

Kruger National Park anti-poaching teams conclude May with successful arrests

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Rangers in the Kruger National Park.

South African National Parks (SANParks) has announced further arrests of suspected poachers in the Kruger National Park (KNP), with four men apprehended.

The four suspected poachers were arrested on Sunday 30 May in the Pretoriuskop Section and on Monday 31 May in the Houtboschrand Section of the park.

On 30 May, rangers (with K9 support) responded to a visual of two poachers and made a follow up in pursuit of the suspected rhino poachers. The Airwing Unit was called in to support the ground teams; and soon thereafter two suspects were arrested without incident.

The following day, three tracks of suspected poachers were picked up by rangers (with K9 support) who began following the tracks. They made contact with three suspects and during the contact, one suspect was fatally wounded. A lengthy follow-up ensued with the support of the Airwing Unit, making use of a helicopter and fixed-wing aircraft as well as support from additional line K9's and free running hounds. This led to the eventual apprehension of the remaining two suspects.

During both operations, a high calibre hunting rifle, ammunition and poaching equipment were seized.

All suspects were handed over to the South African Police Service (SAPS) for further handling and the suspects will appear in court in due course, SANParks said.

The KNP Head Ranger, Cathy Dreyer congratulated all those who were involved in the operations "We are proud of the teamwork and dedication of our Rangers Corp, our aviators and the K9 units, who execute our anti-poaching efforts in extremely difficult conditions. We are aware that poachers are currently targeting weekends for their misdeeds in the mistaken belief that rangers do not work during that time. Only through discipline, teamwork and tenacity will we be able help stem the tide of rhino poaching in KNP and we have members of our teams in the field all day all week 24/7, who have vowed to protect and conserve our fauna and flora".

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