



Wildlife Law Enforcement Briefing

- ✓ **Milestone first ever EAGLE Network meeting held in Benin representing 8 countries.**
- ✓ **Cameroon: Four trafficker sentenced in December**
- ✓ **Congo: PALF's Sniffer Dogs Unit has been activated for large-scale bushmeat seizures**
- ✓ **Guinea: Two ape traffickers arrested in Conakry and a baby chimp rescued**
- ✓ **Benin: 2 traffickers arrested including a sea turtle trafficker and a leopard and python skin trafficker**
- ✓ **Togo: An ivory trafficker with ivory bracelets was arrested**

Summary

This month was marked by the first EAGLE Network meeting with activists representing 8 countries meeting in Benin to discuss strategy. Less emphasis was put on arrests with only 6 wildlife traffickers arrested this month. The arrest operations took place in Benin, Togo, Guinea and Gabon. In Benin, 2 operations led to the arrest of 2 traffickers including a sea turtle trafficker and a leopard and python skin trafficker while in Togo an ivory trafficker who was on his way to Ghana to sell ivory bracelets was arrested. In Guinea 2 ape traffickers were arrested

rescuing a baby chimp. In Gabon, one illegal logger was arrested while transporting timber.

Prosecutions were also obtained. In Cameroon, during three different rulings, 4 traffickers received varying prison sentences during the month, among them was a notorious ivory one who had succeeded over the years in escaping prosecution despite being arrested twice for wildlife trafficking. In Gabon a wildlife trafficker was given a one month prison sentence highlighting the plight to revise Gabon's wildlife law and increase the six month maximum penalty.



Cameroon – LAGA

- A major ivory trafficker, who was arrested in Djoum, South on October 15, 2014, was finally convicted and given a 4-month prison sentence by the Djoum Court of First Instance. His co-accused also received a similar sentence. Chingo Zacharie was arrested for illegal possession and circulation of 39 ivory tusks and he had earlier escaped prosecution for wildlife related crimes twice. They were ordered to pay fines and damages of close to \$19,000.
- Another court ruling this month sentenced an ape dealer in Nanga Eboko to 3 months in prisons and payment of fines and damages of over \$2000. He was arrested on September 8, 2014 for illegal possession and commercialisation of 4 fresh gorilla heads and 16 limbs.
- Two other court rulings were passed this month and a trafficker was convicted and given a 1-year suspended sentence for a period of 5 years and ordered to pay fines and damages of over \$4000 or serve 3 months in jail and in another court a trafficker was sentenced to 2 months imprisonment and to pay fines and damages of over \$2000. He was arrested for illegal possession of chimpanzee, gorilla and elephant parts.



Trafficker was sentenced to 3 months imprisonment for trafficking in gorilla heads and limbs in Cameroon

Congo – PALF

- PALF's Sniffer Dogs Unit has been activated for large-scale bushmeat seizures (of partially protected species) at Maya Maya International Airport. – PALF investi-

gates leads on involvement of corrupt officials in the trafficking.

- Four live Dwarf Crocodiles were found at the Maya



Sniffer dogs helped detect bushmeat at the Maya Maya international airport in Brazzaville



Crocodiles rescued at the Maya Maya airport

Maya airport thanks to PALF sniffer dogs among the luggage coming from Congo. Unfortunately the smuggler did not fly with them, but the animals were saved and later released back to the wild.

- Produced the Summary of Corruption in Congo 2014 info-graphic



The PALF sniffer dogs have been busy, sniffing through the airport to detect holiday-season bushmeat trafficking. The permitting system required in Congo for the transport of wildlife products such as bushmeat is not respected and the urban illegal trade is highly unsustainable according to scientific research. The sniffer dog team is trying to put some order back into things. Local authorities based at the airport have been observed taking money from traffickers who are often not even on the airplane itself. Oftentimes recipients claim that the packages were either sent or to be received by authorities, despite this being in contravention of the law. The sniffer dog team, working with the Gendarmerie, aims to intercept these packages. Except the Dwarf Crocodiles no integrally protected species were intercepted, but the large quantity of partially protected species is still unsustainable. Seized bushmeat was incinerated in Brazzaville in a demonstration of the illegality of the traffic.

Gabon – AALF

- Arrest of two illegal loggers and seizure of a vehicle that was about to transport 7 m³ of sawn wood.
- Conviction and sentencing of two ivory traffickers to 3 months imprisonment and about \$1,200 in awarded damages and fines. They were arrested with 8 ivory tusks.
- Participation in mission conducted by the provincial department of Haut-Ogooué to Kabala village to verify the existence of a Congolese transect on Gabonese territory.
- Anti-poaching mission organised in the Haut-Ogooué Province between the 29th to the 31st of December that resulted in the seizure of 11 arms, 80 cartridges, 12 protected species, 34 ordinary species and an elephant carcass without its tusks.
- Legal Follow-up in Bouee, Ogooue-Ivindo Province of the arrest of 2 traffickers for illegal possession of 22 elephant tusks and 9 pieces of ivory weighing 100 kg.
- Legal follow-up of the case involving a Cameroonian national, Awoung Elysée, arrested by the Gendarmerie in Mitzi for illegal possession and transportation of 2 ivory tusks found in her car and non possession of a residence permit.



Arrested in Libreville for ivory trafficking by gendarmeries. 29 ivory tusks totalling 110 kg were seized. AALF is providing legal follow-up in the matter.

- Trial in Oyem of two suspected wildlife traffickers Mba Owono Sylvain and Mezui Medome Jerome with both

acquitted from charges of illegal transportation, possession and attempts at selling protected wildlife species while Mba Owono Sylvain was convicted on charges of illegal possession of ammunitions and sentenced to one month imprisonment and payment of a fine of \$200, highlighting the plight to revise Gabon's wildlife law and increase the six month maximum penalty.



A report of a poached elephant triggered an AALF mission; photo Bryan Curran

Guinea – Conakry – GALF

- Two ape traffickers arrested in Conakry and a baby chimp rescued in a joint operation with National bureau of Interpol, GALF and the Water and Forests department. The court case was halted for unknown suspicious reasons.
- Interrogations and legal follow-up of the 4 bushmeat traffickers arrested in Labé. The case is present under



Two traffickers arrested in Conakry, Guinea for trafficking in live baby chimpanzee



- examination by the Labé Court of First Instance.
- Production of 9 media pieces on the bushmeat and chimpanzee cases.

The GALF team speaking in a radio talkshow about bushmeat and Ebola

SENEGAL - SALF

- Investigations into parrots and shark fin trafficking in Dakar and identification of new traffickers.
- Legal follow-up of the case against the traffickers of Ni-

gerien nationality arrested with 2,753 wildlife products by ensuring that the appeal and judgment report are done and forwarded rapidly to the Appeal Court.

Togo – TALFF

- Arrest of an international ivory trafficker and repeat offender with 28 bracelets made of ivory which he was about to cross over to Ghana to sell.
- Legal follow-up of the Dinh Huu Khao and the new cases in Basar.
- Several meetings were held with government officials including the Director of the Central Office for the Repression of Illicit Trafficking in Drugs and Laundering, the Secretary General of the Ministry of Environment and Forestry Resources and with the Director of the Franc Weber Foundation



Trafficker arrested at the border where he was about to cross over from Togo to Ghana to sell these ivory bracelets

Benin – AALF-B



Trafficker arrested with 3 leopard skins, 5 python skins and pangolin scales!

- A successful operation carried out in Cotonou saw the arrest of a trafficker and 3 leopard skins, 5 python skins, 3 pangolin carcasses and 2 kg of pangolin scales seized. He was unfortunately released on bail after 6 days of custody.
- A sea turtle trafficker arrested for illegal possession of a green turtle and he is known to have worked with NGOs protecting sea turtles. He is unfortunately free while the legal procedure continues.
- First EAGLE network meeting was hosted by Nature Tropicale and held in Benin with sessions held in Cotonou and at the Pendjari National Park.
- A meeting with the Minister of Environment on December 22, 2014 with Luc Mathot, Josea Bodjrenou - AALF-Benin Director - and Perinne Odier on recent arrest operations and the handing over of a list of problems faced by cases undergoing prosecutions.

C.A.R – RALF

- RALF project is frozen because of security problems in that country, no veritable activity was undertaken. This

situation may continue for the next couple of months.

Headquarters

- The first EAGLE Network meeting of activists representing 8 countries met in Benin to discuss strategy.
- This landmark event of the growing community of activists included discussions on the new EAGLE vision, increasing quality and guarding the unique identity of the replications while taking a leap to the next level.
- Increasing safety of personnel and improving level of investigations have been highlighted as high priorities.
- Base documents of the network and their implications for the countries were discussed - EAGLE Membership Agreement, EAGLE Standard Project Proposal, EAGLE Reporting and Verification Procedures, EAGLE Membership Support System & Replication Protocol, EAGLE Enforcement Model, EAGLE Network Organizational Structure, EAGLE Personnel Positions & Structure, Replication Potential Assessment.



International Media Coverage

The trafficking in ape parts in Cameroon received special attention in December as interviews conducted within the month led to the publication of an Aljazeera article: follow link below.

<http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2015/01/trafficking-great-ape-body-parts-cameroon-2015148945815121.html>

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 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.

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