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Chinhoyi Trio Arrested In A Trap Selling Live Pangolin

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By James Muonwa, Mashonaland West Correspondent

CHINHOYI: Three local men, who allegedly tried to sell a live pangolin, appeared in court here Tuesday facing charges of illegal possession of an endangered species.

The trio; Knowledge Mazivanhanga (40) of Hunyani Section, Rodney Simbarashe Sauti (29) of Chikonohono and Charles Zvauya (29) of Glynamel Farm, appeared before Chinhoyi magistrate Methel Mabika.

They were facing charges of contravening the Parks and Wildlife Act, which pertains to “keep, have in possession or sell or otherwise dispose of any live specially protected animal or the meat or trophy of such animals”.

Zimbabwe Parks Authority (Zimparks) senior intelligence officer Emmanuel Ncube valued the pangolin at US\$5 000.

The accused persons were granted \$2 000 bail each and told to report to the police three times weekly, not to interfere with witnesses, and to reside at their given addresses.

The matter was deferred to August 5 for trial.

Circumstances of the matter are that on 25 July 2020, members of the Zimparks crack team got a tip-off to the effect that an individual was searching for a prospective buyer for a live pangolin.

Upon receiving the information, the Zimparks officials teamed up with detectives from the Chinhoyi CID Minerals, Flora and Fauna Unit and hatched a plan to trap the seller.

One of the Zimparks officers masqueraded as a prospective buyer and contacted Sauti. The two agreed to meet around at 2200 hours at Christos Shopping Centre in Chinhoyi where they would seal the deal.

At around 0300 hours the following morning, Mazivanhanga and Sauti arrived at Christos shops aboard a Toyota Axio, which was being driven by Mazivanhanga.

The planned trap by the law enforcement agents, which also involved the transfer of money, was executed leading to the trio’s arrest.

Tinoziva Chipupure prosecuted in the matter.

