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A man is expected to appear in the Goodwood magistrate's court on Wednesday after he was found in possession of abalone worth over R1.7 million. Photo: Directorate for Priority Crime Investigation (the Hawks)

Suspect arrested in Edgemean with over R1.7m worth of abalone to appear in court

By [Robin-Lee Francke](#) 6h ago



Cape Town - A 45-year-old man is expected to appear in the Goodwood magistrate's court on Wednesday after he was found in possession of abalone worth over R1.7 million in Cape Town's northern suburb of Edgemean.

The arrest came after the Directorate for Priority Crime Investigation's (the Hawks) serious organised crime investigation team, the crime intelligence unit, the K9 Unit and officials from the department of environmental forestry and fisheries conducted a search and seizure operation and uncovered an illicit abalone facility, Hawks spokesman Lieutenant Colonel Philani Nkwalase said in a statement.

The teams found approximately 245.95 kg of dried abalone with a street value of R1.7 million and also seized abalone processing equipment.

Elsewhere, former police colonel Avril Christopher Wentzel, aged 57, was convicted and sentenced in the Kimberley regional court after pleading guilty to fraud.

According to Hawks Northern Cape spokeswoman Nomthandazo Mnisi, Wentzel worked at the provincial detective unit in Kimberley when he submitted several fraudulent travel claims in 2014.

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She said Wentzel misused his state benefit from the Middle Management Service scheme when he received an undue payment of approximately R47 000.

Due to his guilty plea, the court ordered Wentzel to spend 12 months in prison or pay a fine of R30 000.

He was also sentenced to five years imprisonment which was suspended for a period of five years on condition he is not found guilty of fraud.

Hawks national head Lieutenant General Godfrey Lebeya welcomed the conviction and sentencing.

"It is unfortunate that a senior official who is a commissioned officer that has been bestowed on him by the state president, has succumbed to the temptation of looting the public purse," he said.

"May the honest serving members appreciate that crime does not pay and that those who betray their oath of office by committing crime will never go unpunished."

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