

CAPETIMES NEWS

Hawks smell something fishy: 6 held in abalone bust



A tip-off regarding illegal transportation of abalone to Cape Town led Hawks to seize multi-million abalone. Picture: Hawks

By Okuhle Hlati | Published 3h ago

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Cape Town - Swift response by the Hawks National Intervention Unit (NIU) following a tip-off has led to the arrest of six suspects in connection with the discovery of abalone worth more than R2.8 million.

The suspects, aged between 26 and 60, were expected to appear in the Cape Town Magistrate’s court on Tuesday morning facing charges relating to possession of abalone and managing a drying facility.

NIU officers intercepted two vehicles that were en-route to Cape Town after receiving information from crime intelligence of abalone being transported.

Hawks spokesperson Zinzi Hani said the officers had been furnished with the description of the two vehicles.

“The vehicles were then spotted and kept under surveillance by the team. Later on, one of the vehicles was pulled over and seven bags of wet abalone were found in the boot. The driver of the vehicle was a foreign national and the abalone were seized. At the same time the other identified vehicle was also pulled over and five suspects who are South African were arrested,” she said,

According to Hani, further investigation led the NIU team to a premises situated at the Bougain Villas in Century City near Milnerton where the officers discovered an illegal abalone processing facility.

She said at the premises, a large quantity of wet and dried abalone was seized as well as equipment being used to process abalone.

“The six suspects are to face charges ranging from illegal processing of abalone to illegal possession of abalone. While at the scene, the Hawks Economic Protected Resources team was activated and they took over the investigation,” said Hani.