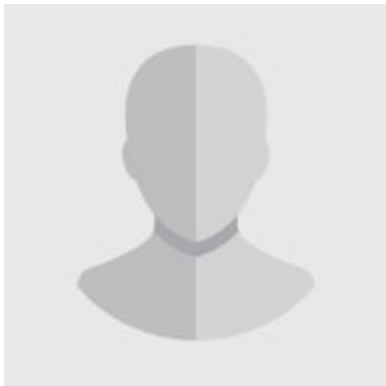


The Witness

News
NEWS



By Londiwe Xulu
journalist

3 minute read

26 Oct 2023

07:29

Sentencing of three wildlife poachers hailed as a success

Three wildlife poachers were each sentenced to eight months' imprisonment or a R2 000 fine.



File image of common reedbuck. Photo: iStock

The recent sentencing of three wildlife poachers has been hailed as a success in the anti-poaching efforts of the Greytown community.

Farmers, SAPS and security companies working together to curb poaching in the Greytown area have welcomed the sentences handed down to three men aged between 27 and 42 years old, who were found guilty of illegal hunting by the Greytown Magistrate's Court.

The three men were each sentenced to eight months' imprisonment or a R2 000 fine. The court also gave them five years' suspended sentences and further declared them all unfit to possess firearms.

The men shot and killed three common reedbuck, four oribi, three of which were pregnant, and a serval in one night in July. These are all endangered species that are mostly targeted by poachers in the area.

ALSO READ | [Black sparrowhawk rescued from poacher](#)

In a Facebook post, FreeMe Wildlife Centre, based in Howick, said it was happy to hear about the sentencing.

READ MORE

Two men killed in car accident on Higginson Highway

The meat and carcasses of the animals, which were shot with high-powered rifles, were brought to FreeMe for necropsies, after being confiscated from the poachers.

FreeMe said the poachers were reportedly going to sell the carcasses in the Durban area.

The joint arrest was made by Greytown SAPS, together with Pietermaritzburg Stock theft and endangered species unit, Greytown stock theft and endangered species unit, Greytown farming community and local security companies.

Mark Bauer, from Golf 911, said poaching was a huge problem in Greytown and surrounding areas. Bauer said statistics show that the game count in Umvoti has been decreasing. He hailed the convictions of these poachers as a success in the fight to curb poaching.

One of the farmers in the area found some of the dead animals in the morning and alerted the security company. Nkombele Security waited in the area and caught these guys loading the animals in their vehicle. A lot of people were involved in this arrest.

He added that everyone was working together to fight poaching and hoped to see more convictions.

Chairperson of the Umvoti Agricultural Society, Justine Le Roux, said besides the loss of wildlife, poaching hindered the efforts to protect endangered species.

Le Roux said farmers have hired private security that patrol around the area.

“When people poach, they don’t really choose what they take, but kill whatever they can get, young and even pregnant [animals]. Poachers do use hunting dogs, but there are also people driving around with rifles and shooting at whatever animal they find. They then try to get them into their vehicles without being caught,” said Le Roux.

ALSO READ | [Zebra allegedly killed by poacher at Pietermaritzburg Lion Park](#)

He added that it is difficult to get poachers to face the consequences of their actions.

We find it very difficult to get convictions, and in most cases there’s not even evidence. Even if there is a vehicle with the animals, somehow, they manage to not get convicted and that’s very frustrating. There’s also a lot of bribery and other things going on that sort of makes it difficult to get convictions.

In Pietermaritzburg, a poacher suspected to have evaded the law for four years was caught red-handed with a zebra carcass in August in the Bisley area. The man was caught skinning an animal carcass on the roadside by Mi7 officers who were patrolling the area.

There was a shopping trolley nearby filled with animal remains, a large carving knife and other tools.

Read more on these topics