


CAPE ARGUS / NEWS

*Conservationists' fears that poachers have been taking advantage of the Covid-19 pandemic to roam and hunt for endangered species have been confirmed. File picture.*

## Poachers in Cape Town taking advantage of Covid-19 lockdown

By Mwangi Githahu  May 19, 2020



Cape Town - Conservationists' fears that poachers have been taking advantage of the Covid-19 pandemic to roam and hunt for endangered species have been confirmed after two recent sting operations by CapeNature and the SAPS stock theft unit led to arrests.

Poachers were caught in illegal possession of an estimated 11000 endangered succulent plants destined for the illegal plant trade.

Environmental Affairs and Development Planning MEC Anton Bredell, whose department includes CapeNature, said: "The arrests were made on April 30 and May 8 in the Matzikama region.

"Following an increase in biodiversity crime in the Matzikama area during the last two years, primarily the illegal collection of succulent plants and lizards, CapeNature's staff at Vanrhynsdorp joined forces with the SAPS Stock Theft and Endangered Species Unit and provincial traffic services in an attempt to curb these illegal activities. Partnerships with other government agencies have proven to be invaluable, allowing for focused and co-ordinated biodiversity conservation compliance and enforcement efforts leading to successful apprehensions and prosecutions," said Bredell.

"In April, three groups of hikers illegally accessed the Cederberg Wilderness area. Vehicles, drivers and hikers were apprehended and turned over to SAPS who issued relevant fines and warnings," he said.

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## Cape Argus

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