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JUST IN: 82 arrested for pangolin poaching



Crime Reporter

At least 82 people were arrested last year alone and police recovered 17 pangolins and over 1 000 kilogrammes of pangolin scales, as the Zimbabwe Republic Police declares war on wildlife crimes countrywide.



In a statement this afternoon, Criminal Investigations Department (CID) spokesperson Detective Inspector Portia Chinho warned would be offenders that it was illegal killing and trafficking of any endangered wildlife as the offences attract a mandatory nine-year jail term.

“In Zimbabwe, the pangolin is one of the specially protected and most trafficked mammals. Other specially protected mammals include the cheetah, aardwolf, bat eared fox, gemsbok, black rhinoceros and white rhinoceros. The pangolin in its entirety is believed to possess an array of medicinal qualities though; no scientific qualification has supported this cultural mythology whose power has justified the poaching and trafficking of the only scaled mammal.



“Our natural heritage is protected by law and as such the Zimbabwe Republic Police will not hesitate to enforce the law without fear or favour. Law Enforcement Officials are not going to sit down and fold hands until sanity prevails in the country. In 2019 alone the ZRP handled 40 cases related to pangolins. Eighty-two accused persons were arrested leading to the recovery of 17 live pangolins and over 1000kgs of pangolin scales. At least 12 accused persons were convicted and sentenced to nine years each for possession of pangolins. Gratitude is extended to members of the public who provide valuable information,” she said.

She said on February 11, the CID Minerals, Flora and Fauna Unit in Guruve also arrested Zuze Tauro (39) of Mushumbi Pools who was selling a live pangolin. Acting on the information, police intercepted Tauro at Chitsungo Business Centre, Mushumbi Pools while in possession of the pangolin which was in a wooden cage and arrested him.

In another similar case in Beitbridge, detectives from Minerals, Flora and Fauna Unit arrested Plaxedes Sibanda (28) for possessing a live pangolin and was taken to court where she was sentenced to 24 months imprisonment. Two more suspects, Trevor Masunda (34) and Tafara Nhamo (36) were also arrested in Beitbridge after being found in possession of two pangolins. The two were taken to court where they were remanded in custody.



“Zimbabwe Republic Police strongly warns the public against poaching of wildlife. According to the Parks and Wildlife Act, it is an offence for one to hunt any animal on any land without a permit,” Detective Insp Chinho said.

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Meanwhile, over the weekend, Zimbabwe joined other countries in commemorating the World Pangolin Day which is held on February 15.

“The Zimbabwe Republic Police is pro-active in protecting the country’s diverse natural resources through the Criminal Investigation Department’s, (CID) Minerals Flora and Fauna Unit. The Section promotes the preservation and conservation of all the country’s precious resources which includes minerals, wild animals and vegetation,” Detective Insp Chinho said.

She sad Anti- poaching awareness campaigns are being carried out throughout the country and that billboards and posters have been displayed in towns and airports informing all Zimbabweans and visitors, that wildlife trafficking is a crime.

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