



Conservation Justice

*Projet AALF*  
*(Appui à l'Application de la Loi sur la Faune)*



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**JANUARY 2011 ACTIVITY REPORT**

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## JANUARY 2011 ACTIVITY REPORT

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### 1 Overview

The first month of the year 2011 witnessed the realisation and follow-up of 2 new operations in Libreville.

In fact, an operation was first of all carried out on January 13, 2011 and led to the arrest of 5 foreign dealers of heads and hands of apes, tails of elephants and leopard skins and other lesser protected species (civet cat, python, African golden cat, black colobus)

Meanwhile, an operation was carried out against a Gabonese citizen who was arrested in the act, while he was trading in a baby chimpanzee which he later disclosed that he had killed the mother.

These wildlife offenders were brought to court in Libreville and remanded in custody.

Relations with Justice, Contre-Ingérence and obviously Forestry officials remain positive and constructive; these various structures are favourably disposed to the AALF project.

### 2 Operations

#### 13 January

After the arrest of 12 traders in ivory in November 2011, a second operation was carried out and this time around it was against dealers in the heads and hands of apes and with skins notably leopard and even lion skins.

Thanks to information furnished by the AALF project, four Forestry Ministry agents and six agents of the the Contre-Ingérences (B2) carried out a raid in the Montbouet Market, Thursday, January 13, 2011. 5 offenders who were in possession of and also trading in leopard and lion skins, feet and heads of ape were thus be arrested. On Thursday, January 13, 2011, thanks to

The offenders were immediately led to the premises of the Direction Générale des Contre-Ingérences et de la Sécurité Militaire (DGCISM).

In total, 13 heads and 32 hands of apes and 5 dealers are behind bars. Added to this is sad record is the seizure of 12 leopard skins, 1 lion skin, 5 elephant tails and numerous other skins of lesser protected species.

**It is reported to be the largest ever seizure concerning apes that has been realised in African! Further still, the seizure of so many leopard skins is very rare in central Africa.**

It should be noted that 2 of the identified dealers escaped during the operation.



The dealers confessed that they have been carrying out this trade for years if not decades, this represents the death of tens, if not hundreds of totally protected animals. Nevertheless, they never accepted to disclose the origin of the products they were organising the sale nor the supplier. They explained that the products of their sale was destined to local medical and magical uses but that some foreigners, especially Asians use these products for souvenirs and trophies.

### 27 January

Following information sent by the Jane Goodall Institut, a second operation was carried out on the January 27. In fact, a Gabonese citizen who, since a number of days ago, was proposing an orphan chimpanzee for sale near the Mbolo supermarket

Une mission a donc été organisée avec 4 agents des Eaux et Forêts et quatre agents des Contre-Ingérences. Le vendeur a pu être arrêté et conduit en garde à vue à la Direction Générale des Contre-Ingérences et de la Sécurité Militaire. Il a expliqué qu'il avait tué la mère du bébé chimpanzé à Ndjolé dans son champ deux mois auparavant et finalement décidé de vendre le bébé à Libreville.

A mission, comprising 4 Forestry agents and 4 Contre-Ingerence agents, was thus organised. The dealer was thereby arrested and taken to the Direction Générale des Contre-Ingérences et de la Sécurité Militaire. He explained that he killed the mother of the baby chimpanzee in Ndjolé in his farm two months ago and finally decided to sell the baby in Libreville.

## **3 External Relations**

### Meetings

Numerous meetings were held with :

1. Officials of the Ministry of Forestry (MINEF) including; the Director General, the Director of Wildlife and Hunting, the Chargé d'Etudes of the Ministry, the Legal Adviser of the Ministry, the Chargé d'Etudes of the Ministry for projects concerning NGOs...
2. Justice officials including the State Counsel, the Procureur General of the *Cour de Cassation* and his assistant, the Procureur General of the Appeal Court and his assistant,
3. The gendarmerie and precisely the Commander of the National Gendarmerie School and his assistants
4. The Director of Contre-Ingérences ;
5. Various NGOs including WCS, WWF, Brainforest.

All officials met showed interest and encouraged the AALF project idea.

### Information to heads of WCS project

A presentation was done to the WCS project heads so as to inform them on the functioning of the AALF project and on the importance of collaboration. It is hoped that this will enable a more rapid circulation of information from the interior parts of the country.



## **4 Legal Department**

The main “dossiers” developed by the legal department were :

1. Participation in the realisation of the 2 operations of the 13<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> January ;
2. The subsequent legal analysis thereof ;
3. Presentation of the cases to a lawyer and the follow-up in the court on the 18, 20 and 25 January.

Of the 13 wildlife offenders jailed on the 1st of December 2010, two were freed and declared innocent, In reality, they were neither dealers nor even accomplices.

All the other accused are in jail in Libreville, that is 16 of them.

## **5 Investigations**

Just one investigation is in service. He enabled the arrest of 13<sup>th</sup> January and continues to criss-cross Libreville.

Other interesting trails are to be followed, principally the ones related to ivory.

## **6 Media**

A total of **41 articles** were published, with **3** in the Gabonese written press, **1** in television, and in the radio and more than **40** on the Internet. Lets precise here that the numerous articles published on the internet correspond to the articles published in the written press. Among the more important ones, we can cite The New York Times, The London Times, The Daily Mail. BBC and CNN equally broadcast information through their website.

## **7 Planned Activities for February 2011**

Legal follow-up of cases in court will be the priority of the month of February. The second part which is particularly interesting consists in the realisation of trainings in the Gendarmerie School in Owendo.

Meanwhile, it is imperative to recruit more personnel, in particular an investigator, a jurist and a coordination assistant.

Finally, the follow-up to obtain an accord for the post and the signing of the protocol with MINEF will be issues of the moment. A meeting with the new Minister of Forestry looks as a necessity and will enable discussions on these aspects.



**8 Photos**

