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# African rangers fight poaching under plight of COVID-19 pandemic



19 hours ago • 19 hours ago • by Apolinari Tairo - eTN Tanzania • [Add Comment](#)





Written by [Apolinari Tairo](#) - eTN Tanzania

The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in a rise in poaching across Africa as wildlife rangers are stretched to the limit, causing alarm and worry for activists and conservationists.

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1. A survey conducted by conservation encouragement charity, Tusk and Natural State, found that African rangers see no sign of relief.
2. Poaching is actually escalating as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact Africa's communities and wildlife.
3. The survey questioned 60 field organizations across 19 countries in Africa.





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The Conservation and Wildlife Fund at Hwange National Park, Zimbabwe, said it has seen an 8,000% increase of traps and snares between May and July 2020.



“There has been an alarming spike in the rate of ivory-related arrests made by our team over the last year. The poachers will not rest despite the pandemic, so it is up to us to maintain operations and the moral high ground by protecting and caring for our teams,” said Nyaradzo Hoto, a sergeant at the [International Anti-Poaching Foundation in Zimbabwe](#).





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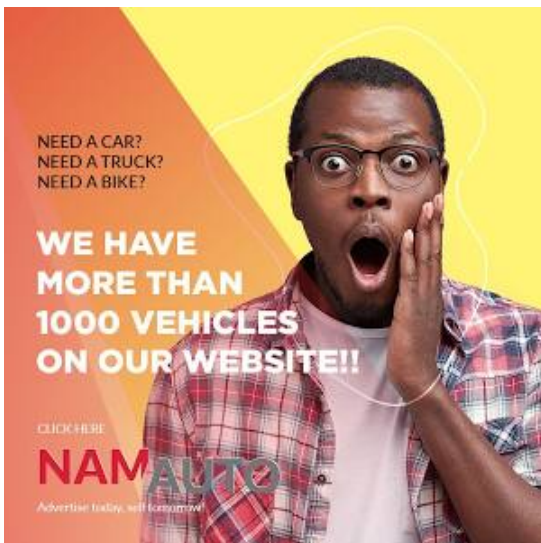
“We stand strong in our commitment to patrol the vast wilderness areas we are entrusted with and protect those that can’t fend for themselves against poachers,” Hoto added.

The International Journal of Protected Areas and Conservation found that 78.5% of surveyed African countries reported that COVID-19 had impacted their ability to monitor the illegal wildlife trade, and 53 percent reported a high level of impact from COVID-19 on the ability to mitigate human-wildlife conflict.

Edwin Kinyanjui, senior wildlife community officer at Mount Kenya Trust in Kenya, said rangers needed to be more vigilant in the past year.

“Illegal activity due to widespread loss of income is on the rise and while combating this activity, rangers are at risk of contracting COVID-19,” said Kinyanjui.

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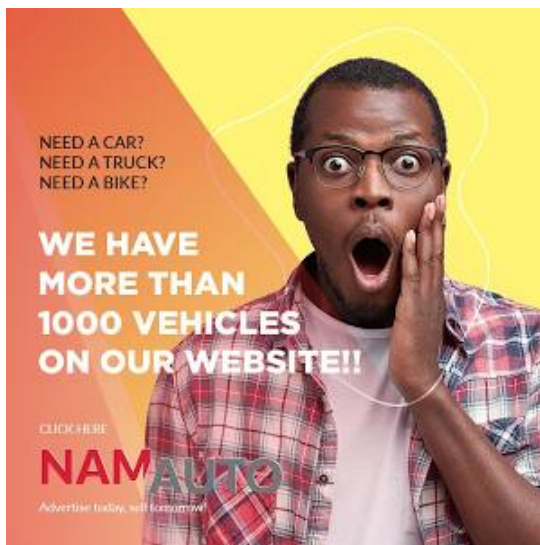
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Essential [funding for wildlife tourism](#) has also been in crisis due to the pandemic. A spokesperson from the Frankfurt Zoological Society said the impact of COVID-19 is being felt in Nsumbu National Park in Zambia.

"This reduced tourism has impacted jobs and related livelihoods and provided a challenge in linking the value of nature with the value to human life," the society said.

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Charity Rhino Ark, which assists Aberdares National Park in Kenya, said tourist revenue for the Kenya Wildlife Services dropped by 96%, which triggered budget cuts to government wildlife and forest security programs.

In a bid to tackle the problem, more than 150 ranger teams are taking part in the 2021 Wildlife Ranger Challenge, a series of mental and physical challenges culminating on September 18 in a 21-kilometer race across the varied and challenging terrain of Africa's protected areas.

Funds raised will cover the operating costs for at least 5,000 rangers, enabling them to provide for their families and protect communities and wildlife in some of Africa's most vulnerable areas.





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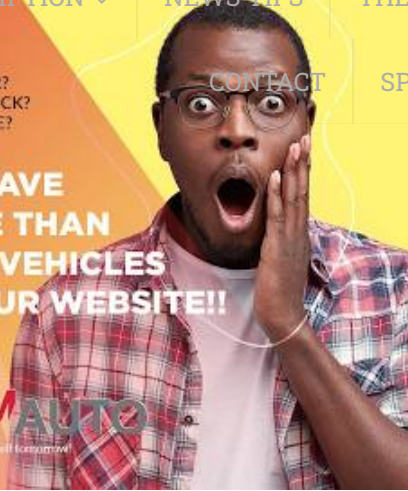
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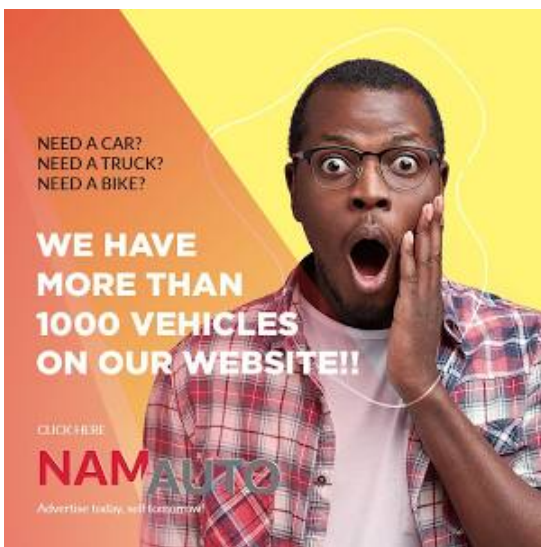


“Rangers are the lifeblood of our conservation efforts and are simply too precious to lose,” said Judi Wakhungu, Kenya’s ambassador to France, Portugal, Serbia, Monaco, and the Holy See.

Anti-poaching campaigns in Africa are going on under serious shortages of funds caused by low turnout of tourists during the pandemic.

In Tanzania, one among African countries rich in wildlife, it was reported that a total of 33,386 poachers have been arrested in the past 5 years thanks to the intensified anti-poaching campaign initiated by the National Anti-Poaching Task Force (NTAP).

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In the same period, 2,533 weapons were seized; a total of 5,253 cases were filed in the court; and 914 were concluded leading to the jailing of 1,600 people.

