

Alleged poacher injured during confrontation in Kruger National Park

One of the fleeing men allegedly pointed a firearm at the pursuing rangers and shots were fired. A 32-year-old poacher was shot and injured during a confrontation with field rangers in the Crocodile Bridge section of the Kruger National Park on the evening of Thursday, September 18 at around 20:00.

According to the Mpumalanga police spokesperson, Sergeant Thulisile Magagula, the incident followed the discovery of human tracks at around 07:30 that morning by field rangers on patrol. A follow-up operation was immediately launched, with rangers tracking the footprints toward the park's southern boundary throughout the day.

“At about 20:00, rangers encountered two armed suspects moving toward them. When instructed to stop, the suspects attempted to flee and tried to scale a nearby fence. During pursuit, one of the suspects allegedly pointed a rifle at the rangers, prompting them to open fire in self-defence,” “Both suspects managed to jump over the fence and continued to flee. One suspect dropped his rifle and collapsed a short distance away near a sugarcane field. The second suspect escaped into the sugarcane fields and remains at large,” said Magagula.

She added that the Skukuza Police Station was immediately notified, and both an ambulance and the Skukuza medical doctor were dispatched to the scene.

The injured suspect was found in possession of a backpack containing two rhino horns and a knife. He was unable to produce any permits authorising his presence in the park or for the possession of the firearm recovered at the scene,” added Magagula.

Following further investigation, the section ranger and members of the Skukuza SAPS confirmed the recovery of the rhino horns. The suspect was arrested and is facing charges of trespassing in a national park, illegal hunting, possession of an unlicensed firearm and possession of a dangerous weapon

The suspect was transported to a nearby hospital for medical treatment and will appear in the Masoyi Periodical Court as soon as he is declared medically fit.

Police are urging anyone with information that could assist in locating the suspect who fled the scene to contact Detective Constable Shegofatso Moreku at 082 077 5826, or call the Crime Stop number at 08600 10111. Information can also be submitted anonymously via the My SAPS App