

Abalone Poaching Disrupted Along the Tsitsikamma Marine Protected Area

On 03 February 2026, SANParks received information regarding the presence of approximately 20 suspected abalone poachers operating within the Tsitsikamma Marine Protected Area along the Otter Trail.

SANParks Rangers responded through various operations from 03 to 05 February 2026. On 03 February 2026 fresh abalone shells were found, which confirmed that illegal harvesting had taken place.

On 05 February 2026 teams tracked the suspects to an area where they had been residing in Covie. The suspects attempted to flee when approached. A thorough and intensified search followed, which led to the apprehension of four suspects.

During the operation, two illegal immigrants were also arrested and detained in Plettenberg Bay. Two cases have been opened at the Plettenberg Bay Police Station. One relates to illegal immigration, and the other to the possession of abalone. A total of 204 units of abalone were seized, with a combined weight of 29.3 kilograms and an estimated value of R45,630.54.

The operation was conducted through the joint efforts of SANParks Rangers, Border Police, and the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment.