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LOOK: Gqeberha man arrested for possession of 1 620 units of protected abalone



Abalone, which is eaten as a delicacy and used as an aphrodisiac in Asian countries, is on the brink of extinction in South Africa as a result of years of uncontrolled commercial fishing and poaching.

File picture: Anna Zieminski/AFP

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Durban - A Gqeberha man was arrested for [suspected abalone poaching](#) in the early hours of January 11, after vigilant Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality Metro (NMBM) Police officers spotted a suspicious vehicle, a red Toyota Condor, which was leaking water from the rear end.

The man was found travelling with eight bags of de-shelled [abalone](#) at around 3.45am in the Summerstrand and Humewood area.

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NMBM Safety and Security acting executive director, advocate Andrew Moses said in a press release that the officers pulled the vehicle over and found the eight bags of de-shelled abalone in the goods compartment.

**Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality**

on Wednesday



11 January 2023

Man arrested in possession of 1620 units of abalone in Gqeberha

In the early hours of Wednesday, 11 January 2023, vigilant Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality Metro Police officers made a successful arrest at Gqeberha when they busted a man travelling with about eight bags of deshelled abalone in a vehicle.... [See more](#)



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"The suspect was taken to the Humewood police station. We want to thank the vigilant officers for a job well done. A total of 1 620 units have been counted from this crime incident," he said.

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[The confiscated abalone](#) is estimated to be worth about R500 000.

Moses said that the metro has intensified crime prevention measures within the municipality over the festive season which has resulted in a drop in crime and more arrests of perpetrators.

Abalone is a large marine gastropod mollusc, a sea snail, often found in the cold waters of New Zealand, Australia, South Africa, Japan, and the west coast of North America.

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Its extremely rich, flavourful, and highly prized meat is considered a culinary delicacy and places it among the world's most expensive seafood.

According to a 2018 report by international wildlife trade monitoring network TRAFFIC, poachers have plundered at least 96 million abalone from South African waters from 2000 to 2017, plummeting this humble sea snail onto the IUCN's Endangered Species category.

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"Efforts to curb the illegal trade have roundly failed. Once abundant, the population of South African abalone *Haliotis midae*, more commonly known as perlemoen, is declining to unprecedented levels," warned TRAFFIC in the report titled: Empty Shells: An assessment of abalone poaching and trade from southern Africa.

"The rampant illegal harvesting of abalone has resulted in the loss of a valuable commodity worth approximately R628m per annum," said the report.

Researchers believe the only way to protect the species from going extinct, and not lose the income that legally fished abalone generates, is an international collaboration to regulate its trade.

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