

Local news

UPDATE: Accused in Mbombela rhino horn bust identified

They made their first appearance in the Nelspruit Magistrate's Court on Thursday afternoon.

• 2 hours ago

Stefan de Villiers  2 minutes read

 Schalk Abraham (A.B) Steyn and Dawid (Dawie) Groenewald. Photos: Supplied.

The two men who were arrested for the illegal possession and selling of rhino horns on Wednesday, appeared in the Nelspruit Magistrate's Court on Thursday afternoon.

They are Schalk Abraham Steyn (48), better known to Lowvelders as AB, and Limpopo game farmer, Dawid Groenewald (52).

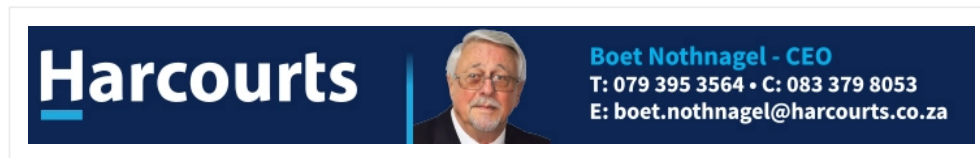
An advertisement banner for 'BASIE BOTHA EIENDOMME / PROPERTIES'. On the left, there is a small photo of three people. The text in the center reads 'BASIE BOTHA EIENDOMME / PROPERTIES'. On the right, there is a red circular icon with a white mouse cursor pointing at it. The text on the right says 'Koop of verkoop met vertroue. KONTAK ONS VANDAG. Buy or sell with confidence. CONTACT US TODAY.'

The case was postponed to Friday for a formal bail application. They will remain in custody until then. It is not yet clear in which court the case will be heard.

According to the Hawks' Col Katlego Mogale, Steyn and Groenewald were arrested on Wednesday in a multidisciplinary operation conducted by the Hawks' Organised Crime Investigation Unit, Wildlife Trafficking Counter-intelligence and the private sector, in their continued effort to curb wildlife trafficking in Mbombela.

"The duo were arrested while allegedly transporting 19 rhino horns in two bakkies," Mogale said in a statement.





"An investigation to ascertain if the suspects are linked to crimes contravening the Endangered Species Act is continuing," she said.

In May 2018, *Lowvelder* reported on Steyn after he was arrested and appeared in the Pretoria Criminal Court for an alleged fake sale of buffaloes.

Read more: <https://lowvelder.co.za/434307/local-man-nabbed-buffalo-fraud/>

He has since been handed a five year suspended sentence.

Groenewald, a Limpopo businessman and game breeder, first appeared in court in 2010 after he and 10 others were arrested following a 15-month investigation. Groenewald, at the time, was pinpointed as the mastermind behind one of South Africa's largest rhino poaching syndicates.

His co-accused, which included two veterinary surgeons and a pilot, were linked to hundreds of illegal rhino poaching incidents over a four-year period and initially faced over 1 800 charges.

These charges ranged from racketeering, money laundering, illegal hunting of rhino, dealing in rhino horn and contravening the Biodiversity and Prevention of Organised Crime Act.

Read more: <https://reviewonline.co.za/260963/groenewald-trial-postponed-to-2021/>

June 21, 21:00: Suspects arrested for possession of 19 rhino horns in Mbombela

Shock waves are making their way through the Lowveld as a well-known local businessman and a Limpopo game farmer were arrested for the possession of 19 rhino horns in Mbombela today.

The Hawks confirmed the arrest and said the horns are estimated to be worth millions.

The arrest was made late this afternoon in an operation driven by the Directorate for Priority Crime Investigation (Hawks) in the Riverside area.

The suspects are expected to make a court appearance either on Thursday or Friday. They will be detained until then. Their identities are known to *Lowvelder*, but they cannot be named as they have yet to appear in court.





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