

Anti-abalone poaching campaign yielding results

An anti-poaching campaign led by the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries resulted in the arrest of seven men and confiscation of 26 429 units of abalone.



Fisheries spokesperson, Lionel Adendorf said the 3.2 tons of abalone were confiscated in five different incidents of poaching by the department with assistance from the South Africa Police Service and Fisheries Control Officers (FCOs).

He said more arrests were made on Thursday morning when the police arrested a Chinese national in Milnerton and found 4 824 units of wet shucked abalone (around 424kg) and 328 units of dry abalone (around 100kg) in two freezers and plastic buckets.

Adendorf said the department will continue to work with all law-enforcement agencies in its efforts to thwart these criminal activities.

"Daniel Nieuwoudt appeared in the Hermanus Magistrate's Court this morning after police noticed a car hidden amongst trees and bushes on the R43 near Gansbaai.

"On investigation they found around 3 346 units of wet shucked abalone (377kg) in various bags," he said.

Largest confiscation this year

According to Adendorf, two men ran away on Tuesday when they crashed their Isuzu double-cab into a house in Mount Pleasant, Hermanus, following a chase by members of the police tactical response team and FCOs.

When searching the vehicle, he said the team found 3 410 units of wet shucked abalone (530kg) in the vehicle.

In what seems to be the largest confiscation this year, five FCOs also confiscated 10 408 units of wet abalone (1 174.31kg) when they arrested Thembinkosi Mmibi and his son Maxolisi last week Thursday.

The Toyota Quantum they were travelling in was hidden in the bushes at Salmonsdrampad outside Stanford.

They appeared in the Hermanus Magistrate's Court on Monday and were remanded in custody; they will appear again at the same court on 7 August for bail application.

Members of the Western Cape Crime Intelligence and Flying Squad also arrested Vuyani Jobo, Sanele Mpati and Nyameko Tibisono at Canal Walk, Milnerton, last Wednesday when they were found in possession of 4 315 units of wet shucked abalone (596.61kg).

The VW-kombi they were travelling in was impounded and they appeared in the Cape Town Magistrate's Court last Friday. They will appear again in the same court on 13 August.

"The department is very proud of the FCOs who are doing their work so diligently and commend the SAPS for their continued support in our efforts to curb illegal poaching.

"We will continue to work with all law-enforcement agencies as these successes could only be achieved through strengthened, solid working relationships with them and we call on communities to join this campaign," he said.

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