



agriculture, forestry & fisheries

Department:
Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

MEDIA STATEMENT

30 OCTOBER 2015

Abalone poachers hit the departments' storage facility in Paarden Island

An undisclosed amount of abalone bags were stolen from the department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries abalone storage facility, in Paarden Island in Cape Town on 29 October 2015. A group of armed and masked men overpowered security personnel tasked with protecting the storage facility and took away abalone bags that were in the storage. The stolen abalone was confiscated by the department during previous operations aimed at curbing illegal fishing of abalone in the province.

Minister Senzeni Zokwana rebuked this criminal act and called on law enforcement agencies to move swiftly in arresting those responsible for this crime. "Abalone is one of the important species that form part of our oceans economy. It is important that we protect it from illegal fishing. Our efforts to do so will not be derailed by thugs who want to steal resources meant for the development of our people and economy," Said Minister Zokwana.

The Marine Living Resources Act (MLRA) is anchored on the sustainable use of the Marine Living Resources including protection services. It is therefore important to note that although Section 63 of the MLRA allows for the sale of confiscated Marine products, this was intended for good will of reinvesting the proceeds from the sale of confiscated fish towards the fight against illegal fishing.

However this may have been open to abuse which has the potential to encourage corruption and collusion. As a department our efforts should be focused on prevention of poaching by improving our efforts of protection of Marine Resources rather than confiscation of poached goods.

The Minister plans to review the process of selling and storage of the confiscated abalone by the department, including options to outsource the function completely or in part or even stop the selling.

Acting Deputy Director General of Fisheries, Ms. Siphokazi Ndudane, said the police and the Hawks were investigating the incident. We encourage community members to provide any information that may lead to the arrest of the perpetrators.

For media enquiries please contact:

Bomikazi Molapo

Minister's spokesperson

078 801 3711

BomikaziM@daff.gov.za