

# Media Statement



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**TO: ALL MEDIA**

**DATE: 03 November 2016**

**RE: HUGO ARMAND WESSELS SENTENCED FOR BUFFALO POACHING**

The Molopo Magistrates Court sitting in Ottoshoop convicted and sentenced a 23 year-old Hugo Armand Wessels to three years imprisonment for hunting of protected wild animal [Buffalo], of which two years was suspended for five years on condition that he does not commit similar offence.

The accused was alternatively ordered to pay a fine of R20 000. Another fine of R2000 or 1 month wholly suspended sentence was imposed on the accused on the count of hunting during the night. He was charged for the contravention of Section 18(1) and 20(1) of the Nature Conservation Ordinance Act 12 of 1983.

The conviction followed after the accused approached the state represented by Advocate Douw Jacobs proposing to enter into a plea and sentence agreement in terms of Section 105A of the Criminal Procedure Act 51 of 1977.

The accused and a friend requested permission from a landowner to hunt problem animals on the Weltevrede farm, close to Ottoshoop in the North West Province on 01 February 2016, a period during which a few buffalos broke out of the Mafikeng Game Reserve. Neighbouring farmers were warned to be on the lookout for these buffalos as they might pose and that they should contact the Game Reserve immediately with information, should they be spotted.

A friend of the accused who was a driver and who later became a state witness told the police that they entered a farm armed with a 308 calibre hunting rifle to shoot any problem animal. As they were driving through in search for problem animals, they spotted two buffalos standing in the grazing field of the farm, during which they stopped with an intention to shoot and kill the buffalos. The accused then shot and killed one

buffalo bull. They then realised that the carcass was too big to load onto their vehicle and left it on the scene.

The police confiscated the accused's rifle after it was linked to the dead buffalo through ballistic analysis. His rifle was forfeited to the state in terms of Section 112 of the Nature Conservation Ordinance Act 12 of 1983 and he was further declared unfit to possess a fire arm in terms of Section 103(1)(f) of the Fire Arms Control Act 60 of 2000.

The NPA welcomes the sentence.

Kind Regards,

**Frank Lesenyego**

**Regional Spokesperson: DPP North West**

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