



NEWS



A file picture of the St Lucia Wetland Park. Picture: Grant Erskine.

Missing suspected poacher may have jumped into St Lucia Lake to avoid arrest

By [Jolene Marriah-Maharaj](#) 1h ago

Durban: Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife said the search was on for a suspected poacher, who may have jumped into St Lucia Lake to avoid arrest.

Spokesperson Musa Mntambo said the poacher may have sustained gunshot wounds after exchanging fire with field rangers.

Mntambo said the incident took place on Friday morning, at around 9:30am.

“Field rangers who were holding an observation post at Mfabeni Game Reserve reported hearing a gun shot being fired to the north of Tewate Wilderness Area on the Eastern Shores of Lake St Lucia at iSimangaliso Wetland Park.

“They called for a backup and a helicopter with four additional field rangers was immediately dispatched.

“As the helicopter flew above the area, two boats at the bank of the lake were spotted.”

Mntambo said a decision was taken to monitor the area near the boats as it was suspected that the poachers who had left those boats would return for them.

“The four rangers disembarked from the helicopter and began patrolling the area on foot.

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“As they were patrolling, at a distance, four poachers were observed walking towards the two boats. It was further noted that one poacher was carrying a gun.

“As the four poachers were about to push the boats back to the river, from a safe distance, one field ranger cautioned the poachers to surrender.

“Unexpectedly, one of the poachers started shooting towards where the rangers had positioned themselves.

“The field rangers returned fire. When the shooting ceased, the field rangers moved towards the boat that an armed poacher had fired shots from.”

Mntambo said the suspected poachers ran in different directions during the shootout.

“Field Rangers further observed blood in the water which made them suspect that one poacher, probably the one with a gun, had been shot. He might have attempted to avert arrest by jumping into the water.”

Mntambo said poaching incidents were very rife in this area.

“Two months ago, a white rhino was poached, and its horns were stolen. Recently a newly poached hippo carcass was discovered about 1 km away from the current incident scene.”

“The search for the missing poacher is still ongoing with the local community participating in the search. The other three suspect poachers are also still at large.”

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