

Five alleged rhino poachers arrested in the Kruger Park

It was successful day for multi-task team of detectives from the Endangered Species Unit, SANParks, Focused Conservation Solutions, Hoedspruit SAPS, and Hoedspruit Farm Watch when they made a breakthrough arresting five suspects for rhino poaching.

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The suspects were arrested on Tuesday, July 4. The intelligence-driven operation led to the confiscation of one 303 hunting rifle, ten 303 live rounds, and one axe.

The suspects are expected to appear in court in due course. The Managing Executive of the KNP, Oscar Mthimunye congratulated all the teams and said that this sends a message to all

criminals.

“The message is loud and clear, criminality does not pay and the cooperation between different stakeholders and law enforcement agencies is biting hard to ensure the safety of our natural resources. Our tight security systems are making it difficult for criminals to operate with impunity and the courts are giving appropriate sentences, we are grateful to all who are with us in fighting this worthy cause” he said.

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In another related incident, South African National Parks (SANParks) has today, July 5 congratulated the National Prosecuting Authority in Mpumalanga, after the Skukuza Regional court, convicted and sentenced a rhino poacher to an effective 22-year jail term.

Enoch Ngobeni was arrested on 17 April 2023 after Rangers heard gunshots and ran into two individuals while investigating the source of the shots, one was armed with a gun and the other had two fresh rhino horns in the Lower Sabie/Tshokwane Sections of the Kruger National Park (KNP). His co-accused who had the rifle managed to evade arrest.

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The court found Ngobeni guilty on six counts and sentenced him as follows, two years for trespassing, one year for illegal immigration, 10 years for restricted activity in a national park, which is hunting a rhino, 10 years for the restricted activity of hunting a rhino, four years for conspiracy to commit a crime and one year for possession of a dangerous weapon.

The court ordered these sentences in count 1 and 2, to run concurrently, as well as count 4,5 and 6, resulting in an effective 22 years imprisonment for Ngobeni.

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