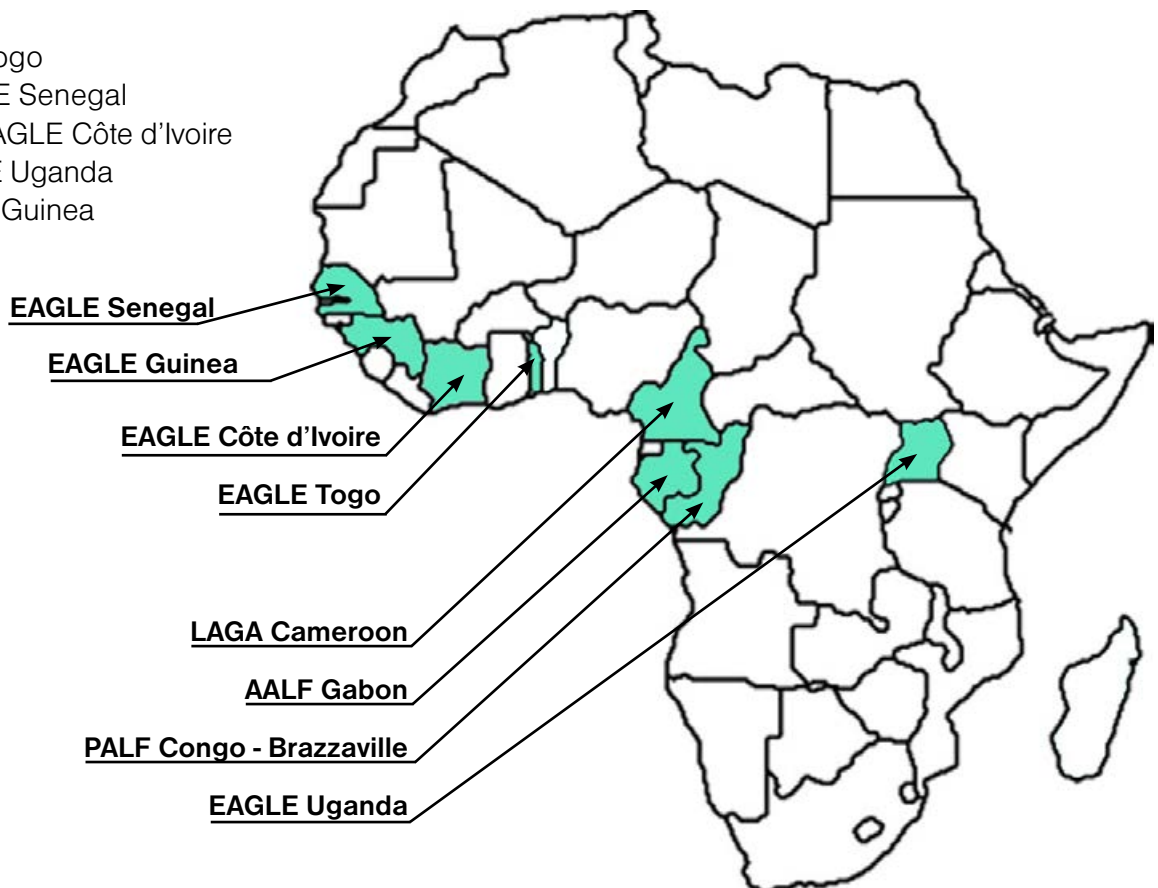
2. Structure of the Network

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, 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.*

The Central Coordination Unit is located in Nairobi.

The EAGLE Network operates in these countries:

1. Cameroon - LAGA
2. The Republic of Congo - PALF
3. Gabon - AALF
4. Togo - EAGLE Togo
5. Senegal - EAGLE Senegal
6. Côte d'Ivoire - EAGLE Côte d'Ivoire
7. Uganda - EAGLE Uganda
8. Guinea - EAGLE Guinea



3. Investigations

809 different investigation missions were carried out in 6 countries, leading to the arrest of 90 traffickers during 2023.

The investigations focused on ivory, birds, big cat skins and pangolin scales trafficking and the illegal trade in primates.

**Numbers of investigations
in 2023**

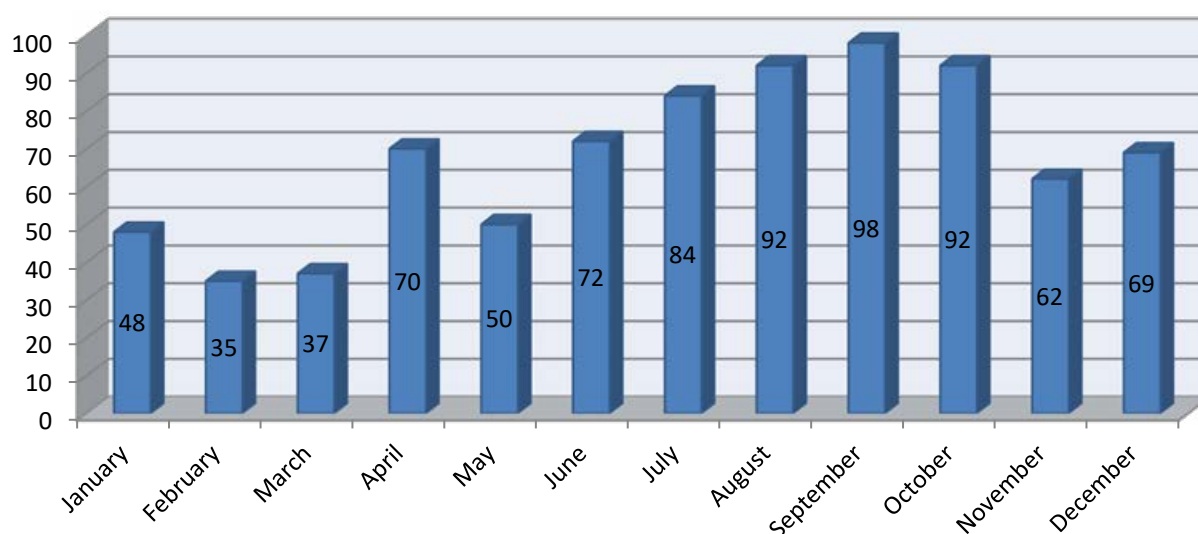


Fig. 1: Numbers of investigations in January – December 2023

Investigations were carried out in 6 countries producing some significant results. The investigation departments received constant support and assistance from the CCU that facilitated information exchange and backing among the countries. A number of cross border arrests were done thanks to these initiatives. Although there was a drop in the number of investigation missions as compared to last year, this could be explained by nature of investigations carried out and the challenges encountered at the beginning of the year, the quality of the investigations were very high and some of them produced top quality operations. Recruitment was intensified and investigators were tested in all countries and some joined the teams. The recruitment processes continued in all the countries to find more good investigators, especially investigators with specific profiles and skills.

4. Arrest Operations

90 significant wildlife traffickers were arrested. EAGLE Network members carried out 41 operations in 6 countries.

**Number of Arrested Traffickers
in January - December 2023**

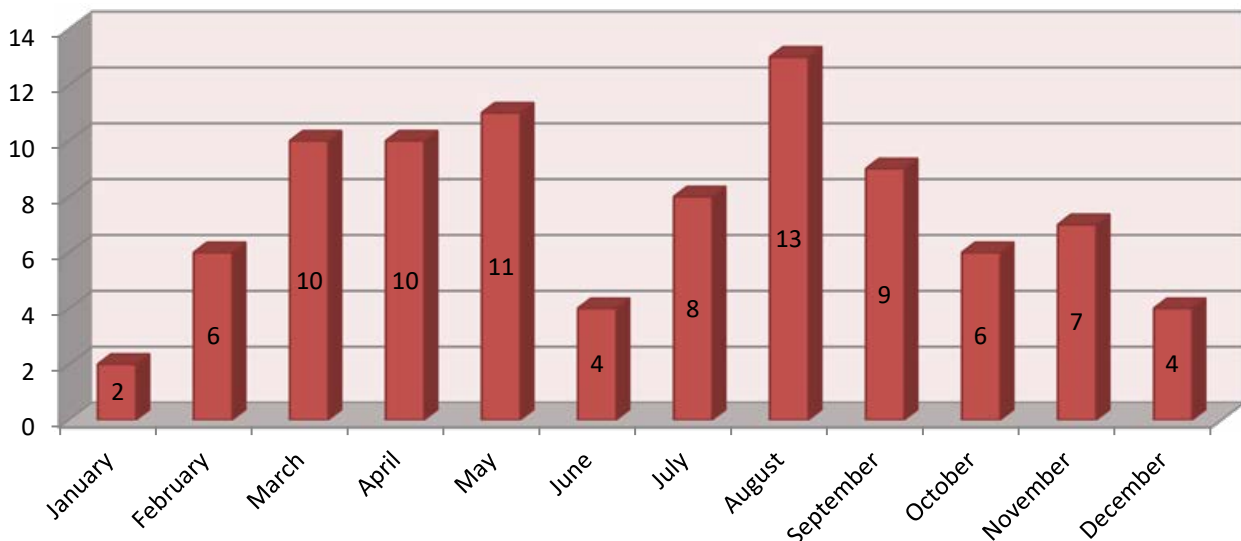


Fig. 2: Number of arrested traffickers January – December 2023

Vast majority of the arrested traffickers – 61 % were traffickers in ivory and other elephant parts. The second largest number were traffickers in pangolin scales traffickers with 16 % also. Third in focus of arrests were bird traffickers with 13 % of all the arrests. Primate traffickers made up 7 % of the arrests while big cat skin traffickers represented 3 %.

Distribution of the Arrested Traffickers According to Species

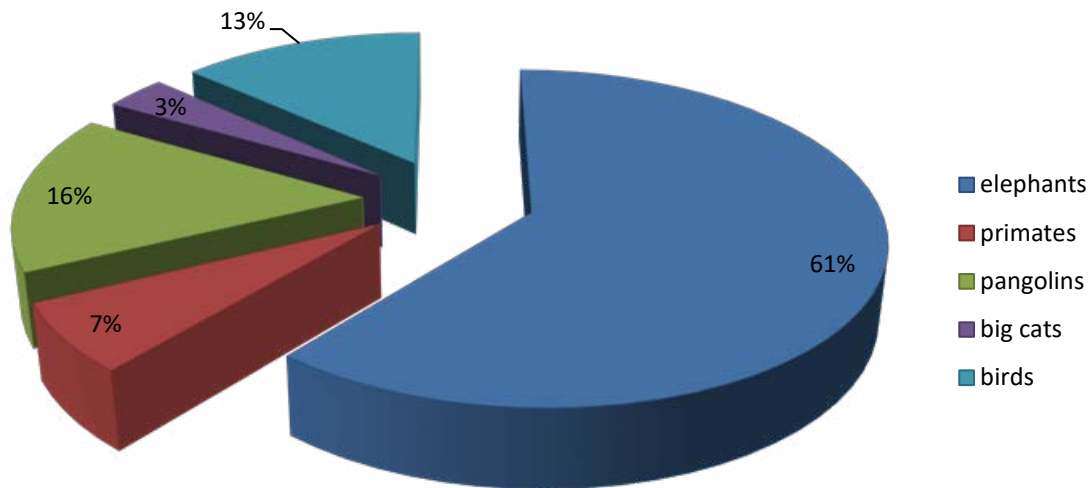


Fig. 3: Distribution of Arrested Traffickers According to Species

Corruption

Corruption is prevalent in all levels of the enforcement and judicial process. In 4 cases of the operation, corruption was witnessed and fought against at the day of the arrest or shortly after. A network of traffickers using corruption to facilitate ivory trafficking between Gabon and Cameroon was dismantled and 9 traffickers arrested with 21 elephant tusks weighing 131 kg. This network is estimated to have generated the killings of thousands of elephants, demonstrating that corruption is the main enabler of organized wildlife trafficking. 5 traffickers were arrested with 126 African grey parrots in a crackdown on a transnational live animals trafficking ring in Cote d'Ivoire and Senegal. Documents showed they used corruption to facilitate trafficking.

- In April in Cote d'Ivoire and Senegal, 5 traffickers were arrested with 126 African grey parrots in a crackdown on a transnational live animals trafficking ring, 2 traffickers were arrested with 115 parrots including 110 African grey parrots in Abidjan. One of them is a Senegalese national who was arrested while attempting to sell 91 African grey parrots in Abidjan. He denounced the supplier, an Ivorian national, who was stocking the birds in his hidden aviary. Raiding the quarantine, more evidence was found on the vast stretch and magnitude of the ring and its connection to ape trafficking. 3 cape parrots trafficked from

South Africa were also recovered. The African grey parrots were transported by road from Cameroon to Côte d'Ivoire by highly professional traffickers who have been doing this kind of business for decades. The Ivorian supplier has been trafficking for 30 years. He sourced birds from Liberia, Cameroon, Nigeria, and Ghana. He was considered as one of the biggest wholesalers in the country. Thanks to collaboration, the long and meticulous investigation involved the Senegal Team. The house of the Senegalese trafficker was searched in Dakar and 3 more traffickers arrested and 11 Timneh parrots seized. Documents exposed systemic corruption with bribe amounts included in calculations and a high level of complicity, including falsification of CITES documents, facilitating this transnational trafficking.

- 9 traffickers were arrested with 21 elephant tusks weighing 131 kg in a crackdown on a major ivory trafficking ring using hidden compartments in vehicles in August, in Gabon. The seizure of 21 tusks and 4 ivory pieces is a mere snapshot of the regular activities of this vast network operating for many years with representatives and stations spread all over Gabon, Congo, Equatorial Guinea and Cameroon, trafficking ivory between Central and West Africa. This network, estimated to have generated the killings of thousands of elephants, demonstrates that corruption is the main enabler of organized wildlife trafficking. One of its heads has been arrested in Cameroon 3 years ago with 600 kg ivory but was awarded a ridiculous sentence sending him right back to resume his illegal activities. While still on trial, he was busy with his illegal activities of collecting ivory in the neighbouring countries. The seizure in Gabon of 131 kg was on its way to be delivered right at his doorstep. The impunity driven by corruption and the light sentences given to major traffickers remains the key problem to organized wildlife crime.
- In December, Togo stopped the smuggling of 40 primates. A shipment of 40 live primates locked in 3 crates, each divided to 10 tiny cells, left the Democratic Republic of the Congo and reached Togo on the way to its final destination, Thailand. After consultation with EAGLE, the CAAT at the Lomé airport stopped the shipment. Together with the EAGLE Togo team the authorities determined the illegalities of the absence of a CITES permit for 7 species and the absence of a re-export permit. The illegal shipment was seized and returned to DRC. The primates were transported in appalling conditions in tiny cells with hardly any space to move. One of the monkeys was sitting on the dead body of another that was covered in fesses. Corruption and complicity are commonplace in the live animals' trade and especially in DRC. This is a test case for DRC to show that it has changed by finally prosecuting the traffickers behind this. The response of DRC has been very disappointing, changing the plan to take the primates directly to the sanctuary at the last minute. Instead, the illegal exporter himself transferred the primates to the Kinshasa Zoo, where due to negligence and delays 13 primates died. At the end the remaining 27 surviving primates were transferred, 24 to the JACK sanctuary and 3 to a controversial facility called P-WAC. The events caused a shake-up in the DRC CITES Office responding to allegation of corruption and complicity triggering two CITES Notifications to Parties. So far, no legal action to prosecute the offence of the illegal exporter has been carried by the DRC government as prescribed mandatory by law. And no corruption offence of the CITES Management Office was treated.
- 3 traffickers were arrested with 78 kg of pangolin scales were arrested in May, in Cameroon and as wildlife officials were establishing the offence report, they received pressure from the accused persons who proposed money so that the officials could discontinue the procedure and this was vigorously fought back.

Elephants

Trafficking in ivory and other elephant parts was the main focus during this period resulting in the largest number of arrested traffickers. 55 traffickers were arrested trafficking in elephant tusks and other body parts. 26 operations were carried out in 5 countries with 609 kg of ivory, which include 110 tusks and 135 ivory pieces, seized. Some examples are presented here:

- A trafficker was arrested with 2 elephant tusks in January in Congo. He concealed the tusks for over a week at the residence of the grandmother of one of his accomplices. He is part of a bigger network. He denounced two others who are on the run. Efforts continue to track them down and get them arrested.
- A trafficker was arrested with 2 elephant tusks in January in Gabon. He was arrested during an attempt to sell the tusks. He travelled some 20 km with the tusks concealed inside a polythene bag he carried. He was arrested upon arrival to town while walking to the place of transaction. 4 pieces of tusks were found inside the bag during a search that was immediately carried out. The 4 pieces of ivory were cut from 2 elephant tusks.
- 2 ivory traffickers, one a Ghana national, were arrested with 2 elephant tusks in February in Gabon. A Gabonese was arrested with 2 elephant tusks and he immediately denounced the other trafficker, a Ghanaian, who concealed the elephant tusks at his premises. The Gabonese is known to the police for the illegal trade in an endemic shrub known for its psychoactive effects and regulated by the law. A search found a good quantity of this shrub at his home. He arrived at the scene of transaction by car with the ivory concealed in the boot of the vehicle.
- 3 traffickers were arrested with 11 elephant tusks in February, in Côte d'Ivoire. 2 of them trafficked the ivory from the west of the country and collaborated with the third trafficker in Abidjan who stocked the ivory and harbored them. He equally concealed the ivory at his place and participated in the making of the deal as they were swiftly arrested while attempting to sell the elephants tusks.
- 5 traffickers were arrested with 4 elephant tusks in March in Gabon. They were arrested during their attempts at selling the elephant tusks. 4 traffickers were arrested when they arrived at the scene of transaction in a car transporting the ivory. During interrogations they denounced one more trafficker who was also arrested. The tusks were concealed in a grains bag.
- 4 traffickers were arrested with 21 tusks and 13 ivory statues and skins of a lion and a leopard in March in Togo. The arrest operation seizing 167kg ivory was a hard one as the traffickers were extremely careful. One that tried to escape was captured in a good teamwork. The contraband was concealed in 2 grains bags found inside the boot of a vehicle.
- 4 traffickers were arrested with 4 elephant tusks and two 12-gauge shotguns in April in Gabon. A trafficker was arrested with the elephant tusks. The driver who transported the ivory to the scene of transaction was also arrested. The trafficker denounced two more traffickers who were arrested the next day. The closely connected network was well organized and experienced.

- 3 traffickers, including a Burkinabe national, arrested with 12 elephant tusks in May in Gabon. The Burkinabe arrived the scene of transaction on a red motorbike, unloaded a cardboard box carefully wrapped in adhesive tape from the motorbike's luggage rack. The box contained another bag where 12 ivory tusks were concealed. He was arrested shortly afterwards and he denounced another trafficker who was arrested a couple of hours later. They both denounced the third trafficker, a village chief. He was arrested 2 days later.
- 2 traffickers arrested with 19 kg of elephant ivory in Congo. The couple, a man and a woman, were arrested attempting to sell 4 tusks. They collaborated in trading elephant tusks. The woman transferred a significantly huge amount of money to the man to enable him buy the tusks. The tusks were brought from the Plateaux Department to Brazzaville, where the traffickers were arrested. They were expertly cautious in their proceedings, shortly before their arrest. The woman arrived first to ensure everything was in good order and the man arrived later in a car with the tusks that were concealed inside a bag. The car waited on them.
- A trafficker was arrested with 4 elephant tusks in July, Gabon. The trafficker, a Burkina Faso national, was arrested shortly after he arrived the place of transaction with a grains bag containing the elephant tusks. The bag was concealed among construction materials, in the boot of a car. He claimed the tusks "belong" to an accomplice who is on the run.
- 3 ivory traffickers were arrested with 6 elephant tusks in July in Côte d'Ivoire. A very large pair of tusks weighing 38 kg belonged to an elephant killed in the Taï National Park - one of the biggest males left in the country. The park rangers had lost his tracks since January 2023. The traffickers used a taxi to transport the tusks, concealed in a bag, to the place of transaction. Traffickers are targeting the remaining population of elephants and given the small populations left in country, it was a surprise to see the enormous size of the tusks.
- 9 traffickers were arrested with 21 elephant tusks weighing 131 kg in a crackdown on a major ivory trafficking ring using hidden compartments in vehicles in August in Gabon. The seizure of 21 tusks and 4 ivory pieces is a mere snapshot of the regular activities of this vast network operating for many years with representatives and stations spread all over Gabon, Congo, Equatorial Guinea and Cameroon, trafficking ivory between Central and West Africa. This network, that is estimated to have generated the killings of thousands of elephants, demonstrates that corruption is the main enabler of organized wildlife trafficking. One of its heads was arrested in Cameroon 3 years ago with 600 kg ivory but was awarded a ridiculous sentence sending him right back to resume his illegal activities. 6 operations were carried to arrest the traffickers. The first and most crucial of the operations was carried out on August 8, when a Gabonese national of Cameroonian origin was arrested in Lambarene, Centre Gabon. He was driving a car with a partner inside. 19 elephant tusks and 4 pieces of ivory weighing a total of 120 kg were concealed in a hidden compartment of the vehicle. 18 rounds of 458 calibre ammunition, close to one million CFA francs in cash and an expired residence permit belonging to a well-known Cameroonian ivory trafficker were also uncovered in the car. On August 9, another main trafficker who had already been arrested for another case, was denounced and arrested for his role in the selling of some of the seized ivory. On August 10, a key man in the ivory trafficking network was arrested. He had facilitated one of the ivory transactions. On

August 11, a major trafficker who had been sentenced to prison in recent years was denounced and arrested in Makokou, North-East Gabon. He was in charge of collecting ivory in the East and North-East of Gabon. He was waiting to be delivered more ivory by the traffickers arrested on August 8. Investigations led to the arrest of 4 more traffickers and the seizure of 2 ivory tusks weighing 11 kg on August 17 and 18, all being members of the same trafficking ring. At different levels, all of these traffickers were working in the same syndicate. It was estimated that more than \$40 000 have been spent in buying ivory only within 9 months, at the time of their arrest. That could be estimated to more than 1 ton of ivory traded within less than a year. One of the kingpins who was arrested in October 2020 in Cameroon, with more than 600 kg of ivory, and while still on trial, he was busy with his illegal activities of collecting ivory in the neighbouring countries.

- 4 traffickers were arrested with an elephant tusk and 5 ivory pieces all weighing over 27 kg in September in Congo. A trafficker was arrested with an elephant tusk; he denounced another trafficker leading to the arrest of 3 more traffickers with 5 pieces of ivory in a follow up operation. He concealed the elephant tusk in a backpack and arrived on a motorbike. He was apprehended as he attempted to sell the elephant tusk. During questioning, he revealed the identity of the brain behind the trafficking, a well-known woman who lives in a locality called Mbomo. The woman and two other traffickers were arrested over the following days and 5 pieces of ivory were seized.
- A trafficker was arrested with an elephant tusk cut into 6 pieces in October in Congo. He was arrested during an attempt to sell the ivory. He is linked to an ivory trafficker arrested in September and sentenced to two years in prison. He arrived at the scene of transaction in a taxi, carrying a multicolour shopping bag in which the tusks were concealed. He visibly was in haste and tried to pull off the deal as fast as possible.
- A trafficker was arrested with 2 elephant tusks in October in Gabon. He transported the elephant tusks from Ovan which is located some 500 km from Libreville, where he was arrested. He concealed the tusks, cut into pieces, in spaces inside the doors of his car which he drove to Libreville. When he arrived Libreville, he put the tusks in a black backpack and took a taxi to the place of transaction, where he was arrested.
- 2 traffickers were arrested with 2 elephant tusks in October in Gabon. The first trafficker was arrested when he attempted to sell 2 elephant tusks weighing 16 kg. He arrived at the scene of transaction with the tusks concealed in a sports bag. He denounced the other trafficker, his uncle, who was arrested in the same town 3 days later.
- 2 traffickers were arrested with 2 tusks and a half in October in Togo. The two reside in Ghana and their trafficking operation has consisted of moving ivory cross-border on a motorbike with no matriculate number and concealed in bags of plantains. They used routes frequented by smugglers to get contraband across the borders.
- 2 traffickers were arrested with 6 pieces of ivory in November, in Congo. They were violent and injured a law enforcement officer during the arrest. The ivory pieces were securely tied together and hidden in a backpack that was concealed inside a cab which one of them took to the place of transaction. They car-

ried out a thorough inspection of the area. The operation team moved in and arrested them when they attempted to sell the ivory. One of the traffickers who watched from afar as the operation team zeroed in on the others, fled. Efforts are underway to arrest him.

- A trafficker was arrested with 2 elephant tusks in November in Gabon. The Cameroonian national was arrested as he attempted to sell the polished tusks. He concealed the tusks in an old rice bag and used a cab to travel to the place of transaction.
- A major trafficker was arrested in Dakar with 2 elephant tusks and 80 carved ivory items in a crackdown on a transnational trafficking ring in November, in Senegal. The seizure included also 18 leopard teeth and many wild animal skins. The contraband was hidden in plastic bags that were kept inside a rice bag. The bag was concealed in the boot of a cab that transported him to the place of transaction where he was arrested.
- A trafficker was arrested with 7 elephant tusks. In December, in Congo He is a priest and carried the ivory in a suitcase and a bag. He travelled over 400 km to Pointe Noire, where he was arrested, with the concealed elephant tusks. He also concealed a hammer that was probably there for attack in case the deal goes wrong.

Big Cats

3 big cat skin traffickers were arrested in 2 operations in 2 countries. 2 leopard skins among other skins seized and a military officer arrested. The arrests are presented here:

- A trafficker was arrested with a leopard skin and other contraband in February, in Senegal. The Burkina Faso national is also involved in gold trafficking in Mali. He activated several cross-border trafficking networks. He was arrested with a suitcase concealing a leopard skin, serval and crocodile skins and head, and hyena skin and head.
- 2 traffickers, including a military Marines officer, were arrested with a leopard skin in September, in Congo. The warrant officer of the Congolese Navy transported the leopard skin in his car to Pointe Noire where he attempted to sell the contraband. After failing to conclude a deal, he contacted another trafficker, and both were arrested during attempts to sell the skin. The warrant officer resisted arrest and it took several minutes for the gendarmes to subdue the violent trafficker. The traffickers were very cautious in dealing with the illegal transaction and had planted an undercover trafficker spying for them for any suspicious activity at the scene of transaction. The undercover fled when he discovered the arrest was going on.

Primates

6 primate traffickers were arrested, 4 in Cameroon, and 2 in Cote d'Ivoire. 2 baby chimps, a mandrill, a drill were rescued and a huge consignment of 40 primates seized in Togo and returned to DRC.

- An ape trafficker was arrested, and a baby chimpanzee rescued; 2 more traffickers were arrested with a young mandrill in August in Cameroon. The ape trafficker was arrested while attempting to sell the chimpanzee. The animal had been chained and caged alongside a dog in the home of the trafficker. The little female was frail and aggressive and looked like she had suffered from trauma. The trafficker talked about trying to sell the chimp to a governor. The mandrill was spotted in the street by the arresting team. The trafficker was arrested and a second detained at the police station when he showed up after police requested for his presence.
- A primate trafficker was arrested and a drill rescued in November in Cameroon. The very young drill, an endangered primate, stressed and agitated, was tied with a rope in the waist. The trafficker, who works for a city council, transported the cage with the drill on his bike. He was waiting for another supply of a baby primate that was killed when local poachers shot dead its mother.
- 2 ape traffickers were arrested and a baby chimp rescued in a crackdown on a transnational criminal network in November in Côte d'Ivoire. This criminal network was trafficking apes from Liberia, Ivory Coast and Guinea to China and to countries of the Arab Gulf. It applied similar modus operandi to previously dismantled networks in Guinea. Apes were smuggled under the cover of a legal business of live animals and connections with some of the biggest ape traffickers known in Africa are being investigated. The baby chimp was trafficked from Liberia to Ivory Coast on the night before the arrest and carried in a crate designed to transport two chimps at a time.
- Togo stopped the smuggling of 40 primates in December. A shipment of 40 live primates locked in 3 crates, each divided to 10 tiny cells, left the Democratic Republic of the Congo and reached Togo on the way to its final destination, Thailand. After consultation with EAGLE, the CAAT at the Lomé airport stopped the shipment. Together with the EAGLE Togo team the authorities determined the illegalities of the absence of a CITES permit for 7 species and the absence of a re-export permit. The illegal shipment was seized and returned to DRC. The primates were transported in appalling conditions in tiny cells with hardly any space to move. One of the monkeys was sitting on the dead body of another that was covered in fesses. Corruption and complicity are commonplace in the live animals' trade and especially in DRC. This is a test case for DRC to show that it has changed by finally prosecuting the traffickers behind this. The response of DRC has been very disappointing, changing the plan to take the primates directly to the sanctuary at the last minute. Instead, the illegal exporter himself transferred the primates to the Kinshasa Zoo, where due to negligence and delays 13 primates died. At the end the remaining 27 surviving primates were transferred, 24 to the JACK sanctuary and 3 to a controversial facility called P-WAC. The

events caused a shake-up in the DRC CITES Office responding to allegation of corruption and complicity triggering two CITES Notifications to Parties. So far, no legal action to prosecute the offence of the illegal exporter has been carried by the DRC government as prescribed mandatory by law. And no corruption offence of the CITES Management Office has been treated.

Pangolins

14 pangolin scales traffickers were arrested in 5 operations. More than 300 kg of scales were seized. Pangolins are currently considered to be the most trafficked mammal in the world. The examples are presented here:

- A trafficker was arrested with 55 kg of pangolin scales in April in Cameroon. He travelled 41 km with the bag of pangolins scales strapped to his motorcycle. He was arrested when he arrived at the scene of transaction and attempted to sell the pangolin scales. The operation came at the end of a long investigation that tracked and monitored the pangolins trafficker who is experienced in the illegal business. He activated a host of small traffickers in several villages, who supplied him with pangolins scales.
- 5 traffickers were arrested with 53 kg of pangolin scales and a hippo tooth in May in Congo. They were arrested in a complex operation that took much patience and initiatives by the arresting team. Some of the scales are of the rarer giant pangolin. The criminals were also caught trafficking two minerals - red cinnabar (mercury sulphide) and white cinnabar (mercury sulphate), the second being extremely lucrative for trafficking and toxic even for mere inhaling.
- 3 traffickers were arrested with 78 kg of pangolin scales in May in Congo. They were cautious, tried a number of tricks and came around without the pangolin scales to the place of transaction. They mixed up the scales and parked it in a single bag that was transported on a motorbike. They were very knowledgeable in the illegal business and did everything they could to avoid arrest.
- 2 traffickers were arrested with 47 kg of pangolin scales in July in Cameroon. The scales are from the endangered giant pangolin. The traffickers took steps to avoid arrest and used a motorcycle to move around. They transported the pangolin scales in a bag and moved hesitantly, conscious of the risks of their illegal business. The pangolin scales were driven from killed giant pangolins poached along the Sanaga River, which is the longest river in the country.
- 3 traffickers were arrested with 91 kg of pangolin scales in back-to-back arrests in September in Cameroon. 2 traffickers were arrested as they attempted to sell a bag of pangolin scales. A third trafficker was arrested immediately after he arrived in the town where the arrest took place. He transported the pangolin scales on a motorbike from a nearby locality. They are well connected, at a significantly high level, to trafficking of pangolin scales in the area. They had links to smaller traffickers of pangolin scales. Wildlife trafficking is rife in the area that has historically been weak in wildlife law enforcement. Before a road was tarred and a bridge built over the Sanaga River, it was very difficult to access, and wildlife trafficking was intense. The tide seems to be turning and couple of operations has been carried out in towns not too far away from the Sanaga River.

Birds

12 bird traffickers were arrested in Congo, Cote d'Ivoire and Senegal where a network of parrot traffickers with international links was dismantled. Hundreds of parrots including the Timneh parrots were rescued:

- 4 traffickers were arrested with 45 African grey parrots in June in Congo. The illegal network, including a DRC national, was trafficking across DRC and Congo. They arrived at the scene of transaction in a taxi. The parrots were transported in makeshift cages in the boot of the car. They proceeded cautiously as one of them lagged behind, providing cover. The parrots were crammed in two cages. The parrots were taken to the Jane Goodall Institute for appropriate care before their release to the wild.
- 5 traffickers arrested with 126 African grey parrots in a crackdown on a transnational live animals trafficking ringing Côte d'Ivoire and Senegal in April. 2 traffickers were arrested with 115 parrots including 110 African grey parrots in Abidjan. One of them is a Senegalese national who was arrested while attempting to sell 91 African grey parrots in Abidjan. He denounced the supplier, an Ivorian national, who was stocking the birds in his hidden aviary. Raiding the quarantine, more evidence was found on the vast stretch and magnitude of the ring and its connection to ape trafficking. 3 cape parrots trafficked from South Africa were also recovered. The African grey parrots were transported by road from Cameroon to Côte d'Ivoire by highly professional traffickers who have been doing this kind of business for decades. The Ivorian supplier has been trafficking for 30 years. He sourced birds from Liberia, Cameroon, Nigeria, and Ghana. He was considered as one of the biggest wholesalers in the country. Thanks to collaboration, the long and meticulous investigation involved the Senegal Team. The house of the Senegalese trafficker was searched in Dakar and 3 more traffickers arrested and 11 Timneh parrots seized. Documents exposed systemic corruption with bribe amounts included in calculations and a high level of complicity, including falsification of CITES documents, facilitating this transnational trafficking.
- 3 traffickers arrested attempting to trade an African hawk-eagle in Pointe Noire. The bird was taken to the Jane Goodall Institute for appropriate treatment and care

5. Legal Follow Up

The EAGLE Network legal teams in the 6 countries followed up the court cases of the 90 arrested traffickers. All the court cases were followed fighting corruption and ensuring imprisonment terms handed. 84 % of the arrested traffickers remained behind bars while on trial, at least from the beginning.

During the year 65 traffickers were prosecuted and 38 of them convicted to imprisonment sentences of various time. The majority of the 27 others were handed suspended prison sentences and or fines and damages. This year saw a strike in Gabon by magistrates limiting the number of court procedures successfully reaching the judgement stage, in a country with a very good prosecution to jail term record. Nevertheless, good deterring punishments were handed in Gabon and Congo. Some examples of good court decisions include:

- 3 ivory traffickers were sentenced to 6 months in prison in February, in Togo. They were arrested on November 12, 2022 with two elephant tusks.
- 2 traffickers were convicted to 2 years in prison in March, in Congo. They were arrested in May 2022 with 2 ivory tusks. One of them is a Malian national and the other a multiple repeat offender who has been convicted at least twice for similar offences.
- A pangolin scales trafficker was sentenced to 6 months in prison in June, in Cameroon. He was arrested in April with 55 kg of pangolin scales.
- 2 ivory traffickers were sentenced to 2 years in prison in July, in Congo. They were arrested on September 21, 2022 with two elephant tusks.
- A pangolin scales trafficker sentenced to 6 months in prison in October, in Cameroon. He was arrested in July with 47 kg of pangolins scales
- An ivory trafficker was sentenced to 2 years in prison in October, in Congo. He was arrested on September with 2 elephant tusks.
- 2 traffickers were sentenced to one year and four months in prison in November, in Gabon. They were arrested in June with 13 elephant tusks and a leopard skin.
- An ivory trafficker was sentenced to one and a half year in prison in December, in Congo. He was arrested on September with 7 elephant tusks.
- 2 ivory traffickers were sentenced to one year and two months in prison in December, in Gabon. They were arrested in October with 2 elephant tusks weighing over 16 kg.

- An ivory trafficker was sentenced to one year in prison in December, in Gabon. He was arrested in July with 4 elephant tusks.
- 5 ivory traffickers arrested by the Gendarmerie in November, were sentenced to 2 years in prison in December, in Gabon. They were arrested with an elephant tusk and the case was followed up by the Legal Team.

6. Media

Using the media to inform the public that the law is being actively enforced maximizes the deterrent value of our actions and the rising risks for potential traffickers to get to jail.

In order to provide a deterrent effect, 1,262 media pieces were published in national media.

The distribution of the media pieces on national media were 41% on internet, 33 % in radio, 19 % in print media and 7 % on TV.

EAGLE Network members also appeared on the international media scene and several international pieces were published.

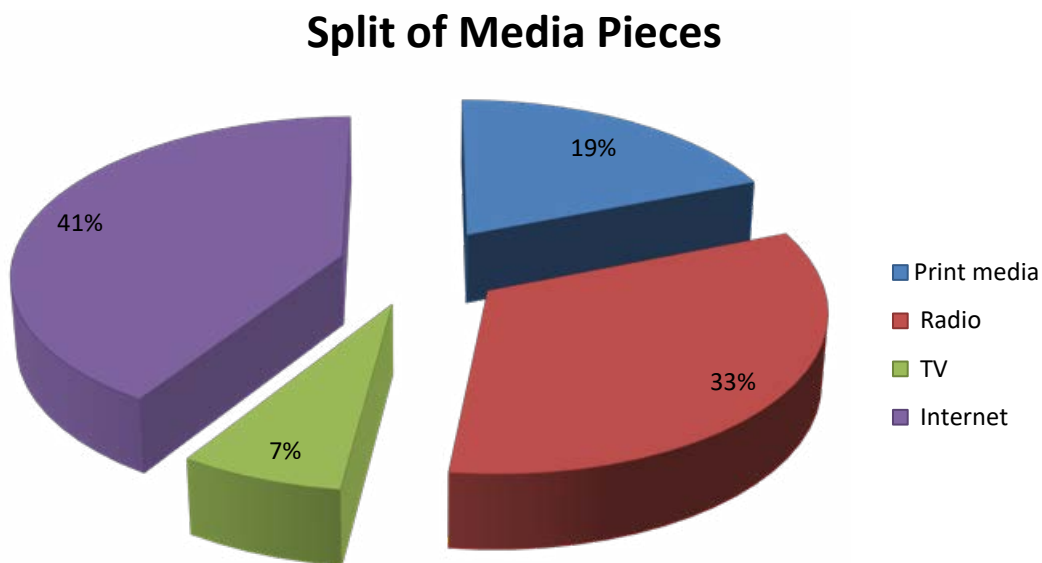


Fig. 4: Split of Media Pieces

**Number of Media Pieces Published in January -
December 2023**

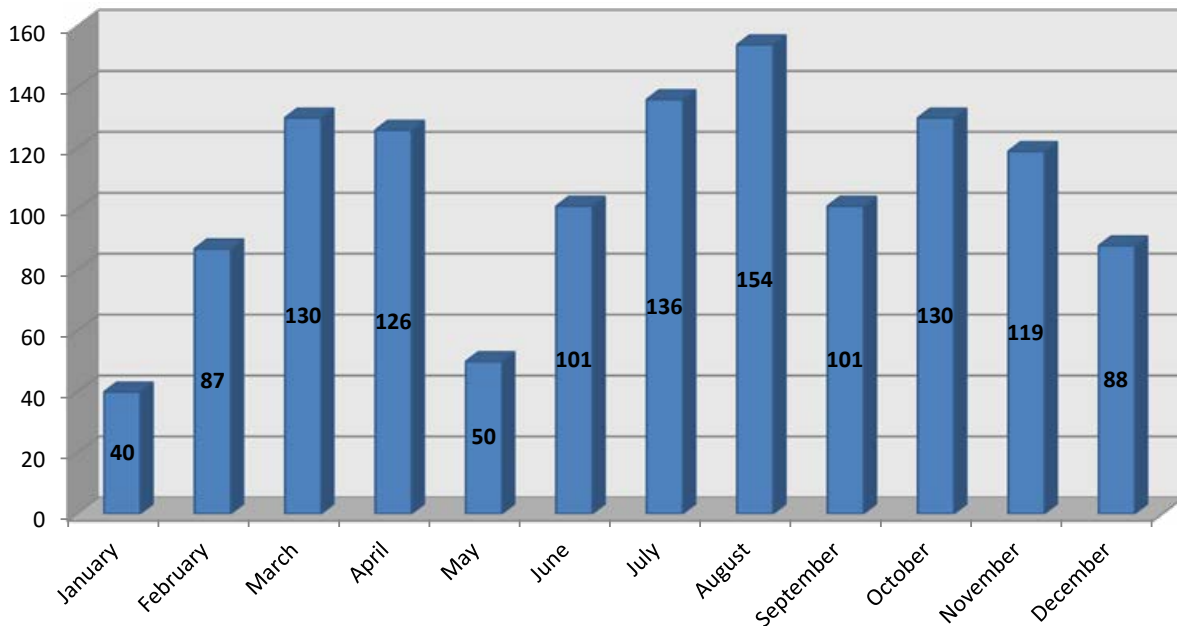


Fig. 5: Numbers of media pieces published in January - December 2023

International media

- In Gabon, the Activities Coordinator and a Legal Adviser participated at a workshop that aimed at providing journalists with tools to better address environmental crime issues in the country in February. During the event, the Activities Coordinator was invited to speak on wildlife trafficking and the Legal Adviser gave a presentation on illegal logging. The event was organised by the US Agency for Global Media
- *Ivory trafficking and Poaching*, a hard-hitting documentary on Conservation Justice's work to combat ivory trafficking was launched. Maxime Ginolin, an activist and a French film maker, and his partner Guillaume Martinez, cameraman, editor and composer, released the documentary that captures the impressive fieldwork to bring down the lucrative and far-reaching illegal ivory trade and reveals the underbelly of international trafficking in February. While in Gabon in May 2022, the two partners followed the Coordination Team and undercover informants as they risked their lives to help arrest the traffickers who have been slaughtering forest elephants for decades. Conservation Justice (the Gabon Team) was founded by Luc Mathot who is one of the Founding Directors of the EAGLE Network. In the last 12 years, more than 500

wildlife traffickers, mostly ivory traffickers, have been arrested and convicted thanks to the partnership between Conservation Justice and the Gabonese authorities. Ginolin is also the director of a shocking film “Grosse” that has received over 7 million views on Youtube. He is very involved for several years in animal rights activism. He has filmed in slaughterhouses, illegal trafficking and religious sacrifices. He directed the first French fiction film on animal slaughter “*Le Jugement*”. These numerous subjects feed into his narrative and that have led him to give conferences in universities such as the Sorbonne, the University of Sciences of Marseille and the Animal Rights National Conference in Los Angeles. He and his team at MagiCJack Production have been specialising in the production of socially-aware films for over 10 years.

- The arrest of 9 ivory traffickers in a crackdown on a major ivory trafficking ring in August, in Gabon was widely reported in the international media. Some links:

[Link to EXPRESS](#)

[Link to RFI](#)

[Link to AllAfrica](#)

- The LAGA Deputy Director’s interview was published in November, in Afrive, an international magazine that focuses on sustainable development in Africa. The interview focused on the fight against wildlife crime.

7. External Relations

Building a relationship of equals with government that is an exception from normal NGO-Government relationships and centering on the fight against corruption, ensuring effective enforcement and consequences for lack of law application is one of the main objectives of the EAGLE Network. This is realized through fostering government relations and engaging the international community to ensure good governance and law application, while pushing the EAGLE Network international messages of larger change. Fostering EAGLE Network's relations with Embassies and other members of the international community is therefore of high importance in the sensitive domain of law enforcement. During this year, the EAGLE activists held many meetings with international authorities, government officials within and outside of their countries, meetings with traditional rulers, they cooperated with local and international NGOs, participated in conferences and conducted several trainings.

Cameroon

- The Deputy Director participated at a pangolin conservation planning workshop, that brought together stakeholders in pangolin conservation in March, in Ghana. The workshop focused on producing a West African regional action plan for pangolin conservation to be validated and adopted by the range states and other pangolin conservation stakeholders. He was part of a panel on the role of law enforcement in pangolin conservation.
- He held a meeting with 3 officials from the US Departments of Justice and Agriculture to discuss wildlife law enforcement and illegal logging in the country in May.
- The Deputy Director held a meeting with Lisa Hywood, Founding Director of Tikki Hywood Foundation, who was on a visit to Cameroon in June. Discussions focused on possible areas of collaboration to strengthen the fight against pangolin trafficking.
- The Deputy Director and the Head of the Legal Department participated at a meeting with wildlife officials that focused on the Memorandum of Understanding to be signed with the Ministry of Wildlife and Protected Areas in July.

Congo

- The Coordinator held meetings in January with several wildlife, gendarmerie and judicial officials on the preparation and arrest of the trafficker. She met with the Internal Security Attaché of the French embassy and the Detachment 94 Unit Commander of the French Central Office for combating environmental and public health offences. They discussed the possibility of creating a specialized unit within the gendarmerie and training opportunities.
- The Coordinator met with a Member of Parliament during 2 working sessions to discuss wildlife crime and environmental issues in the country in February.
- The Coordinator was invited in March by the US Ambassador to a reception organised on the occasion of the arrival in office of the new Resident Director of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) for Congo Brazzaville, to whom she briefly presented the project. During the event, she held discussions with the US Ambassador, the EU Ambassador and the Italian Ambassador
- The Coordinator met with the INTERPOL Chief of the Wildlife Crime Brigade for Congo in March. They discussed operations and ways to restart and improve collaboration on ongoing cases.
- The Coordinator participated at the EU-Congo Partnership Forum and the Three Basins Summit. During the two events he met and briefly discussed with several diplomatic, government and NGO officials, notably the German Ambassador to Congo, among others in October.
- The Coordinator and the Head of the Legal Team did presentations on the legal framework and strategies to the fight against wildlife crime in Congo during a training at the National Gendarmerie School in November.

Gabon

- The Executive Director and the Activity Coordinator met and discussed with the Director of Cabinet of the Minister of Water and Forests, the Director of Investigations at the Directorate of General Research (DGR), the Director of Cabinet of the Commander-in-Chief of the National Gendarmerie and the Chief of Staff of the Departmental Gendarmerie, the Technical Director of the National Parks Agency (ANPN) and the Director General of Wildlife and Protected Areas in January. The meetings were focused on fighting wildlife trafficking and the strengthening of collaboration.
- They held meetings with the US Ambassador and the Head of the European Union Delegation to discuss collaboration in the fight against wildlife crime in January.
- The Activities Coordinator travelled to the United States where he was trained on investigation techniques, mission planning, field data collection, team management and safety during operations in April.

- The Director of Conservation Justice participated at a meeting organised by the EU that brought together several conservation organisations to Brussels in April. The meeting focused on understanding the activities of the organisations in the fight against wildlife trafficking to enable the EU shape its future programmes. He did a presentation on EAGLE and the fight against wildlife crime during the meeting.
- The Executive Director and the Regional Coordinator of Conservation Justice met with the Director of Cabinet of the Minister of Justice as well as with gendarmerie and security officials in Brazzaville on the fight against wildlife crime in July
- The Executive Director met with the Director General of Wildlife and Protected Areas, the Director of Wildlife Management, the Assistant Director of Environment and the Secretary General of Water and Forests respectively in September. Several issues were discussed including the fight against wildlife crime and the strengthening of collaboration.
- He held a meeting with the Minister of Water and Forests, in the presence of the Director General of Wildlife and Protected Areas, to strengthen collaboration in the fight against wildlife crime in October.

Togo

- The Interim Coordinator held a meeting with the Director of Cabinet of the Ministry of Territorial Administration, Decentralization and Territorial Development to discuss issues related to the registration of EAGLE Togo and wildlife crime in the country in February.
- He held a meeting with the Head of the Protected Areas and Wildlife Division and CITES Focal Point to discuss the fight against the illegal wildlife trade in April.
- He met and discussed with several US diplomatic officials during the farewell ceremony for the former Head of Political and Economic Affairs at the US Embassy in May. Discussions focused on EAGLE Togo and the fight against wildlife crime.
- On the occasion of the event marking the independence of the USA, the Interim Coordinator had brief discussions in June with the US Ambassador, the First Secretary and Head of the Infrastructure and Environment Team of the European Union Delegation, a UNDP Programme Officer, the Prosecutor at the Constitutional Court, the Prosecutor at the High Court of Lomé and the Central Director of the Judicial Police during the event. He highlighted the activities of EAGLE Togo and the strengthening of collaboration in the fight against wildlife crime.
- He held a meeting with the Head of the European Union Delegation to Togo to strengthen collaboration in the fight against wildlife crime and corruption. He introduced the EAGLE network in general and the EAGLE Togo project in particular in August. During discussions he focused on important wildlife law enforcement operations carried out in the country.

- He held a meeting with the Director of Prevention at the High Authority for the Prevention and Fight against Corruption and Related Offences (HAPLUCIA) to strengthen collaboration in the fight against corruption and wildlife crime in November.

Senegal

- The Team presented various modules on combatting wildlife crime during 3 training sessions at the Nio-koloko Koba National Park for 29 park officials in May. The trainings focused on wildlife crime, the wildlife law, techniques in identifying and concealing wildlife contraband, writing of offence statements and the rights of the defence.
- The Coordinator and the Head of the Legal Department participated at training for Heads of Airport Anti Trafficking Units from Senegal, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso and Togo in August. They presented various modules on combating wildlife crime during the training sessions.
- The Coordinator gave a presentation on corruption and wildlife crime during the 34th Interpol Wildlife Crime Working Group Meeting in December, in Lyon. The session was attended by 165 people of 56 nationalities, including 145 government representatives and 20 NGOs including EAGLE.

Côte d'Ivoire

- The Coordinator participated at a regional workshop in Accra, Ghana, on the conservation of pangolins in West Africa in March. The workshop brought together stakeholders in pangolin conservation in Africa and abroad. The outcome of the workshop was a draft of an ambitious action plan for the conservation of the 3 African pangolin species found in West Africa. He, alongside the Deputy Director of LAGA, was part of the panel that discussed the role of law enforcement in pangolins conservation.
- He held a meeting with the Director General of Forests and Wildlife on issues related to collaboration with the Ministry. Discussions also focused on the seized parrots in April.
- The Coordinator and a Legal Adviser met the Technical Adviser of the Ministry of Justice in May. The discussions focused on the EAGLE's activities and wildlife law enforcement in the country.
- He also met with the Program Officer in charge of environment issues of the European Union Delegation to present the work of EAGLE Côte d'Ivoire and discuss wildlife trafficking challenges in July.
- The Coordinator met with the Political Officer of the US Embassy to discuss wildlife law enforcement and to strengthen collaboration in the fight against wildlife crime in August.

Guinea

- The EAGLE Senegal Coordinator, who travelled to Guinea to kick start the new project, held a meeting in July with the Secretary General of the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development and discussed the start of activities of EAGLE Guinea. They equally discussed the possibility of holding a meeting with the Minister of Environment.
- She met with the Technical Adviser of the CITES Focal Point at the Ministry of Environment to discuss the start of activities of EAGLE Guinea and the fight against wildlife crime in the country in July.
- She held a meeting with the Director of the Customs Intelligence and Investigation Directorate (DRED) to introduce EAGLE-Guinea and discuss collaboration at the airport in July.
- She met with the Head of Customs at the airport and the Head of the Targeting Unit to discuss collaboration with EAGLE Guinea in fighting wildlife crime at the airport in July.
- The Team followed up the administrative procedures on the Memorandum of Understandings with the Ministry of the Environment and Sustainable Development, the Directorate General of the National Police and the Directorate General of Customs.

8. Headquarters and Development of the EAGLE Network

The countries received support and technical assistance from Central Coordination Unit (CCU) and Steering group members. This was done through missions or videoconferencing and other several media platforms to keep the quality of the work of all teams high. Several training sessions were carried out through these media.

A new project was started in Guinea and the restructuring of the EAGLE Uganda project, took a little longer than expected but considerable progress in recruitment and training was made with support from CCU.

Several investigators supported activities carried in other countries which helped to achieve more results.

- Nicolas Charron, the Monitoring and Evaluation Officer travelled to Gabon for an 8-day mission in July where he tested, evaluated and trained teams in the investigations, operations and legal departments. The mission also aimed at identifying gaps, challenges and solutions, improving the performance and discipline of the teams. He provided support and training in several areas including, strategy, reporting, planning, logistics, security, quality control, procedures and techniques, human and material resource management. Activities also included exercises, simulations and team building initiatives.
- Luc Mathot, the Founding Director of the EAGLE Network, and H  l  ne Blanchard, the Regional Coordinator of Conservation Justice, both travelled to Congo to support the Coordinator on management and external relations in July.
- Ofir Drori participated at a meeting held in the UK and organised by Conservation-Litigation.org of the Lancaster University in September. The meeting focused on environmental litigation - damages awarded in environmental cases or any other forms of reparations. The meeting brought together NGO experts from several countries notably Indonesia, the US, India, Liberia, Kenya among others. He highlighted the vast experiences and examples from the various countries of the EAGLE Network.
- The PALF Coordinator, Tiffany Gobert, came to the end, in May, of her over 2-year stay with the project. She recorded many successes during her time; notably, the renewal of the Memorandum of Understanding with the ministry and the arrest of 58 traffickers. She was replaced by Hom  fa Dovi Zennawoe, the former EAGLE Benin Coordinator.

- The new Guinea project was opened and a team led by the Coordinator of EAGLE Senegal Cecile Bloch, arrived Guinea to finalise the installation of the EAGLE Guinea office in July. Office equipment and logistics, including the purchase and installation of office furniture and services were carried out. The training of investigators, legal advisers and an assistant coordinator was done in Dakar by the Senegalese Team.

9. Photos of the selected cases

A trafficker arrested with 2 elephant tusks in Gabon

A trafficker was arrested with 2 elephant tusks in Gabon, in January. He was arrested during an attempt to sell the tusks. He travelled some 20 km with the tusks concealed inside a polythene bag he carried. He was arrested upon arrival to town while walking to the place of transaction. 4 pieces of tusks were found inside the bag during a search that was immediately carried out. The 4 pieces of ivory were cut from 2 elephant tusks. He was remanded in custody to be transferred to Libreville where they were presented to the Prosecutor of the Special Court.



A trafficker was arrested with 2 elephant tusks in Congo

A trafficker was arrested with 2 elephant tusks in Congo, in January. He concealed the tusks for over a week at the residence of the grandmother of one of his accomplices. He is part of a bigger network. He denounced two others who are on the run. Efforts continue to track them down and get them arrested.



2 ivory traffickers arrested with 2 elephant tusks in Gabon

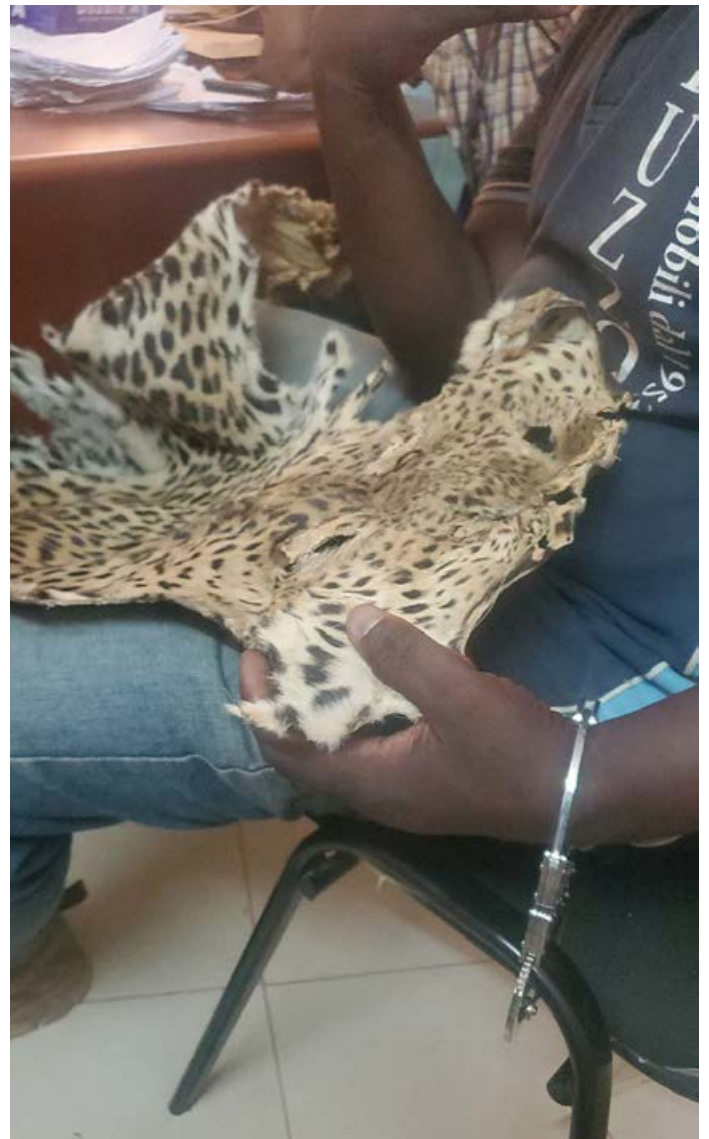


2 ivory traffickers, one a Ghana national, were arrested with 2 elephant tusks in Gabon, in February. A Gabonese was arrested with 2 elephant tusks and he immediately denounced the other trafficker, a Ghanaian, who concealed the elephant tusks at his premises. The Gabonese is known to the police for the illegal trade in an endemic shrub known for its psychoactive effects and regulated by the law. A search found a good quantity of this shrub at his home. He arrived the scene of transaction by car with the ivory concealed in the boot of the vehicle.

A trafficker arrested with a leopard skin in Senegal



A trafficker arrested with a leopard skin and other contraband in February. The Burkina Faso national is also involved in gold trafficking in Mali. He activated several cross-border trafficking networks. He was arrested with a suitcase concealing a leopard skin, serval and crocodile skins and head, and hyena skin and head.



3 traffickers arrested with 11 elephant tusks in Côte d'Ivoire

3 traffickers arrested with 11 elephant tusks in Côte d'Ivoire, in February. 2 of them trafficked the ivory from the west of the country and collaborated with the third trafficker in Abidjan who stocked the ivory and harbored them. He equally concealed the ivory at his place and participated in the making of the deal as they were swiftly arrested while attempting to sell the elephants tusks.



A convicted trafficker arrested in Congo

A convicted trafficker who was sentenced to 5 years in prison in April 2022 and never returned following his release on bail during the trial, was arrested in Congo, in March. He had been evading authorities who went all the way out with the Team's assistance to arrest him. He shall complete his full sentence in prison. This sends a strong message to traffickers that they will be pursued and the law will be applied.



4 traffickers arrested with 167 kg of ivory in Togo

4 traffickers were arrested with 21 tusks and 13 ivory statues and skins of a lion and a leopard in Togo in March. The arrest operation seizing 167 kg ivory was a hard one as the traffickers were extremely careful. One that tried to escape was captured in a good teamwork. The contraband was concealed in 2 grains bags found inside the boot of a vehicle.



A trafficker arrested with 55 kg of pangolin scales in Cameroon

A trafficker was arrested with 55 kg of pangolin scales in Cameroon in April. He travelled 41 km with the bag of pangolins scales strapped to his motorcycle. He was arrested when he arrived at the scene of transaction and attempted to sell the pangolin

scales. The operation came at the end of a long investigation that tracked and monitored the pangolin trafficker who is experienced in the illegal business. He activated a host of small traffickers in several villages, who supplied him with pangolin scales.



5 traffickers arrested with 126 African grey parrots in Senegal and Côte d'Ivoire in April

5 traffickers were arrested with 126 African grey parrots in a crackdown on a transnational live animals trafficking ring in Côte d'Ivoire and Senegal.

2 traffickers were arrested with 115 parrots including 110 African grey parrots in Cote d'Ivoire. One of them is a Senegalese national who was arrested while attempting to sell 91 African grey parrots in Abidjan. He denounced the supplier, an Ivorian national, who was stocking the birds in his hidden aviary. Raiding the quarantine, more evidence was found on the vast stretch and magnitude of the ring and its connection to ape trafficking. The African grey parrots were transported by road from Cameroon to Côte d'Ivoire by highly professional traffickers who have been doing this kind of business for decades. The Ivorian supplier sourced birds from Liberia, Cameroon, Nigeria, and Ghana. He was considered as one of the biggest wholesalers in the country.

3 traffickers were arrested with 11 Timneh parrots in Senegal. The house of the Senegalese trafficker in Dakar was searched and 3 traffickers were arrested with 11 Timneh parrots.



8 traffickers arrested with 131 kg of pangolin scales in Cameroon and Congo



3 traffickers were arrested with 78 kg of pangolin scales in Cameroon, in May. They were cautious, tried a number of tricks and came around without the pangolin scales to the place of transaction. They mixed up the scales and parked it in a single bag that was transported on a motorbike.



5 traffickers were arrested with 53 kg of pangolin scales and a hippo tooth in Congo, in May. They were arrested in a complex operation that took much patience and initiatives by the arresting team. Some of the scales are of the rarer giant pangolin. The criminals were also caught trafficking two minerals

- red cinnabar (mercury sulphide) and white cinnabar (mercury sulphate), the second being extremely lucrative for trafficking and toxic even for mere inhaling.



4 traffickers were arrested with 45 African grey parrots in Congo

4 traffickers were arrested with 45 African grey parrots in Congo, in June. The illegal network, including a DRC national, was trafficking across DRC and Congo. They arrived at the scene of transaction in a taxi. The parrots were transported in makeshift cages in the boot of the car. They proceeded cautiously as one of them lagged behind, providing cover. The parrots were crammed in two cages. The parrots were taken to the Jane Goodall Institute for appropriate care before their release to the wild.



2 traffickers arrested with 47 kg of pangolin scales in Cameroon

2 traffickers arrested with 47 kg of pangolin scales in Cameroon in July. The scales are from the endangered giant pangolin. The traffickers took steps to avoid arrest and used a motorcycle to move around. They transported the pangolin scales in a bag and moved hesitantly, conscious of the risks of their illegal business. The pangolin scales were driven from killed giant pangolins poached along the Sanaga River, which is the longest river in the country.



2 traffickers arrested with 19 kg of elephant ivory in Congo in July

2 traffickers arrested with 19 kg of elephant ivory. The couple, a man and a woman, were arrested attempting to sell 4 tusks. They collaborated in trading elephant tusks. The woman transferred a significantly huge amount of money to the man to enable him buy the tusks. The tusks were brought from the Plateaux Department to Brazzaville, where the traffickers were arrested. They were expertly cautious in their proceedings, shortly before their arrest. The woman arrived first to ensure everything was in good order and the man arrived later in a car with the tusks that were concealed inside a bag. The car waited on them.



3 traffickers arrested with 12 elephant tusks in Gabon

3 traffickers, including a Burkinabe national, were arrested with 12 elephant tusks in Gabon, in May. The Burkinabe arrived the scene of transaction on a red motorbike, unloaded a cardboard box carefully wrapped in adhesive tape from the motorbike's luggage rack. The box contained another bag where 12 ivory tusks were concealed. He was arrested shortly afterwards and he denounced another trafficker who was arrested a couple of hours later. They both denounced the third trafficker, a village chief. He was arrested 2 days later.



3 ivory traffickers arrested with 6 elephant tusks in Côte d'Ivoire in July

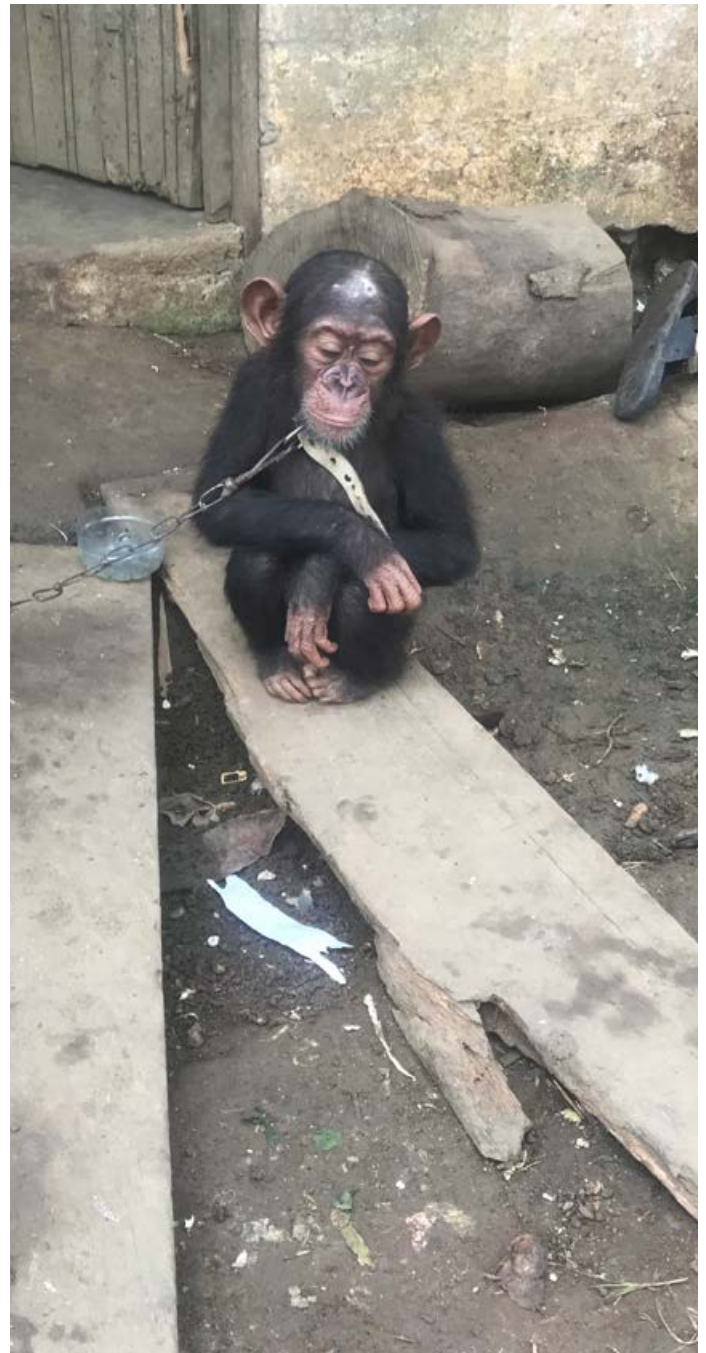
3 ivory traffickers arrested with 6 elephant tusks. A very large pair of tusks weighing 38kg belonged to an elephant killed in the Taï National Park - one of the biggest males left in the country. The park rangers had lost his tracks since January 2023. The traffick-

ers used a taxi to transport the tusks, concealed in a bag, to the place of transaction. Traffickers are targeting the remaining population of elephants and given the small populations left in country, it was a surprise to see the enormous size of the tusks.



An ape trafficker arrested, and a baby chimpanzee rescued; 2 more traffickers arrested with a young mandrill in Cameroon in August

An ape trafficker arrested, and a baby chimpanzee rescued; 2 more traffickers arrested with a young mandrill. The ape trafficker was arrested while attempting to sell the chimpanzee. The animal had





been chained and caged alongside a dog in the home of the trafficker. The little female was frail and aggressive and looked like she had suffered from trauma. The trafficker talked about trying to sell the chimp to a governor. The mandrill was spotted in the street by the arresting team. The trafficker was arrested and a second detained at the police station when he showed up after police requested for his presence.



9 traffickers arrested with 21 elephant tusks weighing 131 kg in Gabon in August



9 traffickers arrested with 21 elephant tusks weighing 131 kg in a crackdown on a major ivory trafficking ring using hidden compartments in vehicles. The seizure of 21 tusks and 4 ivory pieces is a mere snapshot of the regular activities of this vast network operating for many years with representatives and stations spread all over Gabon, Congo, Equatorial Guinea and Cameroon, trafficking ivory between Central and West Africa.

This network, that is estimated to have generated the killings of thousands of elephants, demonstrates that corruption is the main enabler of organized wildlife trafficking. One of its heads has been arrested in Cameroon 3 years ago with 600 kg ivory but was awarded a ridiculous sentence sending him right back to resume his illegal activities.



6 operations were carried to arrest the traffickers. The first and most crucial of the operations was carried out on August 8, when a Gabonese national of Cameroonian origin was arrested in Lambarene, Centre Gabon. He was driving a car with a partner inside. 19 elephant tusks and 4 pieces of ivory weighing a total of 120 kg were concealed in a hidden compartment of the vehicle. 18 rounds of 458 calibre ammunition, close to one million CFA francs in cash and an expired residence permit belonging to a well-known Cameroonian ivory trafficker were also uncovered in the car.

On August 9, another main trafficker who had already been arrested for another case, was denounced and arrested for his role in the selling of some of the seized ivory. On August 10, a key man in the ivory trafficking network was arrested. He had facilitated one of the ivory transactions. On August 11, a major trafficker who had been sentenced to prison in recent years was denounced and arrested in Makokou, North-East Gabon. He was in charge of collecting ivory in the East and North-East of Gabon. He was waiting to be delivered more ivory by the traffickers arrested on August 8. Investigations led to the arrest of 4 more traffickers and the seizure of 2 ivory tusks weighing 11 kg on August 17 and 18, all being members of the same trafficking ring.

At different levels, all of these traffickers were working in the same syndicate.

It was estimated that more than \$40 000 have been spent in buying ivory only in the past 9 months. That could be estimated to more than 1 ton of ivory traded within less than a year.

One of the kingpins of who was arrested in October 2020 in Cameroon, with more than 600 kg of ivory, on his way to selling the contraband, dissimu-



lated it in a hidden compartment of his truck. While still on trial, he was busy with his illegal activities of collecting ivory in the neighbouring countries. The seizure in Gabon of 131 kg was on its way to be delivered right at his doorstep.

The impunity driven by corruption and the light sentences given to major traffickers remains the key problem to organized wildlife crime.

3 traffickers arrested with 91 kg of pangolin scales in Cameroon in September

2 traffickers were arrested as they attempted to sell a bag of pangolin scales. A third trafficker was arrested immediately after he arrived in the town where the arrest took place. He transported the pangolin scales on a motorbike from a nearby locality. They are well connected, at a significantly high level, to trafficking of pangolin scales in the area. They had links to smaller traffickers of pangolin scales. Wildlife trafficking is rife in the area that has historically been weak in wildlife law enforcement.



4 ivory traffickers arrested in Congo in September

4 traffickers arrested with an elephant tusk and 5 ivory pieces all weighing over 27 kg. A trafficker was arrested with an elephant tusk; he denounced another trafficker leading to the arrest of 3 more traffickers with 5 pieces of ivory in a follow up operation. He concealed the elephant tusk in a backpack and arrived on a motorbike. He was apprehended as he attempted to sell the elephant tusk. During questioning, he revealed the identity of the brain behind the trafficking, a well-known woman who lives in a locality called Mbomo. The woman and two other traffickers were arrested over the following days and 5 pieces of ivory were seized.



3 ivory traffickers arrested in Gabon in October

A trafficker arrested with 2 elephant tusks. He transported the elephant tusks from Ovan which is located some 500 km from Libreville, where he was arrested. He concealed the tusks, cut into pieces, in spaces inside the doors of his car which he drove to Libreville. When he arrived Libreville, he put the tusks in a black backpack and took a taxi to the place of transaction, where he was arrested.

2 traffickers arrested with 2 elephant tusks. The first trafficker was arrested when he attempted to sell 2 elephant tusks weighing 16 kg. He arrived at the scene of transaction with the tusks concealed in a sports bag. He denounced the other trafficker, his uncle, who was arrested in the same town 3 days later.



2 traffickers arrested with 2 elephant tusks



A trafficker arrested with 2 elephant tusks.



2 ape traffickers arrested and a baby chimp rescued in Côte d'Ivoire in November

2 ape traffickers arrested and a baby chimp rescued in a crackdown on a transnational criminal network. This criminal network was trafficking apes from Liberia, Ivory Coast and Guinea to China and to countries of the Arab Gulf. It applied similar modus operandi to previously dismantled networks in Guinea. Apes were smuggled under the cover of a legal business of live animals and connections with some of the biggest ape traffickers known in Africa are being investigated.

The baby chimp was trafficked from Liberia to Ivory Coast on the night before the arrest and carried in a crate designed to transport two chimps at a time.

The chimpanzees of West Africa are now classified as critically endangered. They are at great risk of extinction from such specialized trafficking rings.

The baby chimp is a less than 2 years old female and got her family killed to be captured. She will receive long term care in the Akatia sanctuary.





A primate trafficker arrested and a drill rescued in Cameroon in November

The very young drill, an endangered primate, stressed and agitated, was tied with a rope in the waist. The trafficker, who works for a city council, transported the cage with the drill on his bike. He was waiting for another supply of a baby primate that was killed when local poachers shot dead its mother.



An ivory trafficker arrested in Senegal in November

A major trafficker arrested in Dakar with 2 elephant tusks and 80 carved ivory items in a crackdown on a transnational trafficking ring. The seizure included also 18 leopard teeth and many wild animal skins. The contraband was hidden in plastic bags that were kept inside a rice bag. The bag was concealed in the boot of a cab that transported him to the place of transaction where he was arrested.



3 bird traffickers arrested in Congo in December

3 traffickers arrested attempting to trade an African hawk-eagle in Pointe Noire. The bird was taken to the Jane Goodall Institute for appropriate treatment and care.

Togo stopped the smuggling of 40 primates in December

Togo stopped the smuggling of 40 primates. A shipment of 40 live primates locked in 3 crates, each divided to 10 tiny cells, left the Democratic Republic of the Congo and reached Togo on the way to its final destination, Thailand. After consultation with EAGLE, the CAAT at the Lomé airport stopped the shipment.

Together with the EAGLE Togo team the authorities determined the illegalities of the absence of a CITES permit for 7 species and the absence of a re-export permit. The illegal shipment was seized and returned to DRC.

The primates were transported in appalling conditions in tiny cells with hardly any space to move. One of the monkeys was sitting on the dead body of another that was covered in fesses.



Corruption and complicity are commonplace in the live animals' trade and especially in DRC. This is a test case for DRC to show that it has changed by finally prosecuting the traffickers behind this.

The response of DRC has been very disappointing, changing the plan to take the primates directly to the sanctuary at the last minute. Instead, the illegal exporter himself transferred the primates to the Kinshasa Zoo, where due to negligence and delays 13 primates died. At the end the remaining 27 surviving primates were transferred, 24 to the JACK sanctuary and 3 to a controversial facility called P-WAC.



The events caused a shake-up in the DRC CITES Office responding to allegation of corruption and complicity triggering two CITES Notifications to Parties.

So far, no legal action to prosecute the offence of the illegal exporter has been carried by the DRC government as prescribed mandatory by law. And no corruption offence of the CITES Management Office has been treated.



Annex I - Summary of the Results

Number of investigations per month per country

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	<i>total per country</i>
Cameroon	6	3	2	15	5	15	11	9	11	12	12	5	106
Congo	8	12	16	4	10	11	13	16	13	11	5	14	133
Gabon	8	8	9	9	9	8	9	8	14	8	7	8	105
Togo	6	5	8	5	7	5	4	6	10	7	8	4	75
Senegal	4	1	2	19	8	20	30	38	25	31	13	18	209
Côte d'Ivoire	16	6	0	18	11	13	17	15	25	23	17	20	181
total per month	48	35	37	70	50	72	84	92	98	92	62	69	809

Number of arrests per month per country

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	<i>total per country</i>
Cameroon	0	0	0	1	3	0	2	3	3	0	1	0	13
Congo	1	0	1	0	5	4	2	0	6	1	2	4	26
Gabon	1	2	5	4	3	0	1	10	0	3	1	0	30
Togo	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	6
Senegal	0	1	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	5
Côte d'Ivoire	0	3	0	2	0	0	3	0	0	0	2	0	10
total per month	2	6	10	10	11	4	8	13	9	6	7	4	90

Number of media pieces by month by country

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	total by country
Cameroon	11	14	1	11	28	17	0	23	31	18	15	10	179
Congo	14	29	30	9	2	23	43	31	28	33	31	23	296
Gabon	0	20	15	14	3	15	17	37	0	6	7	0	134
Togo	15	20	30	15	15	15	15	16	15	45	30	30	261
Senegal	0	4	0	30	0	0	0	0	0	0	34	0	68
Côte d'Ivoire	0	0	54	47	2	31	61	47	27	28	2	25	324
total by month	40	87	130	126	50	101	136	154	101	130	119	88	1262

Number of prosecutions by month by country

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	total
Cameroon	0	2	4	2	0	3	0	2	0	4	3	1	21
<i>sentenced to jail</i>	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	0		2	1	0	6
Congo	0	0	4	0	0	0	3	4	0	3	0	4	18
<i>sentenced to jail</i>	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	4	0	1	0	1	10
Gabon	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	10	12
<i>sentenced to jail</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	9	11
Togo	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
<i>sentenced to jail</i>	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Senegal	1	0	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	6
<i>sentenced to jail</i>	1	0	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	6
Côte d'Ivoire	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	2	0	5
<i>sentenced to jail</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
total	1	5	9	5	0	3	6	6	0	7	7	16	65
<i>sentenced to jail</i>	1	5	3	3	0	1	4	4	0	3	3	11	38

Annex II - List of Donors



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: jules@eagle-enforcement.org
3. Gabon – AALF: luc@eagle-enforcement.org
4. Togo – EAGLE Togo: darius@eagle-enforcement.org
5. Senegal – EAGLE Senegal: cebloch@eagle-enforcement.org
6. Côte d'Ivoire – EAGLE Côte d'Ivoire: gaspard@eagle-enforcement.org
7. Uganda – EAGLE Uganda: ofir@eagle-enforcement.org
5. Guinea – EAGLE Guinea: cebloch@eagle-enforcement.org