

SOUTH AFRICA

Five poaching suspects arrested in Kruger National Park

Kgaugelo Masweneng

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Rangers tracked down and arrested suspected poachers at Kruger National Park this past weekend. File photo.

Image: *Henk Kruger*

An anti-poaching operation in the Kruger National Park at the weekend netted five suspected poachers.

It was described as a “fruitful” weekend in the Pretoriuskop section of the park, where the suspects were found in possession of ammunition, a silencer and two high-calibre hunting rifles.

“We are delighted with our anti-poaching teams who were able to arrest suspects before any animal was killed. The actions are a morale booster for our anti-poaching teams and conservation efforts,” said Gareth Coleman, managing executive of the park.

SANParks rangers, supported by air wing and K9 units, apprehended one suspected poacher and recovered poaching equipment including a rifle and an axe on Saturday.

A second suspect was fatally trampled by a herd of breeding elephants and a third managed to evade arrest.

On Sunday, rangers detected an incursion on a routine patrol and despite the hot weather conditions, they tracked the spoor until they made contact with three suspected poachers.

All three were arrested and a high-calibre hunting rifle, poaching equipment and ammunition were recovered. The rangers were supported by the air wing and K9 units during this operation.

“We hope the arrests send a strong message to poachers that we are determined to stop them in their tracks within the park,” said Coleman.

“SANParks is committed to working harder with law enforcement agencies and communities outside the park to intensify efforts to crack the criminal syndicates driving these crimes.”

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