

Cycad poachers sentenced to 25 years imprisonment

A cycad poacher has been sentenced to ten years imprisonment by the Jansenville regional court in the Eastern Cape.



[Photo: Ken Hill](#)

The case involved four poachers, arrested in 2014 for attempting to smuggle 12 *Encephalartos lehmannii* (the Karoo cycad) to Johannesburg. The *E. lehmannii* is listed as a protected species on the national list of Threatened or Protected Species, published on 23 February 2007.

The matter, prosecuted by advocate Coetzee, concluded on 24 June 2015 when the presiding officer, magistrate Rene Esterhuize, sentenced three of the poachers - Shadrack Matambo, Desmond Manodawafa and Alex Khoza - to five years direct imprisonment. The fourth poacher, Sibusiso Khumalo, was sentenced to ten years direct imprisonment for the same offences. Khumalo was sentenced to a lengthier jail term due to his previous two convictions for cycad poaching.

Strong message

The Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT) commends the National Prosecuting Authority, advocate Coetzee, and the members of the South African Police Service who arrested the poachers. This case will hopefully send a strong message to would be perpetrators that it is not worth removing endangered plants from the wild.

training interventions with law enforcement officials from mixed enforcement agencies including the South African Police Service.

In South Africa, the greatest threat facing cycads is the poaching of plants from wild populations to supply both domestic and international markets.

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