

# THE SOUTH AFRICAN

## **Lion bones destined for Asia discovered in man's luggage**

Lion bones are used to replace tiger bones in fortified tiger wine and Traditional Chinese Medicines. Lion bones are also carved into jewellery



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Lion bones discovered in man's luggage at airport. Image: Twitter @SAPoliceService

South Africa's legal trade of lion bones to Asia has opened up a fast growing illegal trade of the animal carcass. On Friday, a 43 year old man was arrested for the illegal possession of lion bones destined for Asia.

#### SUSPICIOUS ITEMS FOUND IN MAN'S LUGGAGE

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The Germiston based Hawks' Economic Protected Resources members were alerted after airport security guards discovered suspicious items in his luggage. The suspect was about to board a flight to Vietnam via Qatar.

During the preliminary investigation, it was discovered that it is the carcasses of five lions. Police further seized foreign currency, a cellphone and two passports.

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The suspect will be charged for illegal dealing in wildlife, possession of lion bones and contravening the National Environmental Management Biodiversity Act (NEMBA).



Lion bones Image:Twitter @SAPoliceService

## INSIDE SOUTH AFRICA'S LION BONE TRADE

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In January, the Daily Maverick reported that bone sales in the country were aided by a 2016 resolution taken at the 17th CITES Congress of Parties (COP17) which allowed South Africa to continue to trade in lion parts from captive lions, effectively creating a split-listing problem. However differentiating between captive and wild lions is almost impossible for police.

As 91% of the skeletons that left the country in 2017 included skulls, it is contrary to claims from government, that South Africa's lion bone trade is simply a by-product of the canned trophy hunting industry. Big cats(including tigers) are being commercially bred for their bones.

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According to NGO Four Paws, lion bones are used to replace tiger bones in fortified tiger wine and in Traditional Chinese Medicines. Lion bones are also carved into jewellery, like bracelets and other trinkets.