

Three suspects arrested in possession of rhino horns in the Western Cape

SWELLENDAM – Three suspects aged between 35 and 45 have been arrested for the illegal possession and selling of rhino horns, following a joint operation by law enforcement agencies in the Western Cape.

The arrests took place on Wednesday 2 July, during an undercover operation conducted by the Hawks' Bellville-based Economic Protected Resources (EPR) unit, with assistance from the SAPS K9 Unit, Overberg, and the Stock Theft and Endangered Species unit based in Swellendam.

The operation unfolded on the N2 highway near Buffeljagsrivier, Swellendam, where Hawks members allegedly purchased rhinoceros horns as part of their investigation. The sting operation resulted in the immediate arrest of one suspect, while two others attempted to flee the scene.

"The other two attempted to flee but were pursued and apprehended," according to the official statement from the Hawks.

Law enforcement officials recovered three rhino horns on the scene with an estimated value of R258 270, highlighting the substantial illegal trade value of these protected wildlife products.

All three suspects are from Gqeberha in the Eastern Cape and will appear in the Swellendam Magistrates Court on Friday 4 July, on charges relating to the illegal possession and selling of rhinoceros horns without the necessary permits.

