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Four rhinos, including a pregnant female were found killed at Inverdoorn Private Game Reserve, near Cape Town. picture: Supplied

Four suspects to appear in Ceres court for the poaching of five Inverdoorn rhinos

By Rafieka Williams 5h ago

Cape Town - Four suspects were arrested by police for the poaching of five rhinos at a private game reserve.

Police spokesperson Wesley Twiggs said the four arrested suspects were expected to appear in Ceres Magistrate's Court after they have been charged.

Five rhinos were attacked by poachers at Inverdoorn Private Game Reserve just outside Cape Town last week. Four of the rhinos were killed while the fifth rhino survived a gunshot to the face.

The SAPS stock theft and endangered species units were assigned to the case over the weekend while forensic investigator Wayne Stoltz was also appointed.

Inverdoorn owner Searl Derman said that local and national investigators interrogated teams at all of the Aquila game lodges. Staff also went through polygraph tests throughout the weekend to ensure that all possible angles and leads had been covered.

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“As with most rhino poaching incidents, the trend includes the provision of information from within the staffing complement of private game reserves, including bribes, to gain valuable information,” Derman said.

The 5-year-old rhino that survived the onslaught is fighting for its life and is in a critical condition. Wildlife Veterinarian Dr Louis Greeff has been appointed to attend to the injured rhino.

“She has been losing condition and it’s traumatic to watch her just drink water and the water just comes out of her nasal cavity. She’s limping on her back leg which is a very bad sign but we do hope that she makes it,” said Derman.

CapeNature CEO Dr Razeena Omar said there is a zero tolerance for biodiversity crime in the Western Cape.

“CapeNature was asked to assist when this incident occurred late Wednesday evening. As the regulatory authority we will leave no stone unturned to assist in bringing the perpetrators to book.”

Derek Lewitton, a conservationist from Black Rock Rhino, said poaching has been much more successful and brutal in the last five years than the government has admitted.

“As the national rhino population disappears, the same armed, well-funded poaching syndicates are turning their attention in a more determined way to the private reserves that still have healthy populations,” Lewitton said.

“The private rhino reserves have always been subjected to the same poaching pressures but we’ve been successful in protecting our populations because for us it’s a personal mission and it’s not a job.”

Anton Bredell, the Local Government, Environmental Affairs and Development Planning MEC, expressed his concern.

“I am utterly saddened by this tremendous loss of our wildlife in the Western Cape and condemn this horrific incident in the strongest terms.

“This callous behaviour will not go unpunished.”

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