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Wildlife poachers arrested in Pilgrim's Rest

The suspects were found in possession of hunting rifles and dead wildlife, which the authorities suspect they had intended to sell to the illegal miners in the area as meat.

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Seven suspects aged between 17 and 47 were arrested for poaching and being in possession of wildlife and weapons.

According to a provincial police spokesperson, Brigadier Selvy Mohlala, some wildlife species, mostly more than 20 antelope, two hunting rifles, some bush knives, some ammunition and a light delivery vehicle were all confiscated from the Mauchsburg Plantation in Pilgrim's Rest this morning, Monday December 4, at about 03:00.



"According to information received, the suspects were nabbed as they invaded the plantation and were spotted with technological devices. The security personnel responded to the location in the mountainous plantation in Mauchsburg where different wildlife species were slaughtered and loaded in a light delivery vehicle," he said.

Mohlala said the Sabie SAPS was summoned to the scene, and they handed the case over to the Pilgrim's Rest police for further handling. Some officials from Nature Conversation were also called in. The value of the slaughtered wildlife will be made known as soon as the conversation officials are done with their assessment.

He also said two licensed hunting rifles with about 500 rounds of live ammunition, seven cellphones, six torches and some bush knives were confiscated.



The vehicle used to transport the carcasses was also confiscated. It had not been reported stolen, as the owner was found to be one of the arrested suspects.

Preliminary investigation revealed that the antelope were due to be supplied to illegal miners in and around Pilgrim's Rest, supposedly as meat.

Police investigations continue. The suspects are expected to appear in court soon.