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Media Release: SANParks staff members arrested on suspicion of rhino poaching

23 October 2020

South African National Parks (SANParks) announced the arrest of three staff members on 20 October 2020; in an extended Intel driven operation by SANParks, SAPS Crime Intelligence Unit, Sabi Sands and Skukuza SAPS Stock Theft Unit outside Kruger Gate. Two of the officials were employed as Security Guards and one was attached to Technical Services at one of the rest camps. The three were likely to appear in court on Thursday, 22 October 2020 and will thereafter be subjected to internal employee disciplinary procedures.

The arrest of the suspects followed after the law enforcement officials chased after their car, which was found with a fresh set of rhino horns.

The Managing Executive of the Kruger National Park, Gareth Coleman stated that: "whilst not commenting on the merits or otherwise of this case, it is always disheartening when colleagues from SANParks are involved in criminal activities. It breaks down trust amongst employees which impacts on our responsibilities to act as an effective conservation authority serving the people of South Africa. Whilst they may succeed in the short term, history shows that they will eventually be caught and this will be at the expense of their employment, the wellbeing of their families and community."

Between July and September 2020, the anti-poaching teams arrested 16 suspected poachers inside the Park and confiscated seven rifles. The teams also observed and followed-up on 410 poaching activities, sightings, spoors and camps in the last three months.

"SANParks remains committed to doing everything in its power to stop poaching and help secure the future of fauna and flora for sustainable use and for the benefit of future generations. We also take this opportunity to encourage members of the public and employees to report wildlife criminal activities on 013 735 0197 or 076 801 9679", concluded Coleman.

Investigations are on-going.

Issued by:

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