

Suspected poacher killed by police

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Page no: 1



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POLICE in the Zambezi region are calling on community members who have a missing relative to come and identify the body of a suspected poacher who was killed during a chase over the weekend in the Bwabwata National Park.

Zambezi regional police commissioner Karel Theron yesterday said the man was killed during a shoot-out between the police, members of the anti-poaching unit, and suspected poachers on Saturday.

"The police were on patrol in the park from the western to the eastern side on the B8 road. When they came to the Masambo village, they noticed a man who was acting suspiciously. They decided to pursue him, and they stumbled on six elephant tusks that he had dropped as he fled. Following this discovery, the police called for reinforcement, and the anti-poaching unit arrived to help trace the suspect. They followed his footprints until they caught up with a group of several suspected poachers crossing the B8 road. The poachers, upon noticing the officers, started shooting at them, and the officers retaliated, killing one of them," he said.

Theron explained that after the shooting, the poachers fled from the scene, and dropped two more elephant tusks and items including pots, blankets and knives. Although the exact number of poachers who fled could not be established, they were believed to be around six.

"No police officer sustained injuries, and no arrests have been made. We only need assistance from the community to identify the suspected poacher because he had no form of identification on him," Theron stated.

In an unrelated incident, Theron said a case of culpable homicide was opened after a water guard drowned when he fell

from a boat at the Sikunga channel during a scuffle. The guard, whose age was not given, was identified as Mubita Liseli.

Theron said Liseli and a colleague went on a routine patrol on Saturday, and found two Zambian fishermen illegally fishing in the channel.

"They then apprehended the two fishermen, and put them on their boat to take them to their camp. However, on the way, the two suspected illegal fishermen escaped after overpowering Liseli, who fell into the river. He could not swim, and was not wearing a life jacket, and eventually drowned," the police commissioner noted.

Theron said they have contacted the Zambian police in a bid to apprehend the two suspects. The search for Liseli's body continues.