

## Etosha poacher gets fines or eight years in jail

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**A RESIDENT of the Kunene region whose attempt to poach a rhinoceros in Etosha National Park ended in the death of his partner in crime and his own arrest, was sentenced to an effective fine of N\$34 000 or eight years' imprisonment on Friday.**

Ruteni Muharukua was sentenced by magistrate Abel Sankwasa in the Opuwo Magistrate's Court after he admitted guilt on five charges.

Muharukua was arrested in October 2017, and remained in custody since then after a foray he had made into Etosha National Park did not go as planned, with his poaching excursion companion killed by a rhino that had turned the tables on the two men.

After a year and four months in jail, Muharukua pleaded guilty to five charges last week.

Magistrate Sankwasa sentenced him to pay a fine of N\$25 000 (or five years in jail) on a charge of hunting specially protected game, and also sentenced him to two years' imprisonment, suspended for five years, on the same count on condition he is not convicted of committing a similar offence during the period of suspension.

Although Muharukua and his companion did not manage to shoot the endangered animal they intended to poach, he was

in terms of the law still guilty of the offence of hunting specially protected game.

On a charge of possession of a firearm without a licence, Muharukua was sentenced to a fine of N\$8 000 (or two years in jail). He was also sentenced to a fine of N\$4 000 (or one year in jail) for the illegal possession of ammunition, but that sentence was suspended in full.

The magistrate further sentenced Muharukua to pay a fine of N\$500, or serve a jail term of six months on a charge of entering or residing in a game park, and imposed the same sentence on him on a charge of conveying a firearm into a nature reserve.

Muharukua stood trial without legal representation. The state was represented by public prosecutors Obert Masendeke and Evelyn Karunga.