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Handle evidence better



How effectively the members of the K9 unit are able to use their trained dogs was shown when a person walked through the tall grass and hid under a bush, but was quickly discovered by the dog. Photos: ISAP, Dirk Heinrich



At a staged poaching crime scene, ISAP pilot David Francis operated a drone using various techniques to assess the situation.



The students had the opportunity to demonstrate what they had learned about securing a crime scene in the days before.

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Windhoek (cr) • The anti-poaching initiative ISAP (Intelligence Support Against Poaching) and “Wildlife Vets Namibia” have offered a course to better investigate wildlife crimes by handling evidence. The participants of the course, which took place at the ISAP facility, received information about poaching and an insight into the complexity of finding evidence. The main goal is to support the police by properly securing a crime scene and providing evidence.

The course, which took place from July 16 to 19, was sponsored by ISAP and carried out by "Wildlife Vets Namibia". Participants included veterinarians, lodge managers, game farmers, and members of violent crime prevention forums. Most of the lectures were given by the veterinarian and owner of a game reserve, Dr. Ulf Tubbesing and his assistant Mariska Bijsterbosch. The photographer Dirk Heinrich partially took over the theoretical and practical aspect of crime scene photography. Members of the K9 unit demonstrated how their dogs can be used to track down poachers and other criminals, while a Bushwackers representative explained the use of metal detectors.

Crime is often fueled by opportunities. "It is important to find, secure and collect as much evidence as possible," emphasized Dr. Tubbesing. The more effective security measures become, the more criminals' skills develop.

In order to fight crimes and solve cases, the use of DNA samples from victims and perpetrators is becoming increasingly important. Dr. Tubbesing explained what DNA is, where it can be found and how it should be collected and stored. "A database of DNA from criminals is as important as a database of nasal horns and other endangered animals in different countries," said Dr. Tubbesing. This could track down criminals internationally or link evidence to a specific country and area.

A staged case of poaching gave the course participants the opportunity to apply what they had learned in the previous days. Taking pictures with the drone turned out to be very valuable in order to give a comprehensive and detailed impression of the crime scene from a direct bird's eye view.

The course was only made possible through the generous support of a Swiss donor and local supporters. It is planned to offer more courses for interested individuals or for farmers' associations in the future.