

## Two poaching attempts foiled in KZN

KwaZulu-Natal MEC for Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs Sihle Zikalala has commended law authorities for the arrest of suspected poachers in two poaching attempts in the north of the province.



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In the first incident, members of the SAPS working with the North Coast Anti-Poaching (NCAP) unit intercepted two suspects in Richards Bay who had an illegal haul of more than 900 prawns in their possession.

Early last week, in another incident at the Hluhluwe-iMfolozi Park which is under KZN Ezemvelo, game rangers who were patrolling the park noticed three armed suspects who immediately opened fire on the rangers.

The rangers returned fire and one of the three poachers was fatally wounded while the other two fled the scene. A high calibre rifle and an axe were recovered at the scene.

Commenting on both incidents, Zikalala lauded the quick wittedness of all involved in foiling the two poaching attempts.

“One of the things that KwaZulu-Natal prides itself on is its fauna and flora, including its marine life. These are all important aspects of our ecosystem which also contribute immensely to our desirability as a tourism destination,” Zikalala said.

Zikalala commended the game rangers for defending not only their lives, but also those of rhinoceros at the park.

Meanwhile, the MEC has expressed disappointment at the postponement, yet again, of the marathon trial of the alleged rhino poaching kingpin Dumisani Gwala at the Mtubatuba Magistrate's Court last week.

"Nonetheless, we understand that while the wheels of justice may turn slowly, they grind exceedingly fine. We thus place our faith in the judiciary and remain doubtless that the book will be thrown at those who continue to lead the merciless butchering of our rhinoceros."

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