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# Twenty-two men appear in court for wildlife crimes



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At least 22 men appeared in court last week for various wildlife crimes they have committed.

This is according to the weekly wildlife crime statistics by the Namibian Police Intelligence and Investigation Unit and the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism (MEFT). In the most recent wildlife case, NamPol arrested three Namibian men in line with new cases for possession of skins of specifically protected and protected game. "For all the cases registered the arrests and/or seizures were made by a combination of law enforcement agencies NamPol, MEFT, NDF, BRTT and private APU). Cases are only reported after suspects have appeared before court," reads the report.

Additionally, two cases have been finalised, where Jacques Araeb and Brenden Haose, both aged 23, were sentenced to a fine of N\$ 1000 or three months in prison for their inability to give satisfactory account of possession of a kudu.

In June at a wildlife protection and law enforcement forum, minister Pohamba Shifeta Shifeta said the loss of natural resources as a result of poaching cannot easily be quantified in monetary terms. He stressed that Namibia has experienced a massive increase in wildlife crime over the past decade, which is driven by an increased global demand for illegal wildlife products.

Moreover, former Police Chief, Sebastian Ndeitunga, during the forum also announced that the capacitation of the new National Forensic Science Institute of Namibia is at an advanced stage.

The facility is to be realised with the assistance of wildlife funding partners in creating a wildlife or animal DNA database and analysis. It was also announced that Namibia will soon make use of DNA analysis in forensic investigations into animal abuse and crimes such as illegal smuggling, poaching and the illegal trade in protected species.

According to NamPol, using DNA analysis will make it possible to identify the species and geographical origin, such as the population of a forensic sample, and to also individualise the sample with high levels of probability.