

MEDIA STATEMENT

CONSERVED LIONS HUNTER SUCCESSFULLY CONVICTED

The Free State Provincial Government is celebrating the successful conviction of a canned lion hunter, Mr. Deon Cilliers, for contravening Section 57(1) of the NEMA (National Environmental Management Act).

Deon Cilliers, a Free State province Professional Hunter, and owner of Hunters Safari, pleaded guilty to 45 counts of contravening the Biodiversity and Conservation Acts in the Ladybrand court on the 4th June 2018.

The accused has been fined R1 000 000.00, to be paid to the Asset Forfeiting Unit, or face five years in prison. Included in his plea was the illegal hunting of 39 captive bred lions; the keeping of 8 caracals without permits and the importation and release of 9 scimitar oryx – an exotic species.

MEC for The Department of Economic, Small Business Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs, Ms Limakatso Mahasa, welcomed and commended the provincial Prosecuting Authorities, South African Police Service and Law Enforcement Unit in the Province for their hard work and efforts since the investigations started in 2015 until the successful conviction of Cilliers. The MEC continued to say that, this is a big win for the province and South Africa on illegal hunting.

Most of Cilliers' hunting clients came from the United States of America and Poland. The majority of the hunts were held on Bellevue Farm, Excelsior district in the Free State Province without the required permits.

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For more details, contact Festy Nyamate or Kagisho Leteane at 051 400 9548/9477/083 3408 502/ 073 614 0268 nyamatef@destea.gov.za or leteanek@destea.gov.za



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department of
economic, small business development,
tourism and environmental affairs
FREE STATE PROVINCE