Lowveld

Local news

Four Kruger rhinos killed, three dehorned

Three men who had allegedly poached the four rhinos and were able to dehorn three of them, appeared in the Bushbuckridge Magistrate's Court on Monday July 4.

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Chelsea Pieterse 2 minutes read

> Photo: Linzetta Calitz

Three alleged poachers were arrested in the Kruger National Park after allegedly killing four rhinos on Friday July 1. The alleged poachers appeared at the Bushbuckridge Magistrate's

Court on Monday July 4 and have been identified as Laurenzo Makamu (31), Georgo Miyanga (49) and Nurro Barros (23).

The matter was postponed until July 13 when the men are expected to appear again. A provincial police spokesperson, Brigadier Selvy Mohlala, said in a statement that a tourist in the park had reported heard gunshots on Friday. Mohlala said the information was related to field rangers and a helicopter was deployed.

"As the chopper arrived, three men were spotted and captured in possession of a hunting rifle, a silencer, three knives, four mobile phones and three bags," said Mohlala.

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The Skukuza police were immediately informed and the three men were arrested. Mohlala said three rhino horns were discovered at the scene, as well as four rhino carcases.

The men had allegedly only removed the horns off three of the rhinos before they were caught.

"Through preliminary investigation, it was discovered that the alleged poachers failed to remove the horn off the fourth rhino as the knife they were reportedly using was broken," said Mohlala. He said the men were from Mozambique and in the country illegally, and therefore they will also be charged with contravention of the Immigration Act of South Africa.

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The minister of forestry, fisheries and the environment, Barbara Creecy, recently released a statement saying that private reserves on the western boundary of the Kruger National Park

and government have committed to working together in a number of areas, including tackling wildlife crime, enhancing transformation and improving the local economy.

“The co-operation with private reserves in the western boundary of the Kruger National Park is key to ensuring that communities live in harmony with nature,” said Creecy said at a recent engagement with representatives of the Associated Private Nature Reserves (APNR), community members and other stakeholders in Mpumalanga.

The meeting was held to discuss a range of problems that have arisen in recent years, including wildlife crime and rhino poaching. The department and the Greater Kruger Environmental Protection Forum of which the APNR is a part, agreed to create three subcommittees to address rhino poaching, wildlife crime, economic ecosystems and protected areas conservation.