

# Abalone poaching: 'Hong Kong sucking up mountain of poached SA seafood'

By [Tony Carnie](#)

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With Chinese New Year celebrations just around the corner, millions of people will be tucking into a mountain of tasty seafood delicacies very soon - much of it plucked illegally from South African marine waters.



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A special investigation published on Friday concludes that nearly two-thirds of dried abalone shipments to Hong Kong are harvested illegally in South Africa, before being shifted via a complex variety of smuggling routes that snake northwards up the continent as far as Central and East Africa.

The South African abalone species, which looks a bit like a mushroom with furry edges, is one of several large sea snail varieties that have been popular in Cantonese cuisine since the Zhou dynasty (1122 to 256 BC).

A report published in Hong Kong by the global wildlife trade monitoring group Traffic suggests that abalone (perlemoen) poaching in South Africa has escalated in recent years to the point where 65% of local abalone was illegally sourced and trafficked, compared to the 35% that was legally wild-caught or produced through aquaculture operations.

"Abalone is one of the most prized items in Cantonese cuisine - a must-have on celebratory banquet menus," says Wilson Lau, author of the latest Traffic assessment...

*Read the [full story](#) on the Daily Maverick website.*

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