

Ex-cop jailed for killing rhino



Beitbridge Bureau

A retired police officer, a former scout and a Zambian national have been jailed for nine years for killing a black rhinoceros in Bubye Valley Conservancy near Beitbridge last year.

Nhlanhla Nkomo (43), a retired assistant inspector in the Zimbabwe Republic Police, Owen Nyoni (35), a former scout at the conservancy and Zambian Stanley Katandiza (50) are accused of killing and de-horning a rhino last year.

They all pleaded not guilty to contravening sections of the Fire Arm, Criminal Law Reform and



Mr Toindepi Zhou, who convicted them on the strength of the State evidence.

For the first count of illegal possession of the fire arm, they were slapped with three years' imprisonment and were left with two after one year was suspended conditionally for five years.

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In addition, they were all sentenced to four years imprisonment for unlawful possession of a dangerous weapon and one year was also suspended for five years.

Mr Zhou condemned them to nine years in jail for unlawful hunting of a protected animal and said all the sentences would run concurrently.

The SKS rifle, 58 rounds of ammunition and the Honda Fit they used in committing the crime were all forfeited to the State as part of the evidence.

In addition, the accused were ordered to compensate the State a total of US\$120 000 being the value of the killed rhino.



Prosecuting, Mr Manyonga Kuvarega said between February and May last year, the trio entered Buby Valley Conservancy in Beitbridge and were armed with an SKS rifle.

They illegally hunted and killed the black rhino bull, which they later de-horned and went away.

He said the carcass of the rhino was spotted by game scouts on 4 May in Samanyanga area of BVC. They then alerted their superiors, who reported the matter to the police who recovered 1 x 7,62mm spent bullet heads and two spent bullet fragments.

He said the accused were arrested and the fire arm was recovered and taken to ballistics where it matched the bullets, which were used to kill the rhino in 2018.

