



## Cites concerned about poaching

### Inconsistencies in exporting of Namibian rhino trophies

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A report that will be up for discussion at this week's World Wildlife Conference highlights inconsistencies in the exporting of rhino trophies from Namibia and says that 295 rhinos have been poached in Namibia between 2009 and 2018.

It says the 44 rhinos that were poached in 2017 represented 1.5% of Namibia's rhino population.

The 183 Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) will adopt decisions and resolutions to expand and further strengthen the global wildlife trade regime at to be considered at the 18th meeting of the Conference of the Parties of CITES (CoP18). The conference will take place at Palexpo in Geneva from 17 to 28 August.

Governments have submitted 56 new proposals to change the levels of protection that CITES provides for species of wild animals and plants that are in international trade.

The report that will be considered is therefore of importance to Namibia, which has proposed transferring its population of white rhinos from Appendix I to II with an annotation solely for the sale of live animals to appropriate and acceptable destinations and for hunting trophies, with all other specimens to remain on Appendix I.

According to the report a total of 4 757 African rhino horns are estimated to have entered the illegal trade between 2016 and 2017, of which 1 093 horns were reportedly recovered by enforcement agencies within and outside Africa.

This represents approximately 2 378 rhino horns each year being sourced for illegal markets, weighing some 6.6 tonnes.

Poaching remains the major source of these horns.

"Of the total number of horns intended for illegal markets, the percentage of horns seized in Africa has almost doubled since CoP17, from 4.5% to 8.9%, while the percentage of horns seized outside of Africa has remained at a similar level (5.8% and 5.5%, respectively)," says the report.

In Namibia a total of 10 seizures involving 55 rhino horns or pieces of horns were recorded between the period of 2014 and 2018. These horns weighed approximately 114 kg.

"Although recent slight increases in reported poaching in Botswana and Namibia in 2018 are cause for concern, numbers poached across Africa in 2018 are likely to drop below 1 000 rhinos for the first time in six years, unless there is an end-of-year spike in poaching that is larger than predicted," says the report.

It points out that in South Africa and Namibia, the two countries with the largest rhino populations in Africa, numbers of both species of rhino have increased considerably since sport hunting of white and black rhino resumed in 1968 and 2005 respectively.

In 2004, CITES parties approved annual hunting quotas of five black rhino males for both South Africa and Namibia. Between 2005 and 2017 a total of 10 black rhinos were hunted in Namibia (15% of the quota).



(<https://d3rp5jatom3eyn.cloudfront.net/asse-concerned-about-poaching2019-08-120.jpg>)  
\_Inconsistencies in exporting of Namibian rhino trophies have been highlighted in a report that will be discussed at this week's World Wildlife Conference. Photo\_ ELLANIE SMIT

The report further showed some inconsistencies in the number of rhino trophies that Namibia reported to be exported to certain countries and what those countries reported to have imported.

According to the report between 2013 and 2016 Namibia reported that 14 rhino horn trophies had been exported to the United States, however the United States said it imported only 10 trophies.

Meanwhile, Russia reported that it had imported six rhino horn trophies, while Namibia said it had exported eight rhino trophies to that country.

Austria reported that it had imported five rhino horn trophies from Namibia, while Namibia said it had exported six rhino trophies to that country.

Namibia also exported two rhino trophies to Germany, Hungary Denmark each. This was consistent with the importing countries' reports.

International rhino horn sales remain banned under CITES while the commercial sale of hunting trophies is also not permitted.

CoP18 will again consider a number of elephant proposals. The African elephant was moved from CITES Appendix II to CITES Appendix I in 1989 after decades of ivory poaching had greatly reduced many populations.

In 1997 and 2000, recognising that some southern African elephant populations were healthy and well managed, CITES agreed to downlist the populations of Botswana, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe to Appendix II.

In 1999 and again in 2008, sales of registered stocks of government-owned ivory from these countries to China and Japan were authorised.

Botswana, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe would like to enable trade in registered ivory stocks to Secretariat-verified partners as well as some specified non-ivory trade. They propose to do this by amending an annotation that, although their elephant populations are listed in Appendix II, currently disallows trade.

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