

Leopard poacher goes scot-free

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by Adam Hartman



ARON Uiseb must have been a happy man when Omaruru magistrate Abel Sankwasa fined him N\$250 which was wholly suspended for three years, after he pleaded guilty to poaching a leopard at Ai Aiba lodge near Omauru a year ago.

The Namibian understands a leopard trophy is worth between N\$50 000 and N\$90 000.

Not only did Uiseb escape paying N\$250 if he is not convicted of the same offence in the next three years, the N\$15 000 he deposited as bail will be returned to him.

Uiseb, a resident of a settlement in a communal area was arrested last October on a charge of hunting specially protected animals (case no. CRM-768/2014) after he snared (with an iron trap) a large male leopard on the border on farm Ai Aiba 50km west of Omaruru.

After trapping the leopard, he shot and skinned it. Martin Steppe, the manager of Ai Aiba Lodge heard of this and informed the ministry of environment and tourism as well as the police.

After an investigation, they found a rifle, transport vehicle and the skinned leopard. He was arrested then, but was released from custody on N\$15 000 bail.

Contacted for comment, the ministry's Victor Katanga threatened to "deal with" this newspaper if he saw his name in the story, and referred all questions to his permanent secretary.

He however mentioned that the case was "recalled" but did not give any further details before putting down the phone. An official at Omaruru magistrate's court said they knew nothing of the matter being recalled but confirmed that judgement had been passed.

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- Leave him to go he is unemployed and that is his only way to get money. How many cases has been reported of millions of dollars go missing and none is held accountable for the money just for the reason that the culprits are well-watered individuals. God is on his side, he providing needs for his families. - Roberts Ntesa Ntesa | 2015-10-09 [17629]