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Informanté

NAC meat thieves kill rare African wild dog pack



(<https://i2.wp.com/informante.web.na/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Page-1-fix.jpg?ssl=1>).

Niël Terblanché

Poachers in custody after killing endangered species

THREE security officers and three employees of the Namibia Airports Company (NAC) are in custody at the Hosea Kutako International Airport after they killed two near extinct African wild dogs and wounded another one that was part of a pack of five in order to steal a kudu carcass that the animals managed to kill on the world famous N/a'an ku sê wildlife sanctuary where the animals were in the process of being rehabilitated.

The acclaimed wildlife sanctuary is world famous for animal rehabilitation and count Hollywood Superstars like Angelina Jolie and Brad Pitt amongst its most generous donors.

According to Colette Zannier, three of the men are in the employ of the security company contracted by the NAC to safeguard the perimeter and grounds of the Hosea Kutako International Airport. One of them used his service firearm to shoot at five of the African wild dogs to chase them off their kill. She said the three other men work for the airport maintenance department of the NAC and supplied the vehicle belonging to the state-owned enterprise to transport their ill gotten gains.

"The dogs killed a young kudu near the perimeter fence and the men illegally entered the Zannier Reserve of N/a'an ku sê and scared off the five wild dogs to get to and steal the carcass of the dead antelope. In the process, two of the animals were killed and a third animal is fighting for its life in the veterinary clinic of N/a'an ku sê," said Zannier.

The two dead wild dogs came to the N/a'an ku sê Wildlife Sanctuary as pups after they were rescued from human wildlife conflict in the Mangetti area of Namibia's north-east. The young males, named Namib, Desert and Veldt, were hand raised by world renowned wildlife conservationist, Marlice van Vuuren. The pups thrived and formed a remarkable pack of five with two other dogs.

<https://informante.web.na/nac-meat-thieves-kill-rare-african-wild-dog-pack/>

These dogs were ambassadors for their species and formed one of the N/a'an ku sé Foundation's most successful release projects to date. Furthermore, the release process provided vital research data, with two of the dogs having been fitted with GPS collars. Embracing freedom on the Zannier Reserve by N/a'an ku sé in June 2018 the pack, affectionately dubbed the "Famous Five", survived without conflict for seven months," added Zannier.

Zannier said a farmer neighbouring N/a'an ku sé Lodge and Wildlife Sanctuary was made aware of suspicious activity concerning the African wild dogs in the morning of 12 February. He immediately alerted N/a'an ku sé staff, who investigated the situation.

"Upon further inspection, several 12-gauge shotgun shell casings and tracks indicating that illegal trespassing onto the wildlife reserve occurred for quite a distance from the dividing fence between the reserve and the airport. The rangers also discovered the remains of two dead wild dogs and a third severely injured animal," she said.

The discovery prompted Zannier to contact the Namibian Police. Members of the Protected Resources Unit responded and investigated the crime scene.

"From the evidence on the ground, it soon became clear that the wild dog pack remained on the reserve side, with no evidence of them having left the property and straying onto airport grounds. The remains of their successful hunt were also clearly evident. They chased and caught the kudu on the reserve side of the fence dividing the reserve and the airport grounds. Numerous studies have shown that African wild dogs make use of man-made structures and perimeter fences when bringing down prey, and the pack of five regularly made use of the fence line when they hunted," she explained.

Zannier said she alerted the airport maintenance manager to the possibility that airport security personnel might have trespassed on private property and that they shot and killed a protected species.

She said the suspects were taken to the scene of the crime, whereupon officers of the PRU searched the vehicle for evidence. The six suspects were arrested on, amongst others, charges of hunting protected wildlife species.

Zannier said N/a'an ku sé veterinarian, Dr. Kobus Hoffman, performed forensic autopsies on the dead wild dogs and found further evidence of shotgun shell pellets which indicated that the animals had been shot with a 12-gauge shotgun.

"One of the dead animals had a punctured aorta which caused massive hemorrhaging while the second was killed by a shotgun pellet passing through its pulmonary artery which also caused it to bleed to death," she noted

Zannier said the third dog, the matriarch of the pack, was hit in the neck and face by the pellets, with more of the small lead balls stuck inside her body.