

America helps arrest 'magma smugglers'

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Francoise Steynberg - Cooperation between US law enforcers and the Namibian police (Nampol) has led to the arrest of four suspected eater smugglers.

According to a media statement from the US Embassy, this was the first collaboration of its kind between law enforcers of the two countries.

The arrest of the four took place on 21 July in Windhoek after information from the US security investigations' office in Pretoria in South Africa transferred information about maggot smuggling to the US embassy's regional security officer in Windhoek who in turn shared it with the Nampol.

"Based on this information, the Blue Rhino task force was able to arrest the four suspects. One live maggot, four magma skins and loose scales were seized," said a spokesman for the US Embassy. Jacques du Toit.

The accused, Messrs. Gideon Petrus Ellis, Marvin Tjihukununa, Morethen Katjipi and Uaandjua Tjingovera, remain in custody until their next court appearance on August 13 when they will formally apply for bail.

"This investigation could lead to further arrests and is a telling example of cooperation between America and Namibia to tackle illegal game smuggling," Du Toit said.

He says the ietermagô was released into the wild on July 29 by members of the Blue Rhino task force in the presence of a scientific researcher from the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism.

- francoise@republikein.com.na

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