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## CapeNature bust - R500,000 fine for illegal reptile trafficking the Western Cape

16 Feb 2026

On Thursday, 12 February 2026, a Spanish citizen Mr David Navarro Roman (41) was convicted in the Vredendal Regional Court for illegal possession and importation of 22 Armadillo Girdled lizards (*Ouroborus cataphractus*) and one speckled dwarf tortoise (*Signatus signatus*) from Northern Cape to the Western Cape.

He was convicted on three charges, of which two are in terms of the Western Cape Ordinance 19 of 1974 for possession and importation of protected wild animals without the necessary permits as well as on a charge in terms of the Prevention of Organised Crime Act 1998. He was sentenced to two years in prison suspended for five years, for each of the three charges. Furthermore, he was to pay a fine of R500 000.00. The confiscated animals were forfeited to CapeNature and placed in a suitable facility to be prepared for release.

Roman was caught by members of CapeNature and the SAPS on 29 November 2025 while staying at a hotel in the Vredendal area.







Dr Ashley Naidoo, CapeNature's CEO expressed his serious concern about the increase of illegal collection of these reptiles.

This species is threatened by widespread, unregulated, unsustainable exploitation of natural population habitat of remaining populations must be protected to avoid further exploitation, which could likely drive species to extinction. With such wide open and large natural spaces in the Province, we continue to rely on citizens being observant and on our many partner institutions within and outside government to build enforcement successes.

— Dr Ashley Naidoo, CapeNature CEO

Since these lizards live in groups, the removal of the entire local populations by harvesting for illegal pet trade, is causing local extinction. These remaining natural populations are unlikely to recover due to a low distribution of other natural population reasons, the species has been included on the South African National Sensitive Species List (<http://nssl.sanbi.org.za/>).

CapeNature calls on the public to report any information about the illegal hunting/gathering of wildlife to their nearest CapeNature office or call 087 087 9262.

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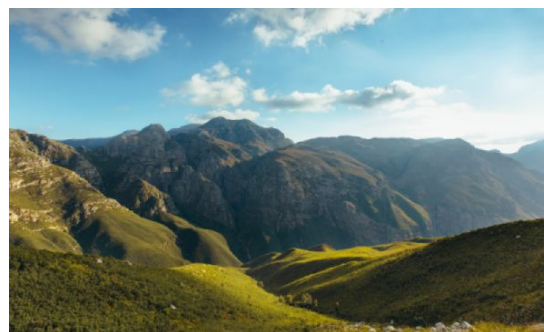
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3 Mar 2026

### Environmental education gets a boost through CapeNature's museum training

CapeNature has partnered with the Department of Cultural Affairs and Sport (DCAS): Museum Services to expand environmental education across the Western Cape. During February 2026, CapeNature's



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The Western Cape is marking World Wildlife Day on 3 March, a day proclaimed by the United Nations, by reaffirming its commitment to biodiversity protection,



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