

Brutal poaching of 19 Angulate Tortoises shocks Cape Town community



Only the empty shells were left after poachers killed 19 tortoises at the Table View Nature Reserve.

Image: Supplied

The recent brutal poaching of 19 Angulate Tortoises at the Table Bay Nature Reserve has sent shockwaves through the community and conservation circles alike.

Staff members of the reserve made the gruesome discovery on the morning of 1 November 2025, stumbling upon empty shells scattered along footpaths leading to the Environmental Education

Centre. This shocking incident has sparked outrage among city officials, wildlife advocates, and citizens dedicated to protecting South Africa's unique biodiversity.

It is evident that these tortoises did not perish naturally; they were deliberately targeted. The violators removed the tortoises from their shells, indicating that they were harvested for their meat or for traditional uses.

“This is a serious case of animal cruelty and a violation of environmental protection laws under the National Environmental Management Biodiversity Act and City of Cape Town by-laws,” said Eddie Andrews, Deputy Mayor and Mayco member for Spatial Planning and Environment.

“These beautiful creatures have been brutally killed, with their shells broken open and discarded, and their internal organs and flesh removed.”

As the city seeks justice for these precious wildlife victims, early investigations suggest that two men entered the reserve that morning under false pretences, claiming they wished to fish. They even paid for the activity and were seen carrying a fishing rod. Evidence in the form of photographs and video footage capturing the suspects' vehicle has been submitted to local police, CapeNature, and the SPCA for further investigation.

In response to this alarming incident, reserve staff have reiterated their commitment to regular patrols across all city nature reserves. They urge visitors to remain vigilant and report any suspicious activity or behaviour observed while enjoying these protected areas. The call to action highlights the shared responsibility within the community to protect wildlife from poaching and other threats.

This disturbing incident showcases the challenges facing conservation efforts in the region. With poaching on the rise globally, South Africa must remain steadfast in its dedication to safeguarding its unique wildlife. The community is left to grapple with the loss of these innocent tortoises, symbols of the rich ecological heritage that belongs to all South Africans.