



KZN man pleads guilty to rhino horn charges, escapes jail



Photographer: Armand Hough

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Durban: Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife has expressed disappointment after a man caught with a rhino horn without a permit, received a suspended sentence in court this week.

Margate resident Wade van Staden was arrested by members of the Pietermaritzburg's K9 Unit and the SAPS flying squad in October 2020.

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This week, Staden pleaded guilty in the Pietermaritzburg Magistrate's Court to being in possession of the rhino horn.

In his plea, Staden said he had been travelling in his car on October 2, 2020 when he was stopped by police and asked to get out of his vehicle. The police then searched his car.

"Upon searching my car, a black rhinoceros horn was found under the seat of my car. I was unable to produce a permit which is required."

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Staden said the horn has been a family heirloom for many years and he was unable to remember when it came into his possession.

He said he was remorseful for his actions.

The court sentenced him to 18 months behind bars, wholly suspended for five years, on condition that he did not commit a similar offence in the same period.

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Reacting to the sentence, Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife spokesperson Musa Mntambo said a heavier sentence would have served as a deterrent.

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