

The Last Great Ape Organization – LA GA

January 2010 Report



Highlights

- Operations started against **4 international parrot traffickers** in Douala – Littoral following the seizure of more than **1000 parrots**.
- **A principal Internet wildlife dealer** arrested in Buea – South West Region
- **3 cases sentenced this month against 4 dealers**.

General

This month was marked by a special focus on international illegal trafficking of African Grey parrots and Internet wildlife trafficking.

An operation was started against **4 international illegal traffickers of African Grey parrots. 2 of the traffickers are well known in Cameroon with 2 other accomplices one of whom is a Nigerian national.** The traffickers are well connected to a big export network with accomplices in the Democratic Republic of Congo from where falsified government documents and CITES Permits used for the illegal exportation are issued. From all indications, they also have accomplices in the control posts at the airport through which the parrots pass without any proper control; and Ethiopian Airlines used for the transportation of the parrots seems to facilitate these illegal deals. The Airlines chose to move shipment without the required documents and we assume that it is not because of lack of knowledge pertaining to the requisite documents used for wildlife exportation. **More than 1000 African Grey parrots were seized at the Douala International airport** ready to be exported to Bahrain and Kuwait with the collaboration of the Douala Judicial Police. This seizure furthermore validated information we had before about the organized chain of complicity in the parrot trade and how **white-collar criminals thrive on this complicity gaining a legitimate cover and eliminating the risk factor.** The parrots will be progressively released into the wild by the Limbe Wildlife Center where they were taken.

A principal Internet wildlife dealer engaged in fraud and illegal wildlife trade over the Internet was arrested in Buea – South West Region. He was arrested for falsifying government documents and CITES Permits that he used to lure a victim in the Netherlands to pay for a capuchin monkey which he did not have. His connection to other forms of fraud including illegal immigration and adoption scams is still being investigated.

3 cases were sentenced this month against 4 wildlife dealers. The Court of First Instance of Bamenda – North West Region sentenced **2 Internet wildlife dealers** who were arrested trying to sell a chimp over the Internet to a client in USA using falsified government documents and CITES Permit; and 2 sentenced by the Court of First Instance of Djoum – South who were arrested in Djoum for illegal killing and trading in protected wildlife species.

In a meeting held by the LAGA family, the **LAGA Director introduced weekly meeting sessions.** Other meetings and the agendas can be initiated by any LAGA family member at any time. These meetings are geared towards identifying problems and proposing solutions to these problems so as to ascertain the smooth running of the organization. In a separate meeting, **a new procedure, rules and regulations** were put in place **governing operations so as to increase their effectiveness.**

Investigations

- **22 investigations** of varying lengths were carried out in **8 Regions** of Cameroon- North, West, South West, South, East, Littoral, Adamawa and Center.

- **Investigations are still ongoing pertaining to 3 targets** that are implicated in trying to illegally export the more than 1000 parrots seized at the Douala International Airport destined for Bahrain and Kuwait.
- **Internet Investigations led to 1 successful operation** after targeting an Internet wildlife dealer in Buea – South West Region. 1 other Internet wildlife dealer engaged in fraud in Bamenda – North West Region was targeted. Investigations are still ongoing.
- An International Investigator volunteered this month for a special mission to track dealers in lion skin, ivory, chimps and products of other protected wildlife species in Cameroon especially in a notorious and violent hotspot such as Fouban in the West, an area difficult to penetrate and that serves to connect ivory dealers in the major towns of Douala and Yaounde. He succeeded in contacting dealers in Fouban, and also succeeded in locating a highly placed government official engaged in animal trafficking. More investigations are ongoing to arrest the targets.
- 2 new candidates tried in the field this month with encouraging results. Field tests will continue with more candidates as the department is experiencing a shortage in effective investigators.

Operations

1 operation was carried out this month against **1 subject**, and another started against **4 subjects**.

- **29/01/10** – A principal Internet wildlife dealer engaged in fraud and illegal wildlife trade over the Internet was arrested in Buea – South West Region. He was arrested trying to sell a capuchin monkey to a victim in The Netherlands using falsified government documents and CITES Permits. His connection to other forms of fraud including illegal immigration and adoption scams is still being investigated.
- **31/01/10** – An operation was started against **4 international illegal traffickers of African Grey parrots. 2 of the traffickers are well known in Cameroon with 2 other accomplices one of whom is a Nigerian national.** The traffickers are well connected to a big export network with accomplices in the Democratic Republic of Congo from where falsified government documents and CITES Permits used for the illegal exportation are issued. From all indications, they also have accomplices in the control posts at the airport through which the parrots pass without any proper control; and the airline they use for the transportation of the parrots seems to facilitate these illegal deals by not doing proper verification of the required documents used for wildlife exportation. **More than 1000 parrots were seized at the Douala International airport** ready to be exported to Bahrain and Kuwait with the collaboration of the Douala Judicial Police.
- **A new procedure, rules and regulations were put in place by the LAGA Director regarding operations so as to increase their effectiveness.**

Legal

- LAGA Legal Department carried out **11 missions** out of Yaounde- Centre Region: 1 in Mamfe (South West), 2 in Bafoussam (West), 1 in Dschang (West), 3 in Douala (Littoral), 2 in Bamenda (North West), 1 in Ntui (Centre) and 1 in Djoum (South).
- There are **6 dealers behind bars during this month**: 1 in the East Region, 1 in South Region, 4 in the South West Region.
- **24 cases** were followed up by the Legal Department this month.
- **20 cases** are scheduled and being trailed in the court this month.
- **Prosecutions**: 3 cases were sentenced this month
 - 11/01/10** - The Court of First Instance of Bamenda sentenced two Internet wildlife dealers to pay each over \$2700 as fines and damages to MINFOF. They will be retained in jail for 24 months in default of the payment of fine and coast proceedings. They were

arrested trying to sell a chimp over the Internet to a client in USA for \$1300 Euros using falsified government documents and CITES Permit.

-19/01/10- The Court of First Instance of Djoum - South sentenced one dealer to 1 year of prison suspended sentence during three years and to pay \$910 as damages. He was arrested in Djoum for illegal killing and trading in protected wildlife species.

-19/01/10- The Court of First Instance of Djoum-South sentenced another dealer to 1 year of prison suspended sentence during three years and to pay \$960 as damages. He was arrested in Djoum for illegal killing trading in mandrills.

- **2 appeals** were registered this month against the ruling given by the Court of First Instance of Djoum in the matter of MINFOF Vs Manga Clothier and MINFOF Vs Owona Manga Hubert.
- The Head of the Legal Department went on a special mission to the Central African Republic (CAR) to assist the coordinator of RALF in that country while replicating LAGA activities with WWF-CAR, and transferring Cameroon government's globally acclaimed wildlife law enforcement experience to the CAR wildlife law enforcement authorities.

Media front

- **29 media pieces** were produced and pushed through to radio and written press including: 4 written press materials (3 in English and 1 in French), 21 radio news flashes (13 in English, 8 in French), 1 radio news feature in English, and 3 radio talk shows in English.
- Guests include: MINFOF Minister, Information officer at the US embassy, South West Regional Delegate for Forestry and Wildlife and a Senior Official of World Wide Fund.
- Subjects focused on wildlife law enforcement including; 1 ton ivory seizure in Douala, 3 ivory dealers arrest in Meyomessala, arrest of 4 Chinese ivory dealers in Congo-Brazzaville, Ministerial decision on bush meat market, Yaounde bush meat seizure, and court case against elephant trafficker in Eyumojock – South West.
- 18 media pieces in English, 11 in French making a percentage of 62% in English and 38% in French.

External Relations and Policy

- The Head of the Legal Department went on a special mission to the Central African Republic (CAR) to assist the coordinator of RALF in that country while replicating LAGA activities with WWF-CAR, and transferring Cameroon government's globally acclaimed wildlife law enforcement experience to the CAR wildlife law enforcement authorities. He was charged with the assessment of the level of execution of the replication exercise; assessment of activities in the various departments (Investigations, Legal, Media, External Relations); the recruitment of Legal Advisers and Investigators; and meetings with the Judicial, Administrative and Diplomatic authorities. All these objectives were met and the replication activities are ongoing smoothly with good results.
- Meeting between LAGA Director and the Regional Delegate for Forestry and Wildlife South West: applying ministerial decision on bush meat market, collaboration on media and cases initiated in the region.
- Focal point for CARPE met with LAGA Director to discuss on wildlife enforcement and CARPE small grants programme.
- LAGA Director held a meeting with the head of follow up unit in the Ministry of Justice concerning legal threats against LAGA.
- Meeting between Minister Elvis Ngolle Ngolle and LAGA Media crew to discuss implementation of MINFOF decision organizing market for the sales of bush meat.

- LAGA Media Head met with the Director of Wildlife and Protected Areas to discuss LAGA's participation at the 15th conference of parties to CITES.

Management

- LAGA family resumed work after a 3 weeks Christmas holiday that started on the 17th of December 2007.
- In a meeting held by the LAGA family, the **LAGA Director introduced weekly meeting sessions to take place every Friday of the week** at 3.00 p.m. Other meetings and the agendas can be initiated by any LAGA family member at any time. These meetings are geared towards identifying problems and proposing solutions to these problems and other existing ones so as to ascertain the smooth running of the organization, and to take initiatives in the development of the family members and the organization at large by **carrying out specific assignments.**
- 1 volunteer were tried out in the Investigations Department with encouraging results. They will be sent out for subsequent missions.

Activism Front

Education activities were carried out on the following:

- World financial crisis – An opportunity for Cameroon.
Paper presented by Rollin (Legal Assistant) of the Legal department bringing out the origin of the world financial crisis and the impact on Cameroon's economy, and proposed solutions.
- Avatar – A film on humanity and nature. The film is a fiction on the egoistic nature of man towards the earth. The film also depicts how much a minority could take a decision to resist and succeed.

Finance

In preparation, will be made available shortly.

THIS MONTH IN PICTURES



The more than 1000 African Grey parrots seized in Douala International Airport ready to be exported to Bahrain and Kuwait. Operations have started against 4 international traffickers involved in regular exportation of parrots with accomplices at the airport control posts and the airlines in charge of the transportation of the parrot



REPUBLIQUE DU CAMEROON
Pais-Travail-Patrie
BP 989, MBALLA II
YAOUNDE, CAMEROUN

REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON
Peace-Work-Fatherland

MINISTRY OF LIVESTOCK, FISHING AND ANIMAL HUSBANDRY
CITES PERMIT
MINISTERE DE L'ELEVAGE, DE PECHE ET DES INDUSTRIES ANIMALES

Ref No: **026 / 421 / 018**

Periode d'exportation
Export period from 22/01/2008 to 22/01/2018

Nom ou raison sociale
Name of exporter or Establishment: **LORA DUKE**

Category: **REGISTERED BREEDER**

Address Complete
Full **12 / BOULEVARD DU LA LIBERTE**
Address **DOUALA**
LITTORAL, CAMEROON

numero carte de licence
exporter's Licence Number **603347**

Is authorized to export the following animals
Birds Dogs & Puppies Monkeys Cats & Kittens Reptiles

This document hereby testify that
LORA DUKE

Has the legal right to export from Cameroon according to article Ref No 152/01.156/099/95 of the livestock, Fishery and Animal Husbandary Department of the Ministry of Economy and Finance, Cameroon.

The Director
Date issued: 22/01/2008

MINISTRY OF JUSTICE
COURT OF FIRST INSTANCE/CAMEROON
24/23 Governor Street Littoral Region 2435 Camerooon

AFFIDAVIT CHANGE OF OWNERSHIP CERTIFICATE

With reference to the application of affidavit change of ownership certificate of parrots this day the 24th of January, 2010 filed by Barrister Patrick Clarke on behalf of Lora Duke valued of parrots deposited with the Pet Movers Int'l Cameroon: In confirmation of the birds we confirm the following for Final Clearance/Approval to the benefit of the under mentioned beneficiary.

Name: **Oscar Verkerk**

Address: **Lawinstraat 48, 2417 AD, Utrecht, Netherlands**

DECLARATION

I, Barrister Patrick Clarke swear this affidavit on behalf of Oscar Verkerk the above beneficiary sincerely and conscientiously is hereby entitled to lay claim to the parrots.

This declaration is made in compliance of the oath and confirmation law of Cameroon.

Sworn at the High Court Registry, Supreme Court Cameroon
Issued at Yaounde under the Seal of the Court and the Head of the Presiding Judge.

BARRISTER PATRICK CLARKE
COMMISSIONER FOR OATH

Falsified government document and CITES Permit used by an Internet wildlife dealer arrested in Buea – South West. He claimed to have capuchin monkeys for sale to a victim in the Netherlands. It should be noted that capuchin monkeys do not exist in Africa.

Links of this month

- 1 ton ivory seized in Douala about to be exported to the international market – TV5 (a French based international TV channel) broadcast. The arrest was successful thanks to the joint collaboration of the Littoral regional Delegation of National Security, Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife and the technical support from LAGA.

http://www.rfo.fr/france-o/le-zoom-afrique/le-traffic-divoire_16757.html