

Combating Wildlife Crime in Namibia

Annual Report 2020



Intelligence and Investigation Unit
Wildlife Protection Services Division
Wildlife and National Parks Directorate
Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism



Protected Resources Division
Criminal Investigations Directorate
Namibian Police Force
Ministry of Home Affairs, Immigration Safety and Security



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Crime becomes near impossible when good people work together to fight it.

This report covers the period 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2020



Criminals are members of the public – if the public is vigilant and reports suspicious behaviour and openly condemns all crime, criminal activities become very difficult.

**Report wildlife crime at this number:
55 555**

[all messages and calls are strictly confidential]

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1. Introduction:

The year 2020 has been one of the most turbulent in recent world history. The global COVID-19 pandemic killed close to two million people, brought the tourism industry to a temporary standstill, suppressed economies and shattered individual livelihoods. A sharp rise in wildlife crime, driven by increased poverty and disrupted conservation and law-enforcement systems, was reported from a number of countries.

Within this context it is noteworthy that Namibia did not register an overall increase in wildlife crime during 2020, although some localised increases in poaching for meat were recorded. Conservation and law enforcement activities continued largely uninterrupted throughout the year. There has actually been an important reduction in the prevalence of high-value species crimes (related to elephant, rhinos, pangolin), although these still accounted for over one third of all arrests made during 2020.

Active collaboration amongst all stakeholders has continued to effectively curb wildlife crime in Namibia. Coordinated national efforts have led to a significant decrease in cases registered (down 31%) and suspects arrested (down 31%) during 2020 compared to 2019. Factors affecting crime prevalence are complex and these statistics should be treated with caution. Nonetheless, it can be stated that efforts to suppress wildlife crime in Namibia are continuing to head in the right direction.

Rhino crimes accounted for most arrests during the past year, with 145 suspects having been detained. A significant number of these were pre-emptive arrests, where suspects were caught before they could kill a rhino. This is not only a highly commendable law enforcement success, but also a very positive

conservation outcome. Pre-emptive arrests have directly saved numerous rhinos and will allow the population to continue to multiply.

The number of rhinos known to have been poached in Namibia during 2020 has decreased from the previous year. On the other hand, significantly more rhino horns were seized during 2020 than during 2019. This indicates improved law enforcement and more effective disruption of criminal networks.

Arrests during 2020 have included a number of high-level perpetrators, with significant international connections. The breadth of arrests in cases related to rhinos, ranging from poachers to abettors to local dealers and finally international kingpins, have had a significant knock-on effect.

Arrests also continue to be made in older cases registered prior to 2020. During 2020, 36 suspects were arrested in line with older cases. This is a particularly noteworthy result, underlining the fact that investigations are ongoing and sooner or later, most perpetrators will be caught.

Although wildlife crime is ultimately driven by demand in consumer countries, Namibians continue to make up over 90 per cent of arrested wildlife crime suspects in our country. This highlights the need for broader interventions to reduce poverty and strengthen social rejection of crime.

An important milestone to close the year was the finalisation of the Revised *National Strategy on Wildlife Protection and Law Enforcement 2021–2025*. This provides essential strategic guidance for the years ahead – although adaptation and innovation will always remain vital attributes in the fight against crime.

2. National Strategy on Wildlife Protection and Law Enforcement

The Revised National Strategy on Wildlife Protection and Law Enforcement is an important guiding document for Namibia's efforts to combat wildlife crime over the upcoming five years.

Criminals constantly adapt to changing circumstances. They also have the advantage of being able to operate outside the law and outside normal moral obligations. This makes coordinated, strategic interventions to combat wildlife crime particularly important. The strategy is based on lessons learnt during the previous five years. It recognises the importance of intersectoral cooperation, conservation systems, anti-poaching activities and law enforcement.

The strategy includes the following:

- **a focus on the high-value species** currently most targeted by criminals, namely elephant, rhinos and pangolin (while recognising that illegal trade in other natural resources needs to be addressed)
- **current crime statistics and trends** that serve as a baseline for measuring impacts
- **key requirements** for protecting valuable and endangered species
- **Clear overall strategic objectives:**
 - protect wildlife and safeguard the wildlife economy
 - enforce wildlife laws and cooperate with neighbouring countries to enhance law enforcement
 - build capacity for conservation, wildlife protection and law enforcement
 - enhance community-based resource management to improve wildlife protection
 - assess current law-enforcement systems and practices to ensure social-safeguard requirements, human-rights based approaches and the protection of local communities
 - strengthen law enforcement amongst all agencies to effectively counter wildlife crime
 - identify lead and partner agencies to mandate the implementation of the strategy
 - build partnerships and stakeholder collaboration
 - raise awareness regarding wildlife protection and communicate matters related to wildlife crime

• **Clear overall strategic principles:**

- state-protected areas are the cornerstone of Namibia's conservation programme
- effectively enforce national legislation and the rule of law
- wildlife is critically important for local, regional and national socio-economic benefits
- wildlife must be protected within and outside state-protected areas
- the long-term goal is to stop poaching rather than perpetually catch poachers
- poaching can be eliminated through cooperation between all Namibian law enforcement agencies
- resources can be more effectively leveraged and used if NGOs, the private sector and international organisations work in synergy with law enforcement agencies
- cooperate with and support local communities to protect wildlife
- cooperate with neighbouring countries to manage and protect shared wildlife resources, and with overseas countries to close down trafficking routes and end markets

• **Strategic programme areas:**

- crime prevention and law enforcement
- investigations and intelligence
- legal framework and prosecutions
- transboundary illicit trade
- community safety and security
- partner and stakeholder coordination
- awareness and communication
- protecting rhinos within state-protected areas
- protecting rhinos outside state-protected areas
- protecting elephants
- protecting pangolins

• **Action plan including:**

- activities and tasks
 - current baseline
 - possible indicators
 - lead agency
 - supporting partners
 - time frame
 - indicative cost
- for each of the strategic programme areas.



LIEUTENANT GENERAL
S.H. NDEITUNGA, OMS
INSPECTOR GENERAL
NAMIBIAN POLICE FORCE



TEOFILUS NGHITILA
Office of the
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FORESTRY AND TOURISM

3. Important notes on interpreting Namibian wildlife crime data

Please read carefully to avoid misinterpretation of information:

1. Wildlife crime statistics are compiled on a weekly, monthly, quarterly and annual basis.
2. Statistics released of any particular period are not exhaustive. Case reports from regions may be received after the closure of that reporting period. These are added retroactively, which influences overall statistics.
3. Retroactive reporting will be reflected in compounded statistics (monthly, quarterly, annual). There may thus be slight discrepancies between weekly, monthly, quarterly and annual reports.
4. Some duplication of data may occur between regional and national reporting. This is identified during final data entry and may lead to a reduction in some totals in some instances.
5. The latest reporting period will always have the most up-to-date information. Always refer to the latest report available. If a discrepancy raises questions, please enquire about it.
6. **Unless specifically noted otherwise, elephant and rhino poaching data is based on estimated date of death of the animal, not date of discovery of the carcass. Statistics of carcasses generally present a number of problems:**
 - carcasses may be discovered a long time after the death of the animal (sometimes years).
 - the date of death of the animal may be difficult or impossible to determine.
 - some carcasses may never be discovered.

Presenting statistics of carcasses based on estimated date of death is problematic, as statistics need to be adjusted retroactively when carcasses that are estimated to be quite old are discovered. This means that figures presented in this report may differ from figures previously published by the MEFT.
7. Many wildlife crime cases involve complex investigations, often over longer periods of time, which may or may not lead to the arrest of suspects.
8. Suspects can only be charged with an offense if there is clear, prima facie evidence against them, which can be used in a court of law.
9. Suspects are regularly arrested in possession of contraband, including illegal wildlife products and illegal firearms. These are often linked to previously reported poaching incidents, or in some cases to incidents that were previously unknown, but are uncovered through the arrest. All illegal items, and any other objects of relevance, are seized and used as evidence in court cases.
10. When suspects are found in possession of any contraband, such as illegal wildlife products, firearms or ammunition, the vehicles in which they transported those items may be seized as instrumentality in the commission of an alleged offence.
11. Follow-up investigations may lead to the additional seizure of firearms used in particular poaching cases, or other illegal firearms kept by the suspects.
12. The origin of seized wildlife products can not always be determined; animals may have been poached in Namibia or in neighbouring countries. This is of particular relevance in the Kavango and Zambezi regions of Namibia.
13. Illegal wildlife products are regularly smuggled into Namibia from neighbouring countries, either for attempted sale in Namibia, or in transit to other destinations.
14. After an initial arrest, investigations in many cases continue for longer periods of time (sometimes several years) and may lead to further arrests or seizures of contraband.
15. Court cases, like investigations, may be drawn out over several years. Direct links between arrest and conviction statistics for any one year should thus not be made (unless a link is specifically noted as part of a statistic).
16. Information on active cases is often extremely sensitive and can not be released to the media, as this would jeopardise investigations. All information that can be released will be made readily available to the media on request.

4. Summary of wildlife crime statistics for 2020:

Note: Statistics are aggregated from all parts of the country, resulting in some cases being incorporated after the publication of a particular report. There may thus be minor differences in numbers between weekly, monthly, quarterly and annual reports.

INDICATOR	Total 2020
Wildlife crime cases registered (high-value species only):	113
related to pangolin	59
related to elephant	33
related to rhinos (total of both species)	25
cases of conspiracy to poach rhino (pre-emptive arrest cases)	7
Suspects arrested (high-value species only):	304
related to pangolin poaching/trafficking	103
related to elephant poaching/trafficking	64
related to rhino poaching/trafficking	145
pre-emptive arrests related to rhino poaching	46
High-value wildlife products seized:	
Pangolin – total number of seizures	74
– live animals seized	8
– dead animals or skins seized	66
Elephant – complete tusks seized	62
Rhinos – complete horns seized	21
Rhinos dehorned:	216
Estimated number of animals poached:	
Elephant	11
Rhinos	31
Perpetrators convicted (in high-value species cases registered in 2019):	
related to pangolin poaching/trafficking	12
related to elephant poaching/trafficking	3
related to rhino poaching/trafficking	2
Firearms seized (in cases related to high-value species)	17
Vehicles impounded (in cases related to high-value species)	28

Interpretation and notes

- Rhino accounted for least cases (25) but most arrests (145), indicating numerous abettors being arrested.
- Pangolin accounted for most cases (59) and seizures (74 animals).
- Ivory seizures continue to be significant; the seizures stem from at least 32 dead elephants.
- **Special note – the number of elephant tusks seized does not relate directly to the number of elephants killed in Namibia, as tusks may originate from elephants killed in other countries. Only 11 elephants are estimated to have been poached in Namibia during 2020.**
- **Special Note – the individual totals for pangolin, elephant and rhino ‘cases registered’ and ‘suspects arrested’ add up to more than the totals in the ‘cases registered’ and ‘suspects arrested’ categories, because a number of cases and arrests involved more than one of the above species.**
- **Special Note – ‘wildlife crime cases registered’ include only those cases in which suspects were arrested or products were seized. Cases in which only the carcass of a poached animal was discovered are not included, although these are obviously investigated.**
- Statistics are aggregated from all parts of the country, resulting in some cases being incorporated after the publication of a particular report. There may thus be minor differences in numbers between weekly, monthly, quarterly and annual reports.

5. Integrated Database of Wildlife Crime in Namibian

For many decades, the Namibian environmental sector has fostered a culture of monitoring, data gathering and data interpretation, which ultimately enables informed and adaptive management. In keeping with these aims, wildlife crime data has been gathered by various agencies for many years, although in the past the information was not consistently aggregated as a national dataset.

The unprecedented surge in targeted, well-organised wildlife crime over the past decade motivated a variety of urgent countermeasures. This included initiatives to ensure comprehensive, coordinated data gathering and analysis. The idea of one national integrated database of wildlife crime in Namibia was first conceived in 2018. Its focussed development began in 2019 and first outputs were achieved during that year. By the beginning of 2020 consistent outputs were being generated.

A focussed effort was made to aggregate and enter disparate historical datasets, reaching as far back as 2012, into the integrated database. While it is recognised that there are some data gaps in some of the early data, particularly regarding cases of meat poaching, the gaps are inconsequential.

Data is now collected from all regions of Namibia via the regional police stations, magistrates courts and regional MEFT offices. In some instances, it may take time to collect and enter all regional data. This may lead to minor data discrepancies between weekly, monthly and annual reports. The data of annual reports always supersedes that of other periodical reports.

All the separately collected data from the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism (wildlife data), the Namibian Police Force (law enforcement data) and the Office of the Prosecutor General (prosecution data) is aggregated and entered into the integrated database. All data is carefully cross-referenced to avoid duplication. A wide range of comprehensive, streamlined data is then available for various applications.

The compiled data includes:

- registered wildlife crime cases
- wildlife mortalities caused by poaching
- seized wildlife products
- seized firearms
- impounded vehicles

- arrests
 - nationality of suspects
 - relevant charges
 - targeted species
- areas of crime prevalence
- status of registered court cases
- legal status of suspects

The primary aim of the database is to enable detailed analysis of various aspects of wildlife-crime dynamics in Namibia. The database provides superb analytical capabilities, such as identifying links between known suspects/perpetrators, firearms, crime scenes and wildlife carcasses; identifying the most-targeted species and areas of crime prevalence; and evaluating the nationalities of perpetrators. Trends over time can be analysed in any category, and data can be mapped geographically to identify hotspots and gaps. All of this enables investigators to work strategically, based on reliable information.

The complexity of wildlife crime webs, connected via a myriad of local, national and international cohorts, requires detailed, in-depth investigations. These cannot be based on hunches or conjecture, but instead require systematic analysis of all available information. The database enables some of this analysis. It also helps investigators to focus their attention on priority areas, cases and suspects, and thus enables optimal use of limited resources.

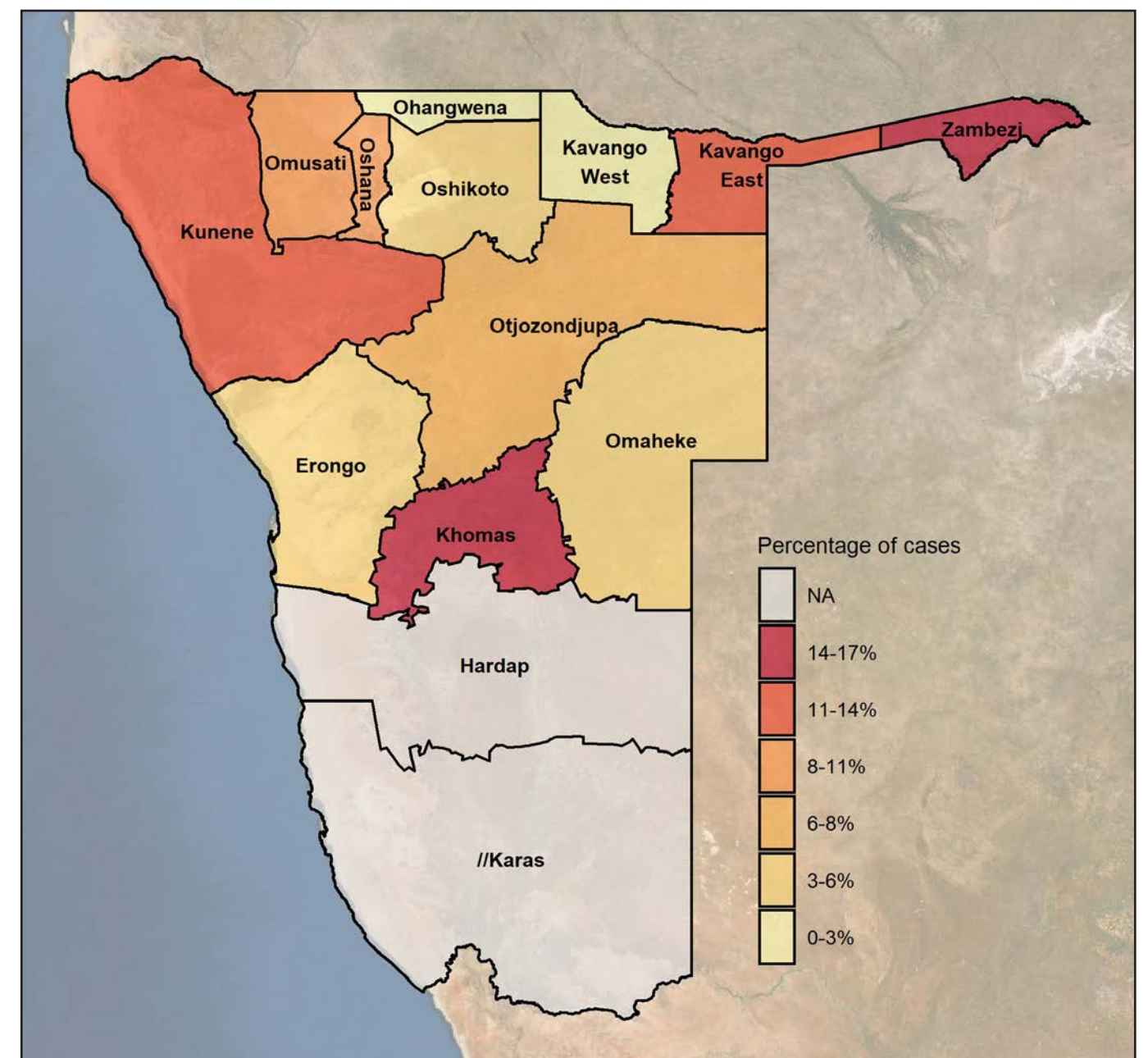
The database can generate automated reports for different target audiences 'at the push of a button'. Internal reports are issued to law enforcement agencies and relevant stakeholders to assist in the strategic allotment of funding, personnel and other resources.

The database has also enabled the MEFT and NAMPOL to issue detailed weekly wildlife crime success reports to the media, which have formed the basis of media reporting on wildlife crime for more than a year. With this, government is demonstrating its commitment to transparency and accountability.

The *Integrated Database of Wildlife Crime in Namibia (ID-WCN)* is today the official national database for all data related to wildlife crime. Development of the database is ongoing. New features are added as new information and new technologies become available.

6. Regional distribution of wildlife crime during 2020:

Note: The map depicts the distribution of high-value wildlife crime cases registered during 2020, related to any charge.



Interpretation and notes

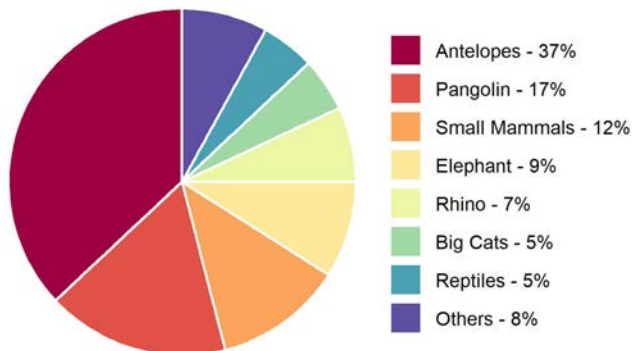
- The highest incidence of wildlife crimes is in the central, northeastern and northwestern parts of Namibia.
- The highest number of incidents were recorded in the Khomas Region.
- Low wildlife densities and few high-value species explain the low prevalence of wildlife crime in the south.
- The map shows the total number of wildlife crime cases registered during 2020, related to high-value species only.
- The map indicates the regions in which cases were registered, not necessarily where the crime was committed. Cases are generally registered at the police station nearest to the place of arrest, which may be in another region than where an incident occurred.

7. Breakdown of important case statistics for 2020:

Note: References to high-value species comprise elephant, rhinoceroses (black and white rhinos combined) and pangolin

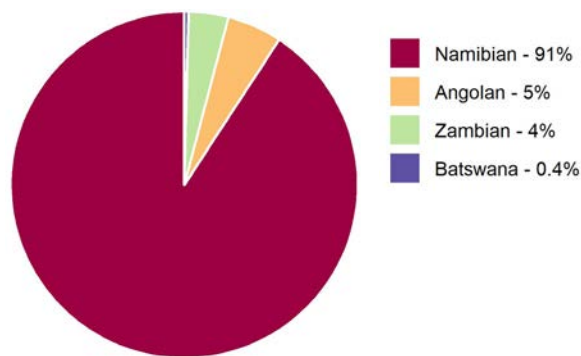
7.1 Ratios of targeted species:

for all registered cases recorded in 2020



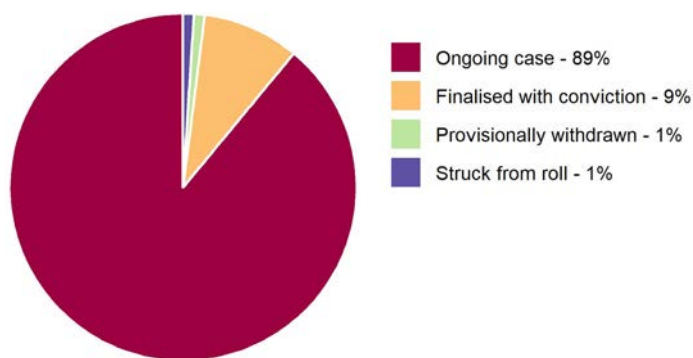
7.2 Ratios of suspects' nationalities:

for arrests recorded in 2020 involving high-value species



7.3 Ratios of court case status:

for registered cases related to high-value species recorded in 2020



Interpretation and notes

Targeted species

- *Pangolin is by far the most-targeted high-value species; these are often trafficked alive; many live animals that are seized can be rehabilitated and released.*
- *Elephant cases make up a significant percentage; these usually consist of ivory seizures; it's rarely possible to link a seizure to a particular carcass.*
- *Rhino cases (both species combined) make up a significant percentage; many are pre-emptive cases where the animals can be saved.*
- *Antelopes are poached for meat and include a great variety of species, from dik-dik to eland.*
- *Ratios are calculated using the number of cases registered per category, not the number of individual animals involved.*

Nationality of suspects

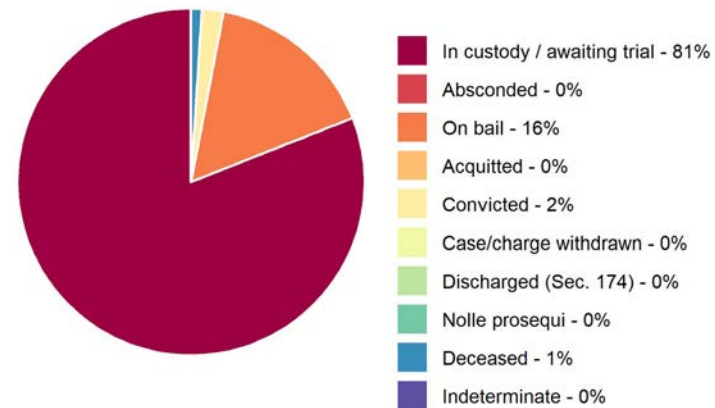
- *The majority of wildlife crimes recorded in 2020 were carried out by Namibians.*
- *Suspects from neighbouring countries make up all other nationalities recorded in 2020.*
- *Contrary to widespread beliefs, Asians do not feature in the ratio of nationalities recorded in 2020.*

Status of court cases related to high-value species

- *Cases related to high-value species are often complex, requiring in-depth investigations and a variety of judicial procedures to be finalised; many cases related to high-value species that were registered during 2020 are thus still ongoing.*

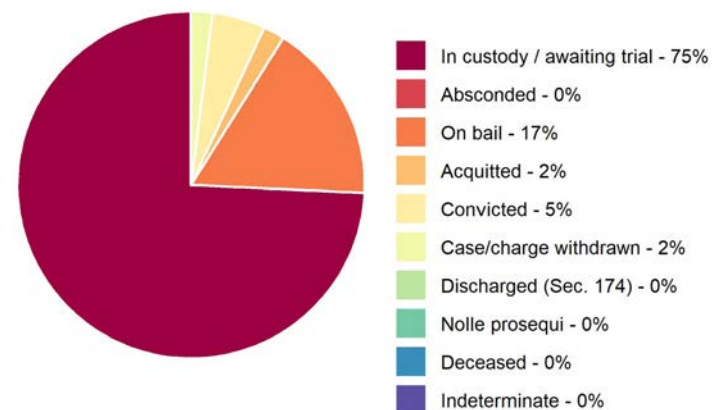
7.4 Ratios of suspects' status in rhino cases:

for suspects arrested in 2020



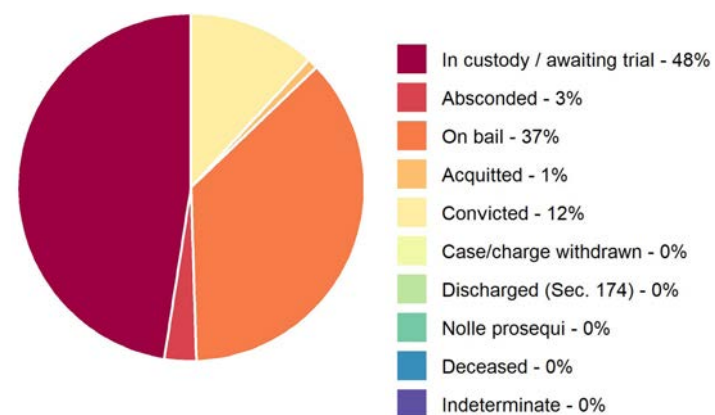
7.6 Ratios of suspects' status in elephant cases:

for suspects arrested in 2020



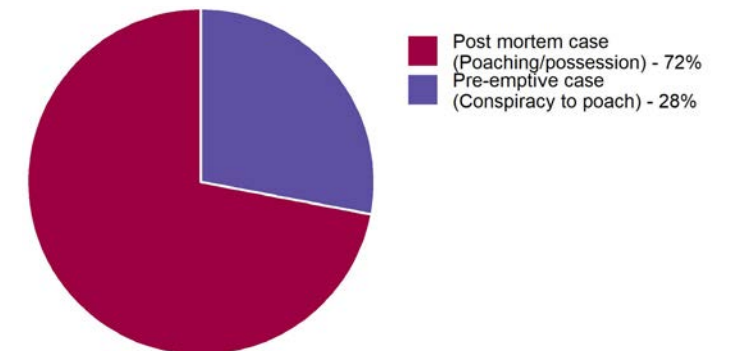
7.7 Ratios of suspects' status in pangolin cases:

for suspects arrested in 2020



7.5 Ratio of case types in rhino cases:

for cases registered in 2020



Interpretation and notes

Case types in rhino cases

- *Rhino cases registered include only those cases in which suspects were arrested or products were seized. Cases in which only the carcass of a poached animal was discovered are not included, although these are obviously investigated.*
- *Pre-emptive cases, in which suspects could be arrested before they were able to kill a rhino, make up more than a quarter of all cases related to rhinos; this represents an important law-enforcement achievement.*
- *The exact number of rhinos that have been saved through pre-emptive arrests is impossible to determine.*

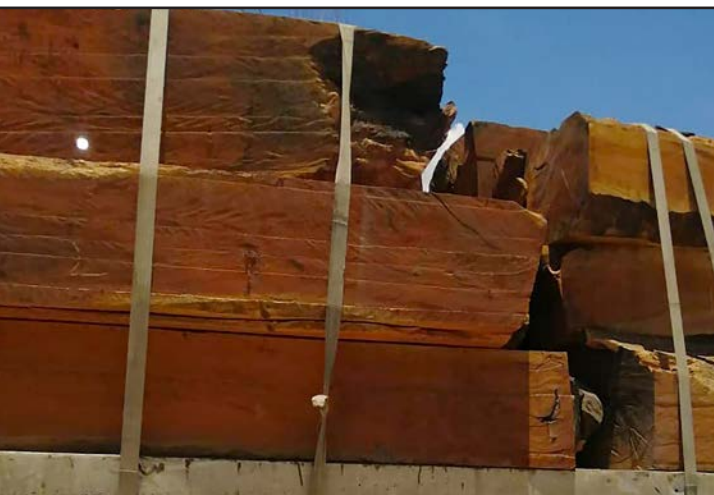
Status of suspects in high-value species cases

- *Suspects in custody and awaiting trial in pending cases make up the greater portion of suspects' status in high-value species cases.*
- *Suspects that have been sentenced in finalised cases make up only a small portion of suspects' status in these cases.*
- *The ratio of suspects on bail is lowest in rhino cases.*
- *Importantly, wildlife crime cases make up only one facet of criminal activity in Namibia; the capacity of the judicial system to deal with all cases is often stretched.*
- *Sensitive cases, including those related to rhinos, must be submitted to the PG's Office.*
- *Securing legal representation for suspects often causes delays.*
- *Investigations and lab results may take considerable time.*
- *These and other factors may lead to lengthy prosecution delays, with the result that complex cases may take years to be finalised.*

8. Summary of events and activities for 2020:



High-value species cases made up a third of all cases



The reintegration of forestry enables holistic management



A training at Waterberg was one of several training events

8.1 Characteristics of the year

A significant decrease in registered wildlife crime cases and arrests was recorded in 2020. Compared to 2019, the number of all registered cases and arrests decreased by 31 per cent. The number of cases related to high-value species decreased by 39 per cent. Cases related to high-value species made up around one third of all registered cases. The number of elephants and rhinos known to have been poached in Namibia decreased, as did the number of pangolins seized. An increase in the seizure of rhino horns is attributed to improved law enforcement and the disruption of trafficking nodes. Important pre-emptive arrests in rhino cases continue to save the lives of numerous rhinos.

8.2 COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic had severe impacts around the world during 2020, and continues to affect global trade, national economies, industries and individual livelihoods. The pandemic has come at a huge cost to personal health, with over 80 million infections and close to two million deaths recorded worldwide during 2020. Namibia recorded just over 200 deaths and close to 24,000 cases during the year. Namibia's management of the pandemic has been commendable. Infections were contained through strict lockdowns, enabling health services and other sectors to adequately prepare responses. Economic activities, internal travel and international borders were reopened in stages during the second half of 2020, and have been operational with only limited restrictions since. The tourism and conservation-hunting industries have only seen very limited recoveries, although internal travel by Namibians experienced a significant resurgence. Recorded incidents of wildlife crime declined significantly during the year, in contrast to reports of sharp increases in other countries. Namibia was able to maintain anti-poaching and law enforcement activities throughout the year. Movement restrictions during lockdowns may also have contributed to declines in wildlife crime.

8.3 Collaboration to lessen COVID-19 impacts

The impacts of the pandemic have been particularly severe on Namibia's rural communities. Tourism and conservation-hunting income has been severely

disrupted, with a knock on effect for rural livelihoods, especially in communal areas. A joint initiative by the MEFT and various conservation NGOs and funding partners channelled funds to community conservancies to cover essential running costs, starting in mid-2020. This has enabled conservancy game guards to continue with field patrols and other essential activities. Dedicated funds were also provided to rhino rangers through a joint initiative between a mining company and various conservation NGOs. Other government, NGO and private sector initiatives have helped to mitigate the impacts of the pandemic.

8.4 Ongoing funding support

Despite the economic challenges created by the pandemic, international funding partners have continued their commitments to support Namibia in its efforts to combat wildlife crime. International funding continues to benefit various sectors, including conservation systems (particularly in community conservation areas), anti-poaching activities, law enforcement and prosecution. The Namibian business community has also continued to offer wide-ranging support. This has allowed most current initiatives to counter wildlife crime to continue at a high level.

8.5 Reintegration of forestry in the MEFT

The illegal exploitation of forest resources has been exposed in recent years as a serious issue in Namibia, as well as at regional level. In response, the Department of Forestry has been shifted from the Ministry of Agriculture to the Ministry of Environment, now the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism. This enables a more holistic approach to the management of all terrestrial environmental resources. The shift also enables more harmonised investigations of all environmental crimes, of which forest crimes represent a significant portion. Investigation of forest crimes is now the direct mandate of the Intelligence and Investigation Unit of the MEFT.

8.6 Capacity building

Wildlife crime is constantly evolving. It is important to keep up with new developments, access the latest technologies, tools and techniques, and build capacities in using them. The MEFT held a three-week training course at the Waterberg Law Enforcement Training Centre during 2020. The course was presented by experts from the MEFT and NAMPOL, including members of the BRTT, who were able to share their

practical experience with the close to 40 participants from different MEFT sections. The course consisted of various practical and theoretical components that enable the competent investigation of wildlife crimes by peace officers. A variety of other capacity-building initiatives took place throughout the year.

8.7 Appointment of additional staff

The Wildlife Protection Services Division of the MEFT was considerably strengthened during 2020 through the appointment of 40 additional staff members in various sections, with particular emphasis on anti-poaching capacities. The Intelligence and Investigation Unit has been expanded through the appointment of six new staff members, with a broader focus that will include both wildlife and forest crimes. The WPSD and IIU have moved into dedicated offices in southern Windhoek. The Blue Rhino Task Team has strengthened its capacities by recruiting experts in financial investigations and other sectors, seconded from various government agencies.

8.8 INTERPOL Wildlife Crime Working Group

INTERPOL held its 31st Wildlife Crime Working Group meeting as a virtual event over three days in November 2020. The National Commander of the Protected Resources Division of NAMPOL, who is also Head of the BRTT, participated in the meeting. The event attracted over 120 participants from around the world and resulted in fruitful exchanges on a great range of topics related to wildlife crime. The event also strengthened ties with international partners.

8.9 Interpol Operation Thunder 2020

Namibia participated in a month-long counter-trafficking operation initiated by Interpol and the World Customs Organisation during 2020. It involved police and customs agencies across 103 countries. The operation focussed on identified trafficking routes and hotspots, and resulted in significant global seizures of illicit wildlife products, including over 1.3 tonnes of ivory and over 1 tonne of pangolin scales, representing about 1,700 killed pangolins.

8.10 Communications and media coverage

The MEFT and NAMPOL have maintained their approach of proactive communications, issuing weekly wildlife crime statistics to the media and various partners. This has kept all stakeholders, including the public, informed on law enforcement impacts.

9. Selection of noteworthy sectors and cases for 2020:

9.1 Arrests of dealers and kingpins

Several important, high-level suspects were arrested during 2020. These included a kingpin from a neighbouring country with complex Namibian connections and links to end markets in Asia, who was arrested in Namibia during a covert operation. A suspect with dual nationalities under different aliases was arrested while attempting to traffic contraband from regional sources into Namibia. The arrest was made possible through transboundary cooperation with neighbouring countries. A ranked member of the Namibian security forces, who was using his position to coordinate poaching incursions into a national park, was arrested, making it clear that no one is above the law. A number of Namibian wildlife product dealers with diverse connections were also arrested.

Investigations in these cases are ongoing and no details can be divulged at this stage.

9.2 Arrest of Jackson Babi

The high-profile arrest of the popular preacher and self-proclaimed prophet, Jackson Babi, demonstrates that people from all vocations and spheres of society may be involved in criminal activity. Babi is alleged to have been involved in a number of rhino poaching incidents. The attempt by an associate of Babi's to bribe investigators in the case, while Babi was already in custody, provides further evidence of criminal intent. It also demonstrates the integrity of wildlife crime investigators and the support of the ACC. Cases of attempted bribery have repeatedly been thwarted and reported.

Court proceedings in the Babi case are ongoing.

9.3 Appropriate sentences in court cases

Appropriate court sentences, which deliver suitable punishments to perpetrators and serve as a real deterrent to criminal activity, are the important final outcome of law enforcement. Namibian legislation regarding maximum penalties for wildlife offences was revised in 2017 to more suitably reflect the seriousness of organised wildlife crime. Significant increases in fines and prison terms were registered in 2020 compared to previous years. These included important increases in sentences for perpetrators convicted on charges of conspiracy to poach rhinos.

Importantly, sentences are always decided by the presiding magistrate on a case-by-case premise, based on a combination of factors including the seriousness of the crime, the circumstances of the accused and the interests of the public.

See further information on pages 16 to 27.

9.4 Pre-emptive arrests in rhino cases

Pre-emptive arrests of criminal gangs conspiring to poach rhino continue to be made at a commendable rate. Such arrests are made possible through proactive investigations, inter-agency cooperation, use of the latest surveillance and analytical technology, and community information and support. These cases not only represent important law enforcement successes, but also achieve vital conservation support by saving numerous rhinos. During 2020, 7 cases of conspiracy to poach rhino were registered, resulting in 46 arrests.

See further information on pages 16 to 27.

9.5 Increased seizures of rhino horn

While the number of rhinos estimated to have been poached in Namibia was reduced from 52 in 2019 to 31 in 2020, there was a significant increase in the number of rhino horns seized during the past year compared to previous years. During 2018 and 2019, 13 and 8 horns could be recovered, respectively, while in 2020 the number was 21. The recoveries represents an important law enforcement success, indicating an increasing disruption of criminal networks in Namibia. This is partly attributed to the arrests of high-level kingpins and dealers, which forced perpetrators to seek new buyers for their products, bringing them to the attention of investigators and leading to further arrests and the seizure of the contraband.

9.6 Ivory seizures

Active anti-poaching initiatives have effectively suppressed elephant poaching in Namibia to low levels. The deployment of Namibian security forces to national parks with elephant populations has created a particularly formidable deterrent to poachers. Active monitoring, including aerial surveys, ensures that most carcasses of poached elephants are discovered. Only 11 elephants are known to have been poached in Namibia during 2020. Significant ivory seizures

nonetheless continue to be made in Namibia, particularly in the Kavango and Zambezi regions. Most of the ivory consists of complete tusks, although there is a trend towards cutting tusks into small sections to make transport less conspicuous and avoid detection. Most of the seized ivory appears to originate from other countries. Namibia is working closely with Botswana and Zambia on transboundary law enforcement to counter transnational wildlife crime.

See further information on pages 16 to 27.

9.7 Pangolin seizures

Pangolin were again the most-trafficked high-value species in Namibia during 2020, with 74 animals seized. Nonetheless, this represents a reduction in seizures compared to previous years (129 animals in 2019 and 88 in 2018). Only eight of the 74 animals seized in 2020 were alive; most seizures consisted of skins (59). Law enforcement related to pangolin poaching and trafficking represents a major challenge, because the animals are largely collected opportunistically. Intelligence information is vital in enabling arrests. Transboundary collaboration led to a notable success in one particular case. The investigations office of the US embassy in Pretoria, South Africa, passed on intelligence information to NAMPOL via the US embassy in Windhoek. This led to the arrest of four suspects and the seizure of one live pangolin, four pangolin skins and two vehicles used in the commission of the crime. The live pangolin could be rehabilitated and released.

See further information on pages 16 to 27.

9.8 Transboundary law enforcement

Transboundary collaboration during law enforcement continues to be an important component in suppressing not only Namibian, but regional wildlife crime. During 2020, shared intelligence and joint operations between Namibia and Botswana successfully disrupted at least two criminal syndicates targeting rhinos in both countries. A number of suspects were arrested during foiled poaching incursions into Botswana in each case. The gangs consisted of citizens from Namibia and Botswana, who have been linked to previous rhino poaching incidents in Namibia. They have also been linked to dealers in Zambia, where they have sold rhino horns from previous, successful hits. Collaboration with Botswana and Zambia continues.

Investigations in these cases are ongoing and no details can be divulged at this stage.

9.9 Bushmeat poaching

Poaching for meat, both for own consumption and for sale to local markets, has continued to proliferate in parts of Namibia. Over 200 carcasses of poached large mammals were confiscated during 2020. While incidents were recorded from various regions, the highest prevalence was in the Erongo Region. Incidents were recorded on freehold and communal land, and in state-protected areas. Antelopes made up the largest percentage, with gemsbok being the most-targeted antelope (84 animals). Targeted species also included kudu (22), Hartmann's mountain zebra (19) and giraffe (5). It is likely that increases in meat-poaching in some areas were driven by the livelihood impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.



Pangolin accounted for the most seizures of high-value species



Ivory seizures continue to be significant

10. Challenges faced in 2020:

10.1 COVID-19 and wildlife crime

While recorded wildlife crime cases and arrests decreased considerably during 2020 compared to 2019, the COVID-19 pandemic nonetheless caused significant challenges. These included a variety of financial and logistical constraints. A particular challenge was the infection of law enforcement officers with COVID-19. It is obviously a challenge for law enforcement personnel to ensure social distancing and other safety measures during the arrest of suspects. While all possible precautions were taken, a number of officers were infected during the course of 2020. All recovered from the virus.

10.2 Bushmeat trade

The bushmeat trade poses a considerable challenge in Namibia, as it does in many other countries. Poaching for meat is widespread in freehold and communal areas, and also takes place in state-protected areas, though to a much lesser degree. The country-wide nature of the poaching, targeting any animal that can be eaten, puts significant strain on the capacities of law enforcement. There is a need for broader collaboration that includes NGOs, community conservancies and freehold farming representatives. Bushmeat poaching is believed to have been exacerbated by the pandemic, as rural livelihoods have been severely affected by loss of income and people are turning to illicit alternatives for survival.

10.3 Poaching and trafficking of large cats

Pangolin and rhinos are currently the primary targets of poachers in Namibia. Regional elephant poaching and local bushmeat poaching are also of considerable concern. Seizures of illicit products of other species regularly take place. Seizures of the skins, and occasionally bones, of large cats are of concern, though these are currently isolated. The international trade in body parts of large predators is widespread. Lion bones and paws appear to be particularly sought after. An increase in trafficking of large-cat parts is thus considered a potential challenge. Wildlife crime data is continually being analysed to ensure the early detection of new trends and enable appropriate counter measures.

10.4 Trafficking of other illicit resources

A variety of information and analyses have indicated the proliferation of wide-ranging illicit trade in various protected resources. Many of these are not being captured by current law enforcement initiatives, with the result that little accurate data is available on them. Indigenous plants and reptiles (particularly lizards) have been identified as two problematic target sectors. Some currently unconfirmed routes for the trade in such illicit products are being investigated. There are also indications of abalone being trafficked via Namibia to end markets elsewhere. Occasional seizures of a myriad selection of other species, including small mammals, snakes and other reptiles, birds and bird eggs indicates that any species for which there might be a demand will be trafficked. All of these developments are of concern, as they may already be causing untold damage to indigenous biodiversity. Countering these trends will also put further strain on law enforcement resource and capacities.

10.5 Suspects on bail absconding

There is a concerning trend of suspects absconding when released on bail. Some released suspects have been found to have left the country to evade their court cases and the likelihood of conviction. Others have quickly become involved in new criminal activity. These trends are problematic for both law enforcement and prosecution, as they require additional law enforcement effort, delay prosecution and in many cases leave court cases pending indefinitely.

10.6 Identity fraud

A case of identity fraud by a high-level suspect arrested during 2020 underlines the extent of criminal deceit in high-value wildlife crime. Criminals are going to great lengths to avoid legal detection and arrest. This particular perpetrator was found to be in possession of official passports from two countries. Different names were used in the two documents, which were obviously fraudulently obtained. Such scenarios clearly make it more difficult to trace suspects, especially if they abscond when out on bail and skip the country. Countering such developments requires particularly thorough

investigations, and often active cooperation with law enforcement officials in neighbouring countries

10.7 Spread of organised crime

A significant overlap of criminal activities in different spheres is being recorded in Namibia, with criminals dealing in anything that can be trafficked. Numerous cases have been registered where perpetrators of wildlife crimes were actively involved in other crimes such as robbery, house-breaking and fraud. The proliferation of firearms through wildlife crime is cause for significant concern. Unlicensed firearms appear to be readily available to criminals in many parts of the country. They are often locally adapted for specific needs, such as fitting silencers onto rifles to enable the undetected shooting of wildlife. Numerous cases have been recorded where firearms were buried in or near rhino ranges for future use during a well timed poaching incursion. Such actions are evidence of clearly organised, premeditated criminal intent. Wildlife crime has also been clearly shown to promote corruption, money laundering and various financial crimes. Use of the Prevention of Organised Crime Act (POCA) is helping to counter these trends.

10.8 Forensics capabilities

Forensic analyses are an important tool in wildlife crime investigations. Ballistic analysis can link bullets recovered from the carcass of a poached animal to a firearm found in the possession of a suspect; DNA analysis can link seized rhino horns or ivory to a particular carcass; in some cases human DNA recovered at a crime scene can be matched with the DNA of an arrested suspect. All such analyses can provide clear, incriminating evidence that can help decide the outcome of a court case. Delays in such analyses, or the inability to procure a particular analysis, have presented significant challenges for investigations and prosecution in Namibia. Namibia is in the process of upgrading its forensic facilities, while at the same time streamlining institutional arrangements. The former National Forensic Science Institute is now the Namibian Police Forensics Institute, ensuring full control over forensic analyses by NAMPOL. A new laboratory at the institute will start to develop a wildlife DNA database to enable DNA matches over an extended time period. While these developments are extremely positive, there is a need to build further capacity at the institute.



Predator bones were confiscated in isolated cases



Firearms are often buried in rhino areas for future use



Bushmeat poaching is straining law enforcement capacities

11. Special feature – protecting Namibia’s wildlife populations



White rhinos were returned to Namibia after local extinction



Namibia’s elephant population has tripled since 1995



Namibia’s pangolin population is still poorly known

Four fundamental elements are required to keep wildlife populations healthy: effective conservation systems, active anti-poaching initiatives, stringent law enforcement (including successful prosecution and appropriate penalties), and intersectoral cooperation.

11.1 EFFECTIVE CONSERVATION SYSTEMS

Sufficient conservation cover

Namibia has implemented effective, wide-ranging conservation systems in increments over many decades. The most central aspect of effective conservation is safeguarding wildlife habitat. Namibia’s protected-area network was expanded significantly after the country’s independence in 1990 and now covers 19.6 per cent of the land as proclaimed state-protected areas (this includes the Namibian portion of the Kavango–Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area outside other proclaimed areas). Another 21.9 per cent of Namibia is managed as community conservation areas (community conservancies and community forests combined), which have grown substantially since the first community conservancy was registered in 1998. State tourism concessions, private nature reserves and freehold conservancies make up a further 7.3 per cent, bringing the total land under recognised wildlife management to 48.8 per cent – nearly half of the country. Other state, communal and freehold land provides important additional wildlife habitat, though without a formal status. The management effectiveness of the various areas may differ considerably, but they nonetheless create an extensive foundation for wildlife management.

Healthy wildlife populations

As part of its ongoing commitment to ensuring healthy wildlife communities, Namibia has actively rebuilt the populations of a number of rare and valuable species. Former ranges of such species have been re-established and population numbers have been actively boosted through translocations and other management interventions.

RHINOS

The white rhino was returned to Namibia through a series of translocations, mostly in the 1990s, after it had become locally extinct in the mid 1800s due

to wanton shooting by early European explorers. Healthy but isolated white rhino populations now exist in several state-protected areas and numerous private reserves.

The black rhino population was rebuilt over the past four decades after it had been reduced to critical lows in the 1980s by displacement, drought and poaching. After the population had been rebuilt sufficiently in state-protected areas, the Black Rhino Custodianship Scheme of the MEFT enabled the return of black rhinos to former ranges in private reserves and community conservancies in various parts of the country. Namibia is now home to the largest black rhino population on Earth, including the largest free-roaming population outside state-protected areas.

Based on the effective conservation of the Namibian black rhino subspecies, *Diceros bicornis bicornis*, over the past three rhino generations, the IUCN changed its conservation status from Vulnerable to Near Threatened in 2020. Near Threatened is a category for species that are less vulnerable to extinction.

ELEPHANT

Namibia’s elephant population has shown substantial growth and range expansion over the past quarter century, mostly through natural recolonisation and growth. The population has tripled from an estimated 7,500 animals in 1995 to over 24,000 at present.

Elephants once occurred across most of what is now Namibia, but were first decimated by ivory hunters prior to the 1900s, with only isolated populations remaining in remote areas. The Etosha population recovered from the 1950s onwards. The remote northwestern population recovered from rampant poaching and drought in the 1970s and early 1980s, after the initiation of the community game guard system. The northeastern population recovered from poaching and displacement by military activity in the 1970s and 1980s through the development of national parks and the establishment of community conservation areas across the Kavango and Zambezi regions after Namibia’s independence.

The desert-adapted elephant population in the western half of the Erongo–Kunene Community Conservation Area expanded southward down to the Ugab River in the 1990s, from where elephants had been absent for many decades. Desert-adapted elephants may now be encountered in all large western ephemeral rivers from the Ugab to the Hoarusib, although the population remains susceptible

HEALTHY WILDLIFE POPULATIONS NEED:

1. **Effective conservation systems**
2. Active anti-poaching initiatives
3. Stringent law enforcement
4. Intersectoral cooperation

ENSURING CONSERVATION COVER:

- **48.8 % of Namibia is under recognised wildlife management**
- 19.6 % state-protected areas (includes Namibian portion of KAZA)
- 21.9 % community conservation areas
- 7.3 % private reserves, state concessions, freehold conservancies

REBUILDING & PROTECTING WILDLIFE POPULATIONS:

- **White rhino** reintroduced after local extinction in 1850s; now healthy populations in state parks and private reserves; second-largest white rhino population on Earth after South Africa
- **Black rhino** increased from drastic population lows in 1960s to ‘80s; now healthy populations in various parts of Namibia; largest black rhino population on Earth; due to successful protection, IUCN changed conservation status of *Diceros bicornis bicornis* from Vulnerable to Near Threatened in 2020, i.e. the Namibian subspecies is now at less risk of extinction
- **Elephant** gradually increased from population lows prior to 1900s; experienced widespread poaching and displacement in decades prior to independence; more than tripled since 1995, now over 24,000 animals
- **Pangolin** population currently poorly known due to limited research in Namibia; most-trafficked mammal in Namibia and worldwide; of great conservation concern; MEFT and NAMPOL coordinating with Namibian Pangolin Working Group to ensure rehabilitation and release of pangolins confiscated alive wherever possible, and further research of national population to enable effective conservation
- **Other species**, including giraffe, lion, leopard, cheetah, hyaenas, crocodile, hippo, zebras and most antelopes with healthy populations

to drought and human influences. The population above the escarpment in the eastern half of Erongo-Kunene has grown substantially. It exhibits some genetic exchange with the western population.

The elephant population of Etosha National Park, which exhibits some exchange with the Erongo-Kunene population, is considered to be at the maximum carrying capacity for the park and has remained relatively stable in recent decades.

The free-roaming elephant population of Khaudum National Park and adjacent community conservation areas to the north and south of the park has grown significantly in recent decades, partly due to the establishment of permanent waterholes in Khaudum. The core of this population is present in Khaudum year-round, rather than migrating seasonally as it did in the past, putting increasing pressure on Khaudum's vegetation and other wildlife. Together the Erongo-Kunene, Etosha and Khaudum populations make up about one third of Namibia's total elephant numbers.

Elephants were displaced en masse from what are today the Kavango East and Zambezi regions through rampant poaching and prolific military activity from the early 1970s to late 1980s, during the Namibian War of Independence. Facilitated by the proclamation of the Bwabwata, Mudumu and Nkasa Rupara national parks and the establishment of community conservation areas in the Zambezi Region, a large population of around 15,000 elephants has re-established itself across the area since independence. This is a free-ranging population that can move between Botswana, Namibia, Angola and Zambia. Namibia's Zambezi and Kavango East regions form a central habitat component for these elephants and the Namibian population estimates are based on animals counted in Namibia during successive surveys. This part of Namibia lies at the very heart of the Kavango-Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area and represents a vital component of the overall range of the regional elephant population.

PANGOLIN

Namibia's pangolin population is currently poorly known and, due to the recent sharp increase in pangolin trafficking, the species is of particular conservation concern. Only localised research has ever been done on Namibia's pangolins at a few isolated sites. While this has provided important information on pangolin ecology and potential pangolin densities in productive habitats, it has not enabled any national-level assessment of the population.

The Namibian Pangolin Working Group was formed in 2020 to help address a variety of issues, including national-level research, an effective rehabilitation programme for confiscated pangolins and initiatives to address concomitant threats to the population.

OTHER SPECIES

Other vulnerable species have shown remarkable recoveries in Namibia. The country is home to healthy lion populations in the Erongo-Kunene Community Conservation Area and Etosha National Park (with some genetic exchange exhibited between the two populations), as well as smaller populations in Khaudum, Bwabwata, Mudumu and Nkasa Rupara national parks, which range into adjacent community conservation areas and, in some instances, neighbouring countries. The Erongo-Kunene population has shown remarkable growth and range expansion, numbering only about two dozen animals in a small core area in 1995, which has grown to over 100 lions ranging from the Ugab River as far north as the Kunene River, east to Etosha and west to the Skeleton Coast.

Giraffe have been returned to the eastern Zambezi Region, as well as numerous private reserves across the country, after local extinctions prior to or around Namibia's independence. Existing populations have also shown significant growth, particularly in Etosha and parts of the Erongo-Kunene Community Conservation Area.

Namibia's populations of cheetah, leopard, hyaenas, crocodile, hippo, zebras and most antelopes are also in a healthy state, with some species exhibiting remarkable expansions into former ranges in recent years.

Parallel wildlife management

The combination of parallel wildlife management systems, stretching across freehold and communal land and state-protected areas, enables the landscape-level conservation of free-roaming wildlife populations. There is of course not one ideal, equal conservation cover across the entire country. Many wildlife habitats on freehold and communal land are fragmented by fencing and agriculture. The state-protected area network does not provide equal cover to Namibia's biomes and major ecological communities, with some falling mostly outside protected areas. Nonetheless, at a national level, wildlife populations can be considered healthy and resilient to drought, disease and human

influences. This allows moderate off-takes through conservation hunting and meat harvesting, based on regular counts, conservative quotas and controlled harvests. Wildlife protection and conservation shortcomings detected through monitoring and research activities are continually being addressed through adaptive management initiatives.

The poaching surge of the new millennium

The conservation successes achieved in Namibia after independence led to a temporary sense of unfounded security and optimism during the first decade of the new millennium. Commercial poaching was basically non-existent and wildlife was flourishing, as were wildlife-based tourism and conservation hunting. Yet a dramatic global increase in wildlife crime over the past decade has forced Namibia to adjust its approaches and invest heavily in wildlife protection. Rhino and elephant poaching rapidly reached alarming levels between 2012 and 2015. Pangolin trafficking has shown shocking increases over the past few years.

11.2 ACTIVE ANTI-POACHING INITIATIVES

Deployment of security forces

The first steps taken to reverse rampant poaching focussed on anti-poaching initiatives to reduce poaching opportunities. The Namibian National Wildlife Security Committee, comprised of representatives from nine ministries, was established in 2016. In the same year, security forces were deployed to Bwabwata, Etosha, Mudumu and Nkasa Rupara national parks to assist in the protection of elephant and rhinos. Active patrols, surveillance, security fencing and other measures were also implemented on private reserves with rhinos.

Game guards and rhino rangers

The well-established community game guard system provided an important foundation for increased patrol effort in community conservation areas. Dedicated rhino rangers were appointed in Erongo-Kunene and by 2018 the patrol effort in the area had been increased to 1,200 per cent of 2012 levels.

Community involvement and Rhino Pride

Community awareness and involvement have always been important aspects of Namibian conservation, especially in communal areas. The Rhino Pride Campaign was rolled out across Erongo-Kunene from 2016 to engage local communities in rhino protection,



In Namibia, giraffe ...



... most large predators ...



... zebras and most antelopes have healthy populations

HEALTHY WILDLIFE POPULATIONS NEED:

1. *Effective conservation systems*
2. **Active anti-poaching initiatives**
3. **Stringent law enforcement**
4. *Intersectoral cooperation*

ACTIVE ANTI-POACHING INITIATIVES:

- **Namibian security forces** deployed to Etosha and northeastern parks to protect wildlife, especially rhinos and elephant
- **Rhino rangers** appointed in Erongo–Kunene; coordinating with community game guards and security forces to intensively patrol all rhino ranges
- **Patrol effort** in Erongo–Kunene increased to 1,200% of 2012 levels
- **Community awareness** and involvement maximised through Rhino Pride campaign and other initiatives
- **Regular de-horning of rhinos** to shift risk-reward ratio in favour of wildlife protection
- **K9 Unit** developed and deployed as a reaction and search unit in Etosha
- **Increased security and surveillance** in all rhino ranges, including private reserves

STRINGENT LAW ENFORCEMENT:

- **Revised wildlife legislation** enables appropriate penalties for wildlife crimes
- **Dedicated agencies and personnel** ensure targeted law enforcement
- **Rapid response and flexible funding** maximise law enforcement impacts
- **Effective prosecution and appropriate penalties** ensure that perpetrators are convicted and appropriately punished and a deterrent to crime is created
- **The serious impacts of wildlife crime** include national security threats through the proliferation of firearms, gang activity, money laundering and corruption, the risk of spreading zoonotic diseases, the disruption of livelihoods and social upheaval in addition to the direct biodiversity impacts

resulting in an extremely positive response and a significant reduction in poaching incidents.

Regular de-horning of rhinos

The regular de-horning of a large percentage of the rhino population has been used repeatedly in Namibia as an important strategy to deter poaching. By de-horning rhinos, the risk-reward ratio is skewed significantly. While some de-horned animals are still killed, most poachers realise that the risk of getting caught is not worth the reward of the remaining horn stubs.

MEFT K-9 Unit

An anti-poaching dog unit, known as the K9 Unit, was developed by the MEFT from 2017, with training and support from international experts. The unit was based at Waterberg during development, but has since been deployed to Etosha. It is used as a reaction and search unit to respond to incidents, search vehicles etc.

Capacity building

Capacity building is another central component of effective conservation and anti-poaching. The Waterberg Law Enforcement and Training Centre was inaugurated in 2017 to enable ongoing capacity building of MEFT staff. Other initiatives have included the application of the latest surveillance, security, forensics and analysis technologies.

11.3 STRINGENT LAW ENFORCEMENT

Appropriate wildlife laws

Stringent law enforcement is the final line of defence against wildlife crime. While conservation systems create resilience to some degree of poaching impacts, and anti-poaching initiatives limit criminal opportunities, law enforcement needs to ensure that anyone still intending to poach or traffic in illicit wildlife products is caught and convicted. Appropriate wildlife laws form the basis of effective law enforcement. Recognising the rapidly escalating seriousness of high-value wildlife crime, the Namibian government revised the Controlled Wildlife Products and Trade Act of 2008 in 2017, which now includes more appropriate maximum penalties for wildlife crimes.

Dedicated agencies and personnel

Perpetrators of wildlife crimes can only be systematically caught through dedicated, information-driven investigations focussing exclusively on wildlife

transgressions. To ensure sufficient capacities for such investigations, the MEFT created the Wildlife Protection Services Division and the Intelligence and Investigation Unit in 2016–2017.

This was followed up by the launch of Operation Blue Rhino in 2018. The Blue Rhino Task Team that coordinates the operation consists of officers from the NAMPOL Protected Resources Division and Serious Crime Unit, staff from the MEFT IIU, and a number of additional specialists. This enables close, formal collaboration between police officers and conservation officials. A strong network of regional NAMPOL and MEFT units ensures a coordinated national law enforcement presence, which is reinforced by ongoing support from the Namibian Defence Force.

Rapid response and flexible funding

A vital aspect of successful law enforcement is rapid response to incidents or information, and adequate resources to carry out investigations and operations. The Rooikat Trust was established as a Namibian NGO in 2018 to channel international funding support directly to wide-ranging law enforcement activities related to wildlife crime. This ensures access to the latest technologies and equipment, operational headquarters, dedicated vehicles and flexible funds for field operations.

Effective prosecution and appropriate penalties

The arrest of suspects of wildlife crimes is only meaningful if perpetrators are effectively prosecuted and served with appropriate penalties that dissuade future criminal activity. The revision of wildlife laws was an important step in this regard, as past penalties were in many cases too lenient. The sentencing of perpetrators nonetheless remains at the discretion of the presiding magistrate, based on the seriousness of the crime, the circumstances of the accused and the interest of society. The Office of the Prosecutor-General has established a dedicated Wildlife Crime Unit to ensure the informed prosecution of perpetrators of wildlife crimes. Wildlife crime investigators work closely with prosecutors to enable well-prepared and presented cases, and recommend appropriate sentences. Important sentences with significant fines and prison terms were served during 2020.

The seriousness of wildlife crime

A sound understanding of the seriousness of wildlife crime and its far-reaching impacts is enabling more



Good conservation maintains healthy wildlife populations



Anti-poaching initiatives minimise criminal opportunities



Law enforcement catches and prosecutes perpetrators

appropriate prosecution. Wildlife crime not only results in the death of individual animals but reverses population growth and can quickly cause the local or even global extinction of vulnerable species. The impacts of wildlife crime reach far beyond environmental damage, disrupting rural livelihoods, disturbing social structures, motivating corruption and posing diverse threats to national security through the proliferation of firearms and gang activity, money laundering and the potential spread of zoonotic diseases.

11.4 INTERSECTORAL COOPERATION

Active stakeholder collaboration

Namibia has always pursued an approach of active cooperation amongst stakeholders in the conservation sector. Government has actively collaborated with international funding partners, NGOs, community conservation organisations and the private sector to establish effective conservation systems across the country. This collaboration was extended to anti-poaching and law enforcement initiatives when

wildlife crime began to escalate dramatically over the past decade.

Long established local NGOs such as Save the Rhino Trust, Integrated Rural Development and Nature Conservation, Namibia Nature Foundation, Legal Assistance Centre and WWF In Namibia, more recently established entities such as Intelligence Support Against Poaching, and umbrella bodies such as the Namibian Association of CBNRM Support Organisations and the Namibian Chamber of Environment have all contributed significantly to wildlife protection, particularly in the conservation and anti-poaching spheres. There has also been overwhelming, ongoing support from the Namibian business community.

International cooperation

International cooperation at various levels facilitates positive conservation, anti-poaching and law-enforcement outcomes across borders. Active transfrontier conservation collaboration takes place amongst the five member countries of KAZA. This is particularly important for the protection of the region's elephant population. In the law-enforcement sphere, international cooperation ranges from collaboration with neighbouring countries on cross-border investigations to global-level cooperation with members of the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (comprised of CITES, INTERPOL, UNODC, World Bank and World Customs Organization). Direct exchanges of information have also taken place with authorities and NGOs in some of the destination countries for illicit wildlife products.

International funding support

Important international funding support has been received from the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) in the USA, the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Wildcat Foundation and WWF. Active liaison between NGOs and funding partners ensures that support is coordinated and responsive to government needs.

National Wildlife Protection Strategy

The *Revised Strategy on Wildlife Protection and Law Enforcement 2021–2025* was ratified at the end of 2020. It sets out clear priorities for the protection of Namibia's valuable wildlife and emphasises coordination amongst government agencies and collaboration with all relevant stakeholders.

12. Special feature – linking law enforcement and conservation

Stringent law enforcement, which investigates transgressions, prosecutes perpetrators and hands out appropriate sentences to deter the proliferation of wildlife crime, is indispensable in large, complex and dynamic environments such as Namibia, where crime can never be eliminated completely.

12.1 PROACTIVE LAW ENFORCEMENT

The shift from reactive to proactive law enforcement

Over the past five years, Namibia has been able to shift from purely reactive law enforcement to proactive and innovative interventions. In the early stages of the current wildlife crime surge, law enforcement was based almost entirely on the investigation of discovered wildlife carcasses and the incidental seizure of wildlife products, which often happened a long time after an animal had been killed.

A major increase in patrol and surveillance effort in rhino and elephant ranges since 2015 means that carcasses are now generally discovered quickly, enabling the rapid investigation of evidence, which routinely leads to the swift arrests of the culprits. Suspects have been arrested in most rhino poaching incidents registered over the past three years.

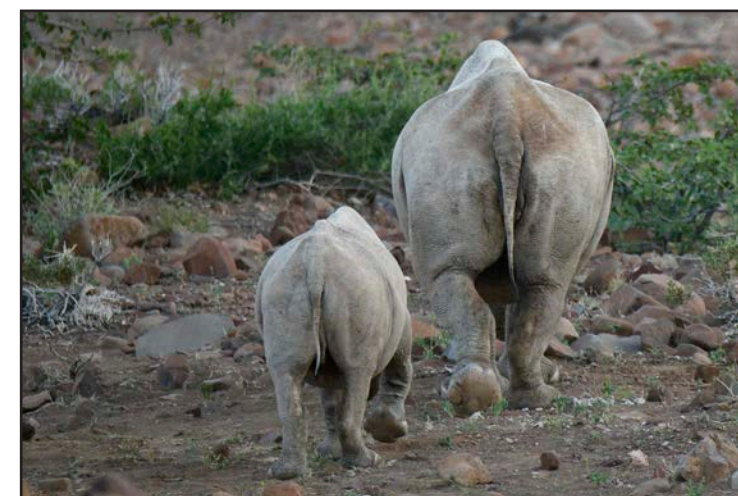
Innovative, evidence-based and intelligence-led investigations have also allowed law enforcement to move ahead of the criminals in numerous instances, particularly in relation to rhino crimes. The activities of wildlife crime syndicates are now regularly detected even before poachers breach a target area in search of rhinos. Suspects are being arrested with clear intent to poach rhino – but before they can kill an animal. A variety of evidence is gathered that proves the conspiracy to poach and enables the conviction of the perpetrators, while the targeted rhinos are saved. The intent to poach is treated with the same degree of seriousness under Namibian law as actual poaching.

Pre-emptive arrests in rhino cases

Pre-emptive law enforcement related to rhinos has been a game-changer in countering rhino crimes and facilitating the protection of Namibia's rhino population. Pre-emptive cases numbered 6 in 2018, 23 in 2019 and 7 in 2020. The interventions led to the arrest of a total of 140 suspects over the three-year period. These are obviously impressive



Pre-emptive arrests catch suspects before they can kill a rhino



Poaching of rhino cows incurs the loss of breeding potential



Pre-emptive arrests save numerous rhinos

HEALTHY WILDLIFE POPULATIONS NEED:

1. Effective conservation systems
2. Active anti-poaching initiatives
3. Stringent law enforcement
4. **Intersectoral cooperation**

INTERSECTORAL COOPERATION:

- **Stakeholder collaboration** shares information, equipment and human and financial resources to maximise effective interventions
- **International cooperation** facilitates effective regional conservation and counters wildlife crime at regional and global levels
- **International funding support** facilitates effective interventions by overcoming national budget limitations and local economic constraints
- **The National Wildlife Protection Strategy** coordinates wildlife protection and law enforcement priorities and initiatives for the next 5 years

PROTECTING RHINOS by linking law enforcement and conservation:

- **Effective conservation systems** provide the basis for healthy rhino populations
- **Poaching can decimate rhino populations** by killing breeding animals, reversing population growth and quickly reducing rhino numbers
- **Proactive law enforcement** –
 - **ensures rapid response** to any poaching incident, leading to swift arrests
 - **catches poachers before they can kill** by using the latest forensic and surveillance technologies and information
- **Conspiracy to poach rhino** is treated with the same seriousness as actual poaching
- **Pre-emptive arrests** that catch poachers before they kill a rhino save numerous rhinos
- **Saved females rhinos** continue to breed
- **This links law enforcement and conservation** by maintaining population growth and healthy rhino numbers

UNDERSTANDING RHINO POPULATION GROWTH:

- **Rhinos are slow breeders**
- **A female has her first calf** when she is between 6 and 9 years old
- **Only one calf** is born at a time
- **The interval between calves** is between 2.5 and 3.5 years
- **Annual population growth** is between 4% and 8%
- **Natural factors** such as drought, disease and predation influence population growth
- **Rhinos live** for up to 40 years
- **One rhino cow may produce 10 calves** in a healthy life
- **About half of the calves are female**, which mature to have their own calves
- **Over a 40 year period**, one cow may produce 100 animals through the offspring of her own calves; numbers may vary due to many factors
- **Poaching one rhino cow** wipes out all of her potential contributions to population growth

- **Pre-emptive arrests in rhino cases save individual rhinos and safeguard population growth**

law-enforcement results. They are also extremely important conservation outcomes.

12.2 POSITIVE RHINO-CONSERVATION OUTCOMES

Minimising poaching impacts

Poaching can rapidly decimate susceptible populations of slow-breeding animals such as rhinos. The continuous loss of a large number of breeding animals obliterates population growth and quickly reduces overall animal numbers. Small, isolated populations, such as those on some private reserves, can be completely wiped out in a matter of months.

Ensuring healthy rhino population growth

While the immediate impact of a single poaching incident is the loss of one rhino, the cumulative, long-term impact of losing female rhinos is massive. The loss of one cow is estimated to incur the loss of eight to ten animals over a twenty-year period, a number that will have increased ten-fold in forty years.

Under ideal conditions, a healthy rhino population may achieve an annual growth rate of between four and eight per cent, depending on the species (white rhinos have a slightly higher growth rate than black rhinos) and the environmental circumstances (controlled environments with plenty of food but free of predators and diseases produce higher growth rates).

Namibia's arid environments generally provide sub-optimal conditions. The age of a female at first calving is significantly higher here, and the interval between calves is longer. Predation of calves by lions and spotted hyaenas can have an impact on population growth, as can other factors such as population density, disease and severe drought. Growth rates are thus generally lower in Namibia than elsewhere in Africa.

One rhino cow may nonetheless produce up to ten calves during a long, healthy life. About half of the calves would be females that would in turn produce offspring during their own lives. In a 40-year period, the offspring of one cow might thus produce around 100 animals, although this number can vary significantly depending on mortalities caused by predation, drought, disease etc.

Saving rhinos through pre-emptive arrests

The pre-emptive arrests achieved between January 2018 and December 2020 are likely to have directly saved more than 30 rhinos. While not every poaching incursion is successful, a poaching gang often kills

two or more rhinos during an incursion. Yet the pre-emptive arrests effected since 2018 will also allow hundreds of rhinos to continue breeding in the future. Importantly, conservation, anti-poaching and law-enforcement interventions must be sustained. Annual rhino losses to poaching must be kept well below the annual growth rate of the Namibian population. If rhino poaching escalates unchecked, Namibia's rhinos will be rapidly reduced and will face extinction in the foreseeable future. Some small, isolated populations have already been wiped out completely in the past few years.

12.3 INTERNATIONAL RHINO-CRIME WEBS

Rhino poachers, aiders and abettors

Rhino poaching is currently the most organised sector of wildlife crime in Namibia. Investigations show intricate webs of connections from poachers tasked with shooting rhinos to various aiders and abettors, to local dealers and finally to international kingpins. The arrest of a poaching gang often leads to the arrest of numerous accomplices who facilitated a poaching incident in some way.

High-level wildlife crime kingpins

The apprehension of high-level kingpins is more complicated and involves painstaking investigations to ensure sufficient *prima facie* evidence for an arrest and subsequent conviction. Yet such arrests tend to have a wide knock-on effect on local crime webs. Middlemen may be forced to seek alternative buyers for their contraband, bringing them to the attention of investigators, which can lead to important further arrests and seizures of wildlife products.

Namibian law enforcement officers succeeded in several high-level arrests during 2020. The knock-on effects can not always be definitively measured, but the subsequent arrest of several local dealers and the seizure of a relatively high number of rhino horns are positive indicators for the disruption of extensive criminal networks in Namibia during the year.

12.4 INTERNATIONAL IVORY TRAFFICKING

Elephant poaching in Namibia

The number of elephants estimated to have been poached in Namibia in 2020, based on discovered carcasses, is 11. This indicates that most of the 62 tusks seized in Namibia during 2020 (representing

at least 31 elephants) were brought in from neighbouring countries for sale in Namibia. Pre-emptive arrests related to elephant poaching have only been possible in isolated cases, and involved poaching incursions targeting wildlife in Botswana, using Namibia's Zambezi Region as a springboard.

Trans-boundary trafficking

The impacts of law enforcement on Namibia's elephant population are less direct and more difficult to gauge than those related to rhinos. A large percentage of elephant cases involves ivory seizures and arrests achieved through sting operations, when ivory is offered for sale in Namibia. The origin of the ivory is often unclear and tusks can rarely be linked to an elephant carcass. Most cases are registered in the Kavango and Zambezi regions, where there is a distinct likelihood that the ivory stems from elephants poached in neighbouring countries. The small number of arrests and ivory seizures registered in northwestern Namibia could mostly be traced back to a specific elephant carcass.

12.5 PANGOLIN COLLECTING AND TRAFFICKING

Pangolin trafficking trends

The health of the Namibian pangolin population is still poorly known, as are the impacts of pangolin poaching. The fact that pangolins have constituted the largest number of seizures of individual animals in recent years is an alarming trend. During 2018, 88 animals were seized, a number that rose to 129 in 2019 and dropped to 74 in 2020. Various initiatives are seeking to reverse this trend, while also improving our understanding of these secretive insectivores and the dynamics that drive the trade in products of this species.

Pangolin poaching appears to be mostly opportunistic, i.e. animals that are encountered by chance are picked up and offered for sale. Intelligence-led investigations regularly achieve arrests and seizures during such attempted sales. How high the number of seizures is compared to the number of animals that are successfully smuggled out of the country is unknown. It is however suspected that a relatively high percentage of all trafficked animals is seized.

Awareness and reward scheme

A wide-ranging pangolin information and reward scheme, initiated in 2017, was extremely successful in creating awareness of pangolins. Numerous rewards

PROTECTING ELEPHANTS through international collaboration:

- **Elephant poaching has been minimised in Namibia through effective conservation, anti-poaching and law enforcement**
- **Deployment of security forces to national parks has been particularly effective in deterring poaching**
- **Most ivory seized in Namibia is smuggled into the country for sale, but originates from elsewhere**
- **Transboundary ivory trafficking is a significant regional concern**
- **Collaboration with Botswana and Zambia is enabling the regional disruption of wildlife crime syndicates**
- **Law enforcement collaboration with Botswana and Zambia has led to numerous arrests in Namibia, Botswana and Zambia**

PROTECTING PANGOLINS through knowledge, awareness and action:

- **Knowledge of Namibia's pangolins is currently limited, but research is expanding**
- **An awareness and reward scheme initiated in 2017, has helped raise public knowledge and led to numerous arrests and seizures**
- **A follow-up campaign focusses on suppressing pangolin collection in the wild**
- **Rehabilitation and release of pangolins seized alive is difficult, but is being improved through collaboration between MEFT/ NAMPOL and wildlife veterinarians, animal rehabilitation centres and researchers**
- **The Namibian Pangolin Working Group was formed in 2020 to facilitate pangolin protection and research**
- **National-level research is being prioritised to improve understanding of the overall population and facilitate management and protection initiatives**

were paid for information leading to the arrest of pangolin traffickers and the seizure of pangolins. Awareness is unfortunately always a double-edged sword, as increased knowledge of the value of pangolins may motivate an increase in trafficking. In addition, reward schemes may be susceptible to abuse. A follow-up campaign with revised messaging focussing on suppressing pangolin collection in the wild was rolled out during the second half of 2020.

Pangolin rehabilitation and release

Pre-emptive arrests prior to a pangolin being collected in the wild are impossible in cases of opportunistic collection of the animals. Nonetheless, numerous pangolins are seized alive each year, and many can be rehabilitated and released back into the wild. Unfortunately, pangolins are extremely susceptible to stress during capture and in captivity.

Seized animals are often in a poor condition, with dehydration, starvation, injuries and stress being major issues. This makes rehabilitation a difficult, time-consuming process. Release back into the wild is also problematic. It is rarely possible to establish where a pangolin was caught. Release into its original range would mostly not be advisable due to the high risk of recapture. Release into a safe habitat with an existing pangolin population creates issues of territorial fights between the released animal and the resident pangolins.

Namibian Pangolin Working Group

The Namibian Pangolin Working Group was established in 2020 to coordinate pangolin research and protection. NAMPOL and the MEFT are working with wildlife veterinarians, animal rehabilitation centres and pangolin researchers to optimise rehabilitation and release procedures for pangolins confiscated alive.

12.6 KEEPING WILDLIFE CRIME TO A MINIMUM

Illicit markets drive wildlife crime

As long as there are lucrative illicit markets for rhino horn, ivory, pangolin parts and other illegal wildlife products, some poaching of such species is unpreventable in a country as vast as Namibia.

Multi-agency collaboration

The transformation of wildlife crime investigations in Namibia was enabled by an approach of multi-agency collaboration. The initial groundwork was laid by the

deployment of security forces to national parks in 2016, which fostered collaboration between the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism, the Ministry of Home Affairs, Immigration, Safety and Security and the Ministry of Defence. The establishment of the Wildlife Protection Services Division and the Intelligence and Investigation Unit in the MEFT in 2016-2017 created dedicated capacities to combat wildlife crime.

Operation Blue Rhino

The launch of Operation Blue Rhino and the establishment of the Blue Rhino Task Team in 2018 formalised the collaboration between the NAMPOL Protected Resources Division and the MEFT Wildlife Protection Services Division. Operation Blue Rhino also catalysed more active collaboration amongst the regional units of NAMPOL and MEFT, with active support from the NDF. This has facilitated a law-enforcement focus on high-value wildlife crime across the country. Use of the latest technologies has been one of the keys to successful investigations.

Prosecution and conviction

Law enforcement is only effective if investigations and arrests lead to the prosecution and conviction of perpetrators, with appropriate sentences creating a deterrent to future crimes. Revised wildlife legislation and improved collaboration between investigators and prosecutors have led to more effective prosecution and more appropriate sentences in wildlife-crime cases. This has included significant sentences for conspiracy to poach rhino.

Healthy people, healthy wildlife

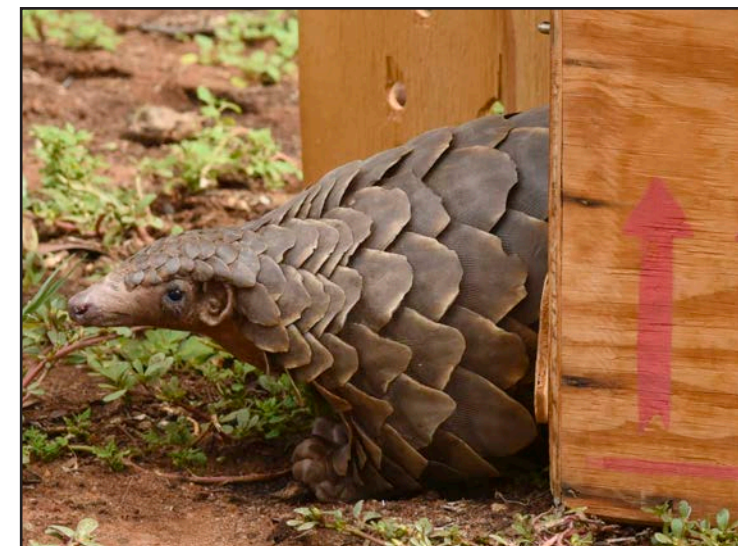
Sound conservation systems, active anti-poaching initiatives and stringent law enforcement can counter wildlife crime and keep valuable wildlife populations healthy. The cost of prolonged, intensive wildlife protection is, however, extremely high. To minimise wildlife crime prevalence in the long term, it is important to eradicate poverty and ensure socio-economic upliftment of rural communities. Environmental pride and the adoption of social norms that reject crime are other vital aspects. These can be partly achieved through wildlife-based economies such as tourism and conservation hunting, but also require other integrated initiatives. Proud, self-sufficient and healthy rural people will facilitate healthy wildlife populations. Such fundamental changes can also influence long-term demand in consumer societies.



Much of the ivory seized in Namibia comes from elsewhere



Pangolin poaching is mostly opportunistic

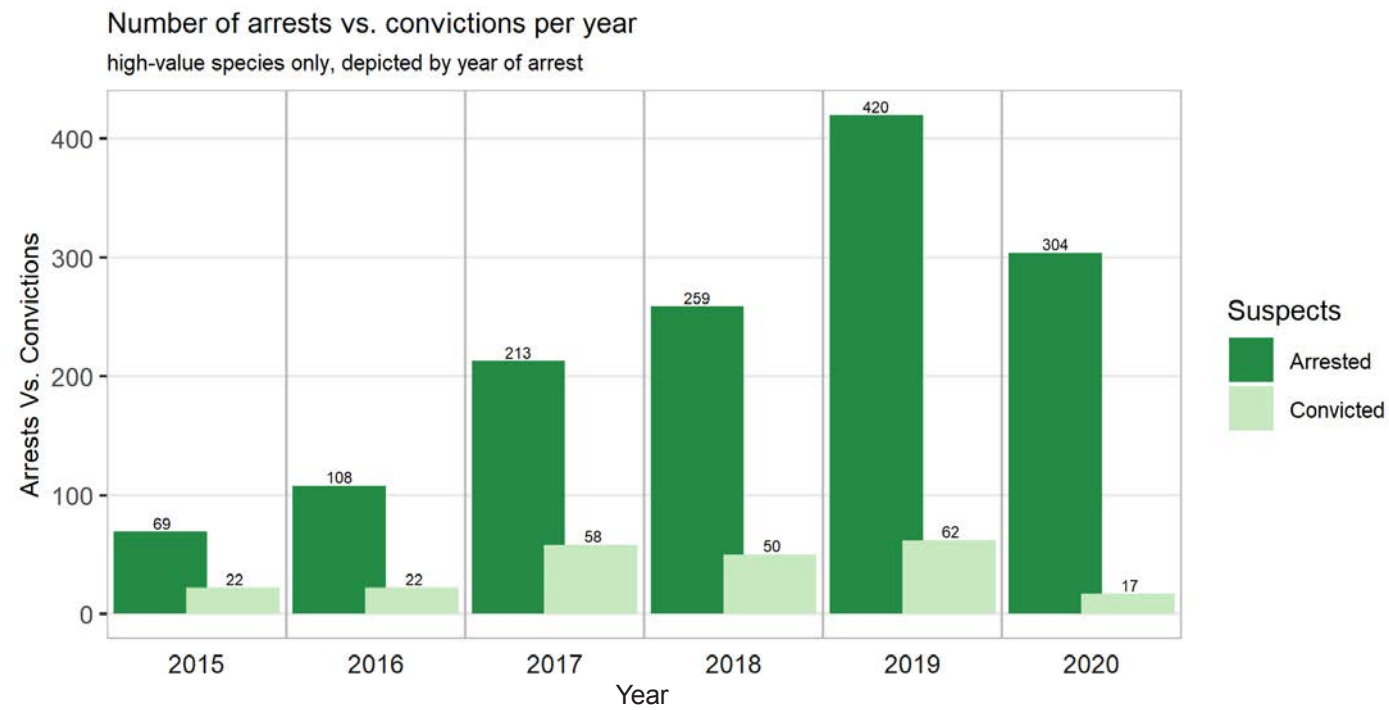


Many pangolins seized alive can be rehabilitated and released

13. Long-term law enforcement and wildlife crime trends:

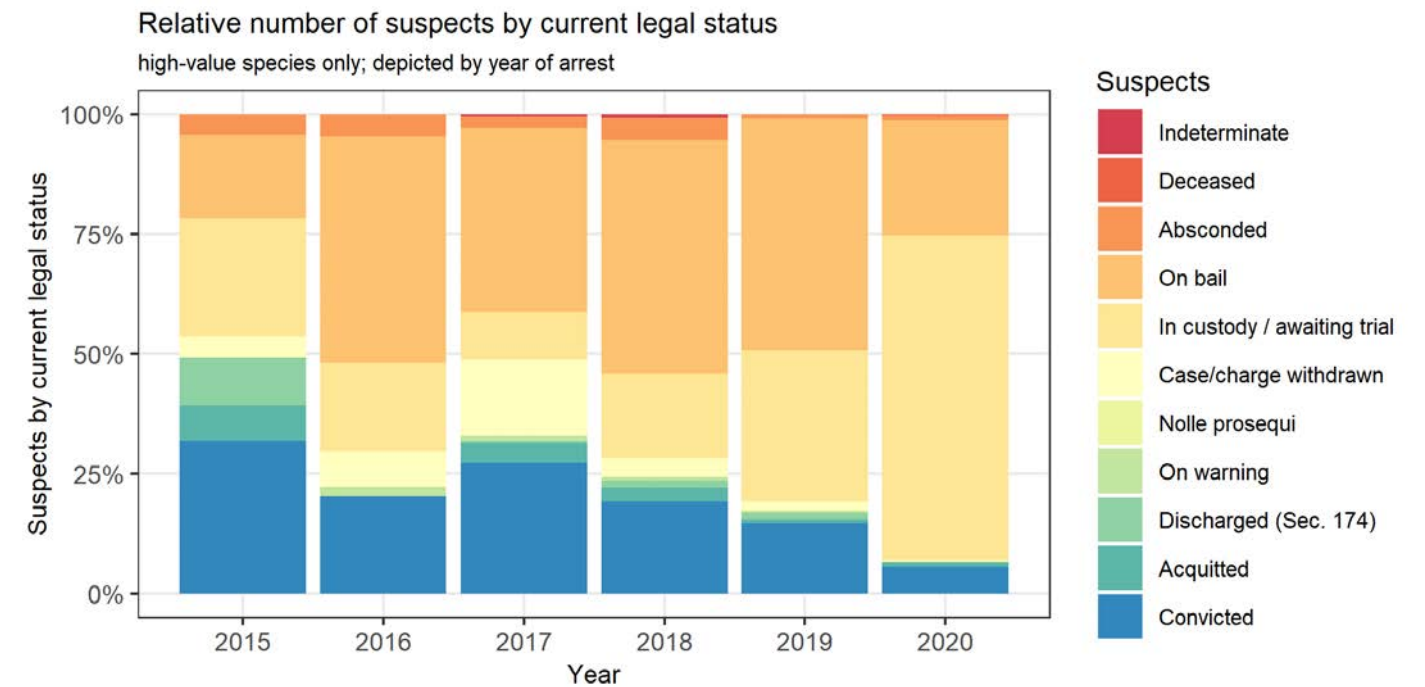
13.1 Arrests and convictions related to high-value species per year (2015–2020)

High-value species: elephant, rhinos (black and white rhino combined), pangolin



13.2 Legal status of suspects as a percentage of all suspects arrested per year (2015–2020)

High-value species: elephant, rhinos (black and white rhino combined), pangolin



Interpretations and notes

Long-term trends in the number of arrests related to high-value wildlife crime

- The above statistics illustrate the changes in the number of arrests in cases related to high-value species.
- A variety of factors influence variations in the number of arrests:
 - **prevalence of criminal activity**
 - **effectiveness of law enforcement**
 - **accuracy of wildlife crime data**
- **Data accuracy** has rapidly improved over the past three years; data for these years is considered comprehensive.
- **Law enforcement efficiency** has rapidly increased over the past three years; this is due to intersectoral collaboration, flexible funding support for law enforcement (started in late 2016), access to the latest technologies, the launch of Operation Blue Rhino (mid-2018) and increased collaboration amongst regional NAMPOL, MEFT and NDF units.
- **Prevalence of crime** is difficult to measure, but is believed to have increased from 2015 to 2019; a decrease in the prevalence of crime during 2020 is believed to be caused by a combination of the impacts of COVID-19 restrictions and ongoing, effective law enforcement.

Long-term trends in the number of convictions related to high-value wildlife crime

- Many factors influence the number of wildlife crime suspects convicted.
- Complex cases often require in-depth investigations, some of which take place after initial arrests.
- Court cases may be drawn out due to a variety of delays caused by tight court schedules; changes in legal representation, prosecution or magistrates; ongoing investigations and lab results; case transfers; PG decisions; etc.
- Wildlife crime is only one of many problematic criminal segments requiring urgent attention in Namibia

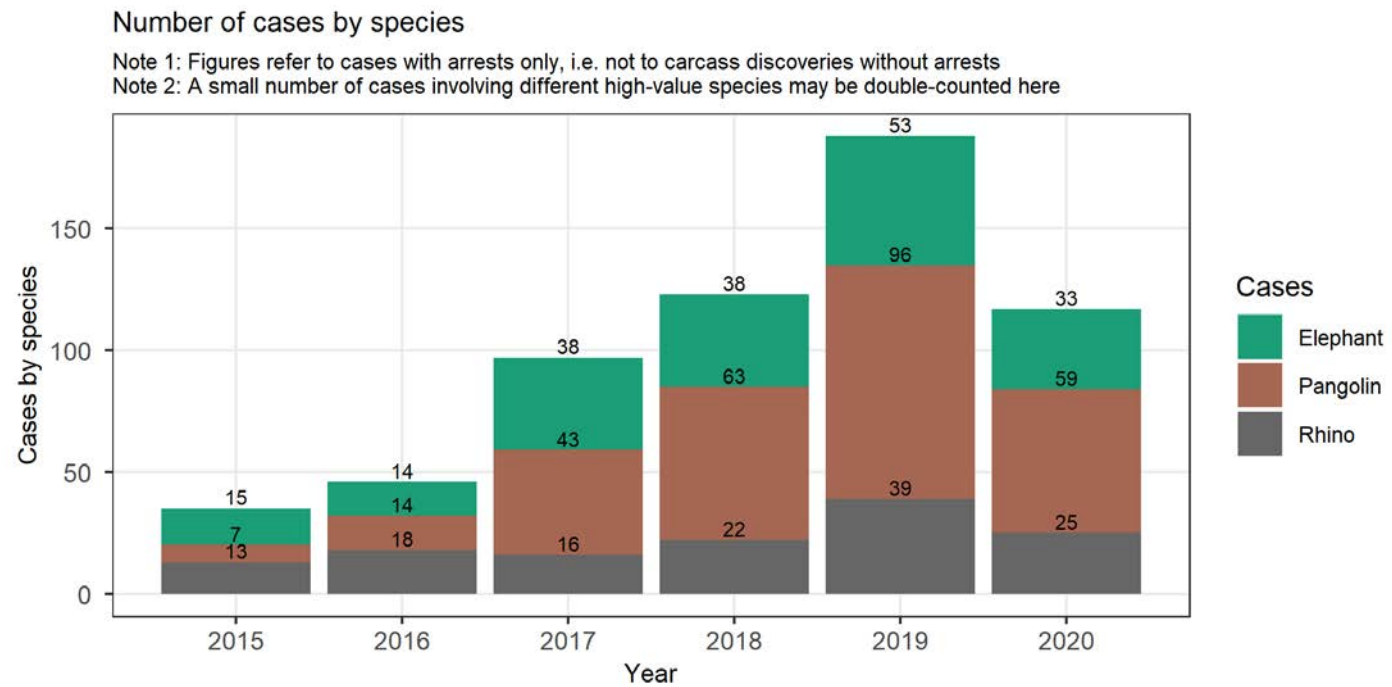
Interpretations and notes

Legal status of suspects as a percentage of all suspects arrested per year

- The graph indicates the current status (as of end December 2020) of suspects arrested in any particular year.
- For example, of all suspects arrested in 2015, about 54% have had their cases finalised, leading to the conviction of suspects (just over 30%), the acquittal of suspects (less than 10%), or other case closures (on warning, case/charge withdrawn, etc.); approximately 25% of suspects arrested in 2015 remain in custody, while just over 20% have been released on bail.
- The statistics clearly highlight the drawn-out nature of court cases.
- The low number of suspects convicted in 2020 indicates that it takes several months for many cases related to high-value species to be finalised.
- That a lower percentage of suspects has been convicted in high-value species cases may be explained in part by the fact that these are generally more complex than meat-poaching cases.
- All sensitive cases, including those related to rhinos, must be submitted to the PG's Office for guidance, which increases the length of the court case.
- Many sensitive cases, including those related to high-value species, are transferred from local to regional courts, which increases the length of the court case.
- In-depth investigations, including forensic analysis of DNA, ballistics and other evidence, take considerable time to be completed, which increases the length of the court case.

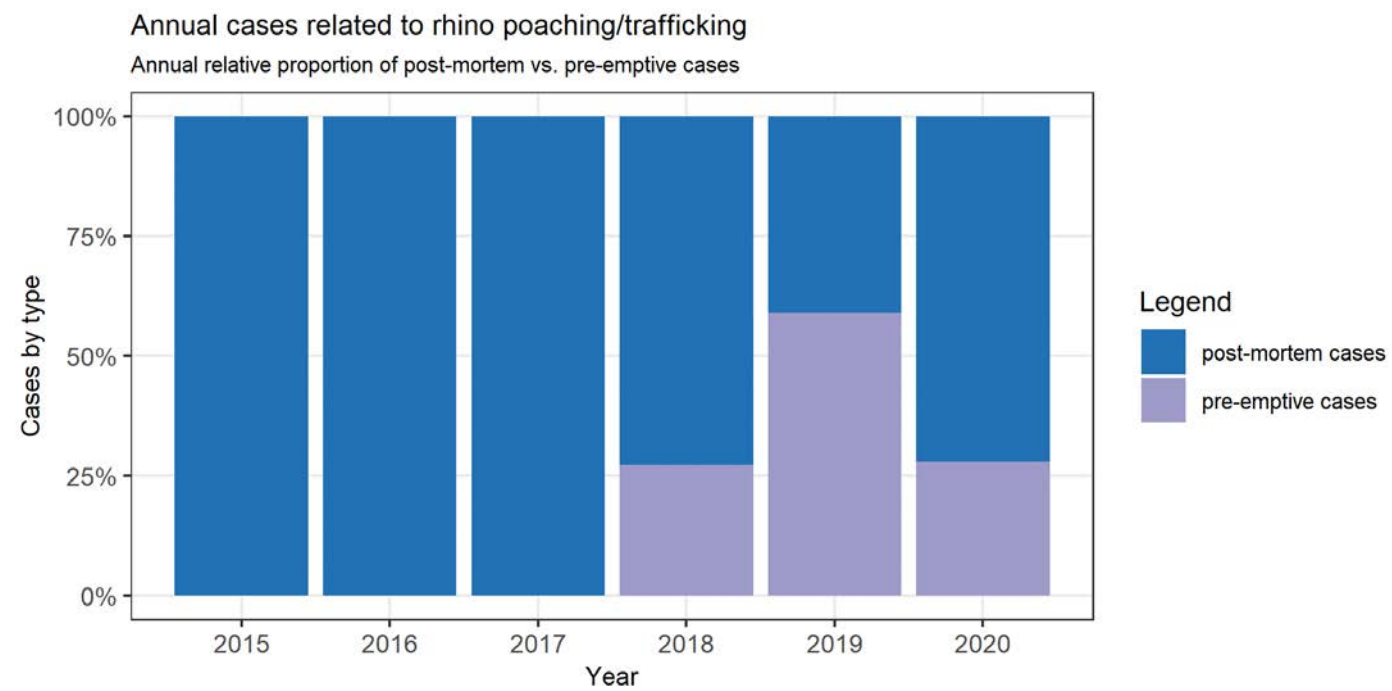
13.3 Arrests related to high-value species per year (2015–2020)

High-value species: elephant, rhinos (black and white rhino combined), pangolin



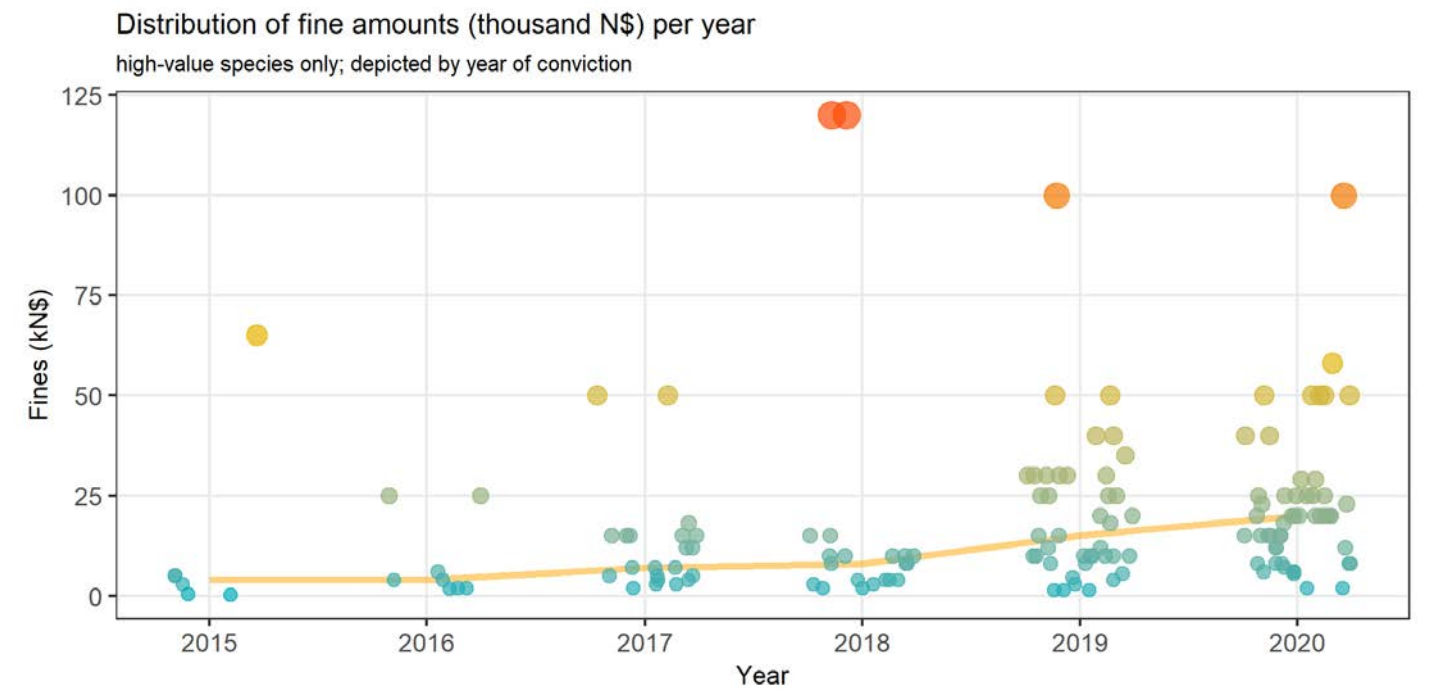
13.4 Percentage of pre-emptive arrests related to rhinos per year (2015–2020)

Post-mortem cases represent cases in which **suspects were arrested after a rhino has been killed**
Pre-emptive cases represent cases in which **suspects were arrested before they could kill a rhino**
 Pre-emptive arrests are considered the most successful law enforcement intervention related to rhino poaching.
 Pre-emptive arrests save the lives of targeted rhinos, but still lead to the conviction of the criminals.
 The knock-on effect of disrupting syndicates means that a considerable number rhinos are saved.

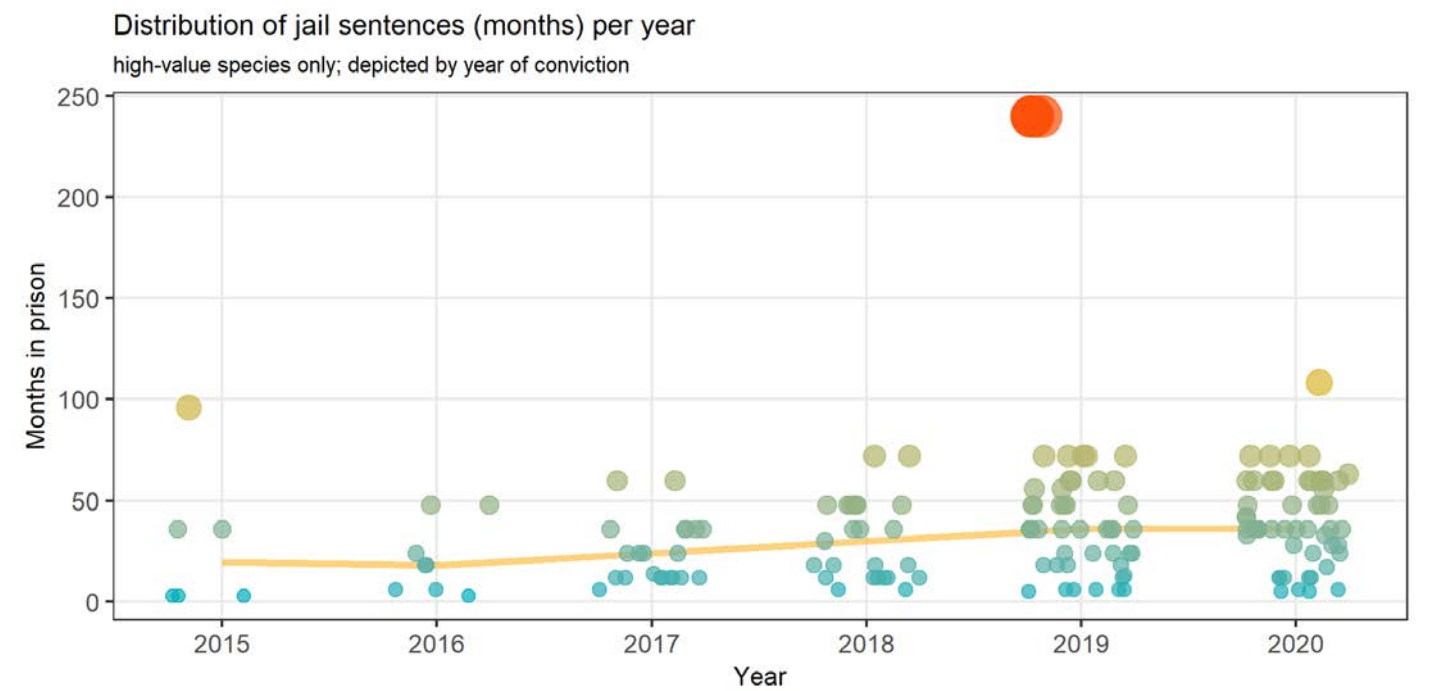


13.5 Fines and prison sentences per year (2015–2020)

High-value species: elephant, rhinos (black and white rhino combined), pangolin



- The graphs of fines and jail terms show the changes in the height of sentences over time.
- The time line (x-axis) indicates the date of sentencing.
- The colour and size of the dots varies according to the height of the sentence, with small blue representing the lowest and large orange the highest.
- The yellow line indicates the median.
- The few very high sentences are related to complex crimes that were judged to be particularly severe.



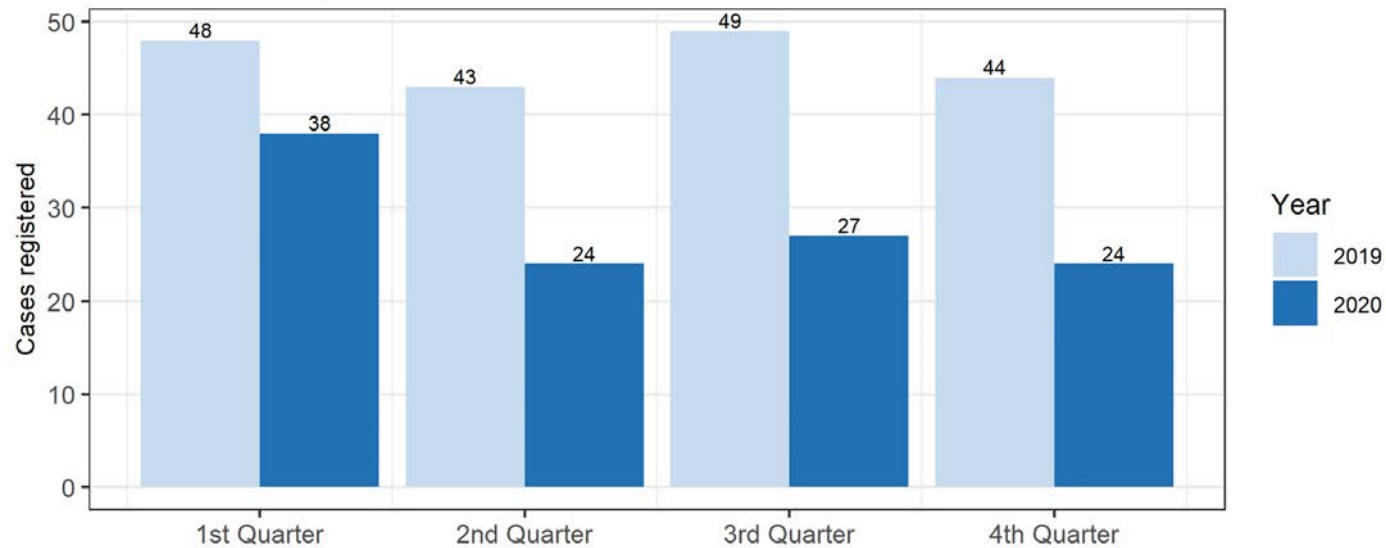
14. Detailed wildlife crime statistics for 2020

14.1 Wildlife crime CASES REGISTERED related to high-value species (2019-2020)

High-value species: elephant, rhinos (black and white rhino combined), pangolin

Wildlife cases related to high-value species registered per quarter for the past two years

2019 Total (high-value species only): 184
2020 Total (high-value species only): 113

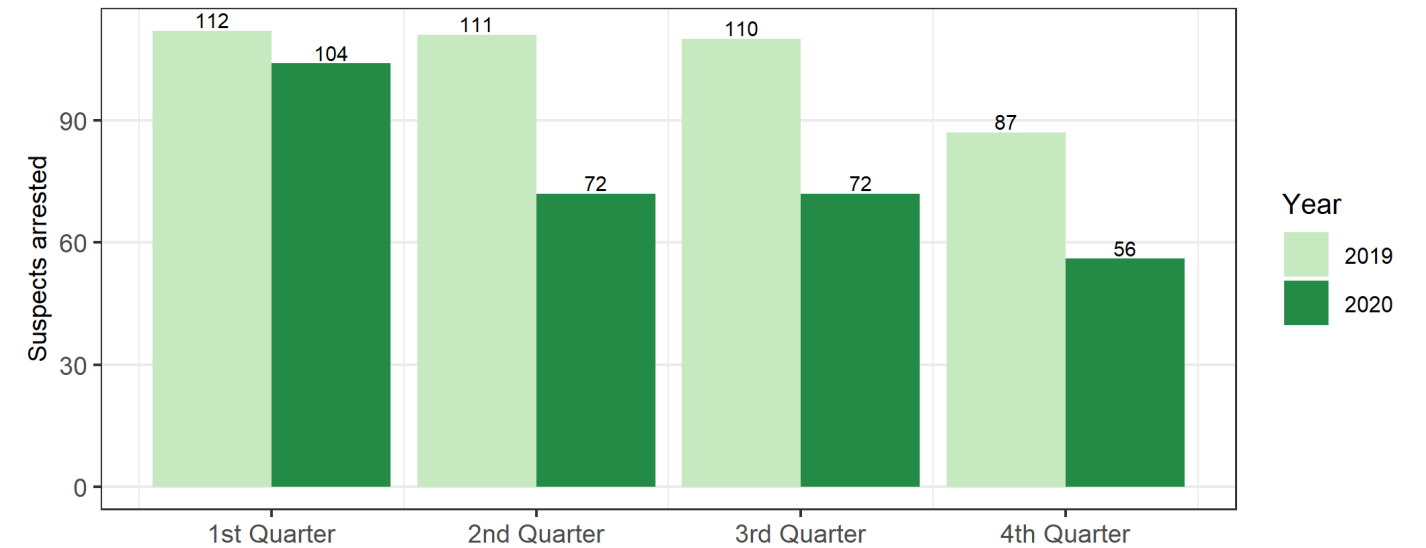


14.2 Wildlife crime ARRESTS related to high-value species (2019-2020)

High-value species: elephant, rhinos (black and white rhino combined), pangolin

Suspects arrested on charges related to high-value species per quarter for the past two years

2019 Total (high-value species only): 420
2020 Total (high-value species only): 304



Interpretations and notes

Total number of wildlife crime cases involving high-value species

- The above statistics represent all cases registered during the current reporting period, which were related to either elephant, rhinos (both species) or pangolin, registered anywhere in Namibia.
- Infringements include both actual poaching and the intent to poach; trafficking (i.e. trading) of controlled wildlife products; possession of controlled wildlife products; and other infringements such as possession of illegal firearms, and unlawfully entering a protected area.
- Cases may be opened based on the seizure of illicit goods and do not always include arrests.

Changes in the number of registered cases from year to year

- Many factors influence the number of wildlife crime cases registered. These can include changes in law-enforcement effort, and changes in the number of crimes being committed.
- Suspects may be charged with a number of offenses, sometimes under separately registered cases.
- The same suspects may be re-arrested in new cases over time (having been released or acquitted).
- Wildlife crime in Namibia has escalated rapidly over the past decade, but this has been accompanied by significant increases in the effectiveness of anti-poaching, law enforcement and prosecution.
- The decrease in registered cases during 2020 may be due to a variety of factors, although effective anti-poaching, law enforcement and prosecution has undoubtedly played a vital role.
- COVID-19 restrictions may have indirectly contributed to a reduction in registered cases.

Interpretations and notes

Total number of wildlife crime arrests related to high-value species

- The above statistics represent all suspects arrested on charges related to any type of wildlife crime infringement in connection with either elephant, rhinos (both species) or pangolin, registered anywhere in Namibia during the current reporting period.
- Infringements include both actual poaching and the intent to poach; trafficking (i.e. trading) of controlled wildlife products; possession of controlled wildlife products; and other infringements such as possession of illegal firearms, and unlawfully entering a protected area.

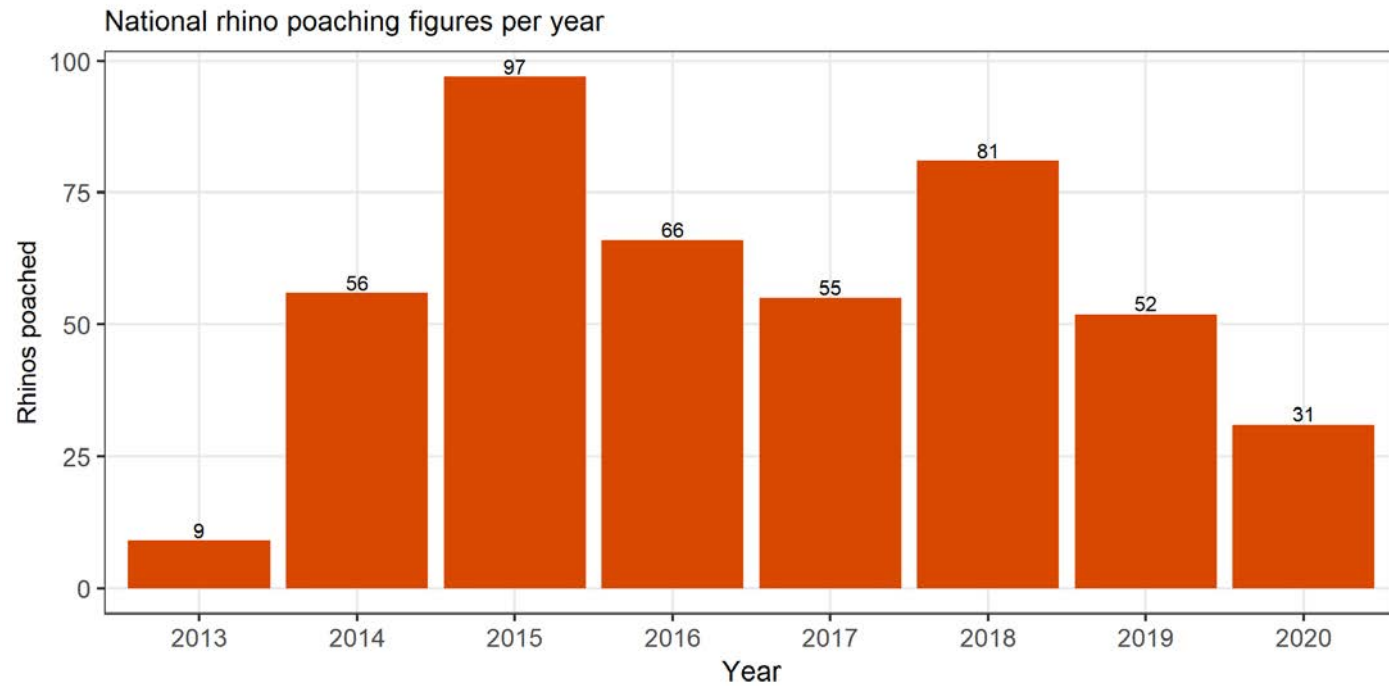
Changes in the number of arrests from year to year

- Many factors influence the number of arrests made. These can include changes in law-enforcement effort, and changes in the number of criminals involved in crime.
- Many wildlife crime cases involve complex investigations, often over longer periods of time, that may or may not lead to the arrest of suspects.
- Suspects may be charged with a number of offenses, sometimes under separately registered cases.
- The same suspects may be re-arrested in new cases over time (having been released or acquitted).
- Suspects can only be charged with an offense if there is clear, **prima facie** evidence against them, which can be used in a court of law.

14.3 ESTIMATES OF POACHED RHINOS (2013-2020)

NOTE - STATISTICS REPRESENT ESTIMATES, BASED ON DISCOVERED CARCASSES OF POACHED RHINOS. ESTIMATED DATE OF DEATH WAS USED TO ASCRIBE CARCASSES TO A PARTICULAR YEAR.

Estimating date of death for old carcasses is extremely difficult. Some carcasses may remain undiscovered.



THE ABOVE STATISTICS REPRESENT ESTIMATES ONLY

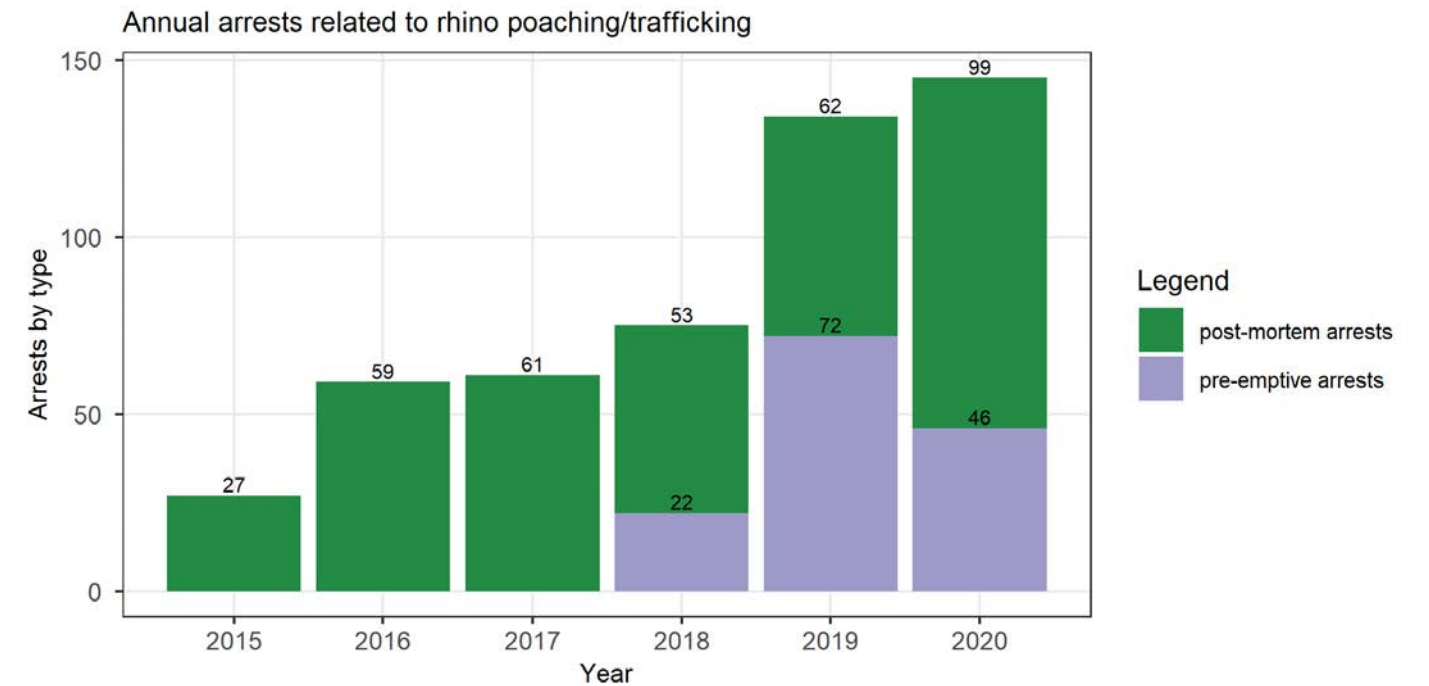
Interpretations and notes

Estimates of poached rhino

- **Special Note – all rhino poaching data presented in this report is based on estimated date of death of the animal, not date of discovery of the carcass.**
- Statistics of rhino carcasses generally present a number of problems:
 - carcasses may be discovered a long time after the death of the animal (sometimes years).
 - the date of death of the animal may be difficult or impossible to determine.
 - some rhino carcasses may never be discovered.
- Presenting statistics of rhino carcasses based on estimated date of death is thus problematic, as statistics need to be adjusted retroactively when carcasses that are estimated to be quite old are discovered. This means that figures presented here may differ from figures previously published by the MET.
- Finding animal carcasses in vast bushland (e.g. Etosha National Park), or remote, inaccessible terrain (e.g. Erongo-Kunene Community Conservation Area) can be extremely difficult or impossible, even with the aid of helicopters and other modern technology.
- Fluctuations in numbers of discovered carcasses are thus influenced by search effort as well as poaching intensity.
- Investigations use the date of discovery of a carcass as the basis and then scrutinize all available evidence. CITES categories are used to classify the approximate age of carcasses to aid investigations.
- **The statistics show a clear reduction in the estimated number of rhinos poached. While there may be undiscovered carcasses, it is believed that pre-emptive arrests and other improvements in law enforcement have led to a reduction in rhino poaching in Namibia.**

14.4 ARRESTS RELATED TO RHINOS (2015-2020) (black and white rhino combined)

Note – pre-emptive arrests indicate poachers arrested before they could kill a rhino.



Interpretations and notes

Total number of arrests related to rhinos

- Total arrests related to rhinos include both the actual poaching of rhinos and the intent to poach rhinos; trafficking (i.e. trading) of rhino parts; possession of rhino parts; aiding and abetting criminals; or other infringements.
- Some cases may be ongoing for several years, and arrests may be made at any time during this period.
- There is a clear increase in the number of arrests each year, even though the estimated number of poached rhinos has decreased. This indicates improved law enforcement and the arrest of numerous middlemen, aiders and abettors.

Pre-emptive arrests

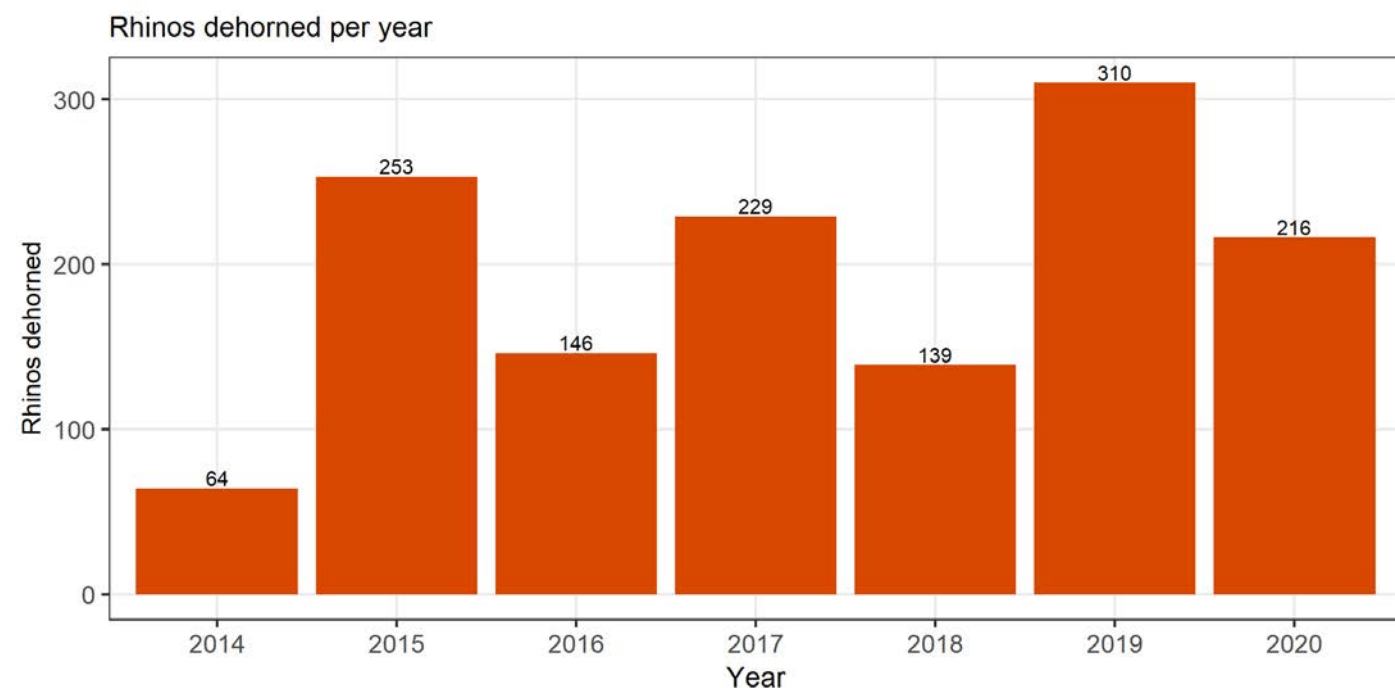
- Pre-emptive arrests are those arrests where suspects are arrested while planning or attempting to poach a rhino, but have not yet killed a rhino.
- Suspects in pre-emptive arrests are charged with conspiracy to poach rhino (also known as intent to poach).
- Charges in pre-emptive arrests are based on a variety of incriminating evidence, which may include unlawful entry into a game park, possession of illegal firearms, carrying of firearms in a game park etc.
- Through the effective use of a range of monitoring, surveillance and forensics technology, as well as other information, investigators have been able to make an increasing number of pre-emptive arrests.

The impact of pre-emptive arrests

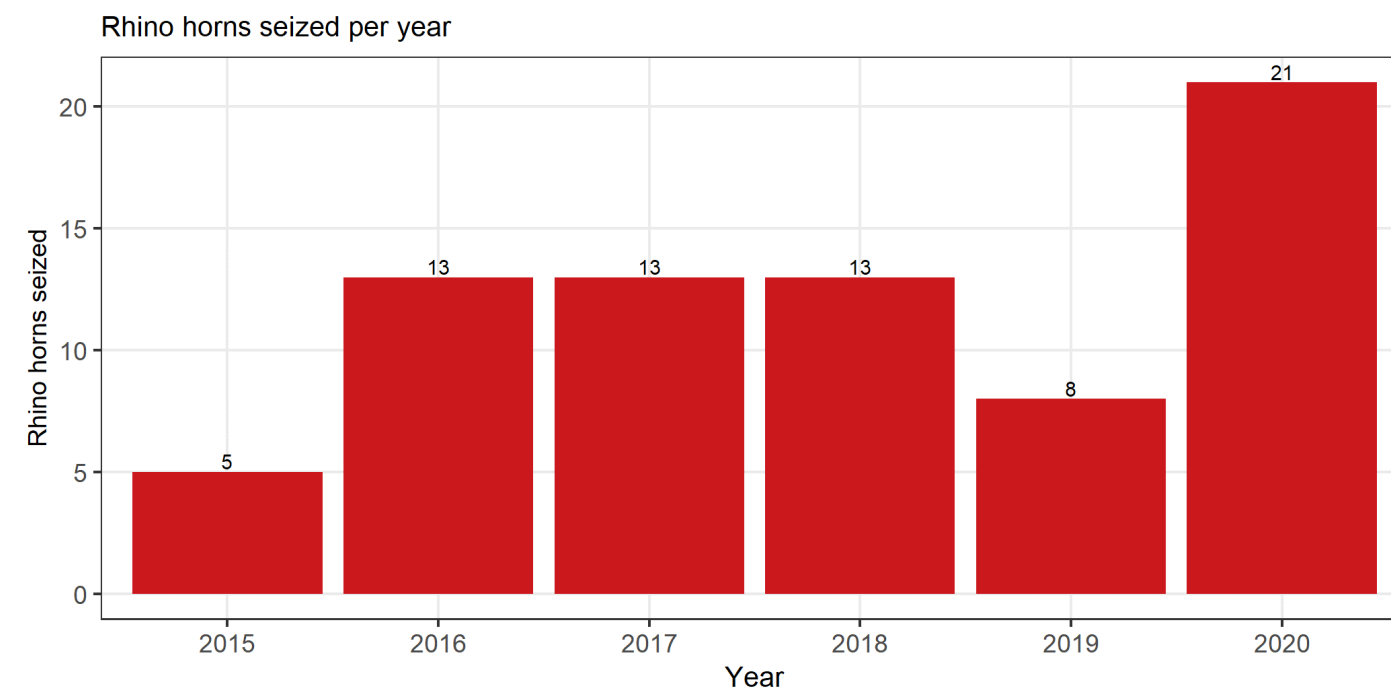
- Pre-emptive arrests are considered the most successful law enforcement intervention related to rhino poaching.
- Pre-emptive arrests save the lives of targeted rhinos, but still lead to the conviction of the criminals.
- The knock-on effect of the disruption of syndicates means that a considerable number rhinos are saved through each pre-emptive arrest.
- Under Namibian legislation, the laws and penalties regarding the conspiracy to commit an offence (in this case rhino poaching) are applied in the same manner as if the perpetrator had committed the actual offence.

14.5 DEHORNING OF RHINOS – number of rhinos (2019-2020) (black and white rhino combined)

Note - rhinos are dehorned to make them uninteresting to poachers and protect them from being killed.



14.6 RHINO HORN SEIZURES – number of complete horns (2019-2020) (black and white rhino combined)



Interpretations and notes

Dehorning of rhinos

- The horns of a rhino grow continuously throughout the animal's life. The horns can be cut off without pain or injury to the animal (in the same way people cut their hair or fingernails). Both black and white rhino naturally have two horns, although these may vary significantly in size. In very rare cases, a small third horn may be present on some animals.
- To dehorn a rhino, the animal is tranquillised by a professional team which includes an experienced wildlife veterinarian. The horns are cut off just above their growth base. Once the procedure has been completed, the animal is safely released. As the horns grow relatively quickly, dehorning needs to be repeated at intervals of 12 to 24 months to be an effective deterrent against poaching.
- Dehorning is an expensive operation. It is usually carried out with the aid of a helicopter to locate and dart the targeted animals.
- The horns of all Namibian black rhino remain the property of the government, while the horns of privately owned white rhino remain the property of the rhino owner. Rhino owners must, however, apply for a special permit to dehorn their rhino and store the horns.
- Namibia has successfully used dehorning as a means to help protect rhinos against poaching since the late 1980s.

Interpretations and notes

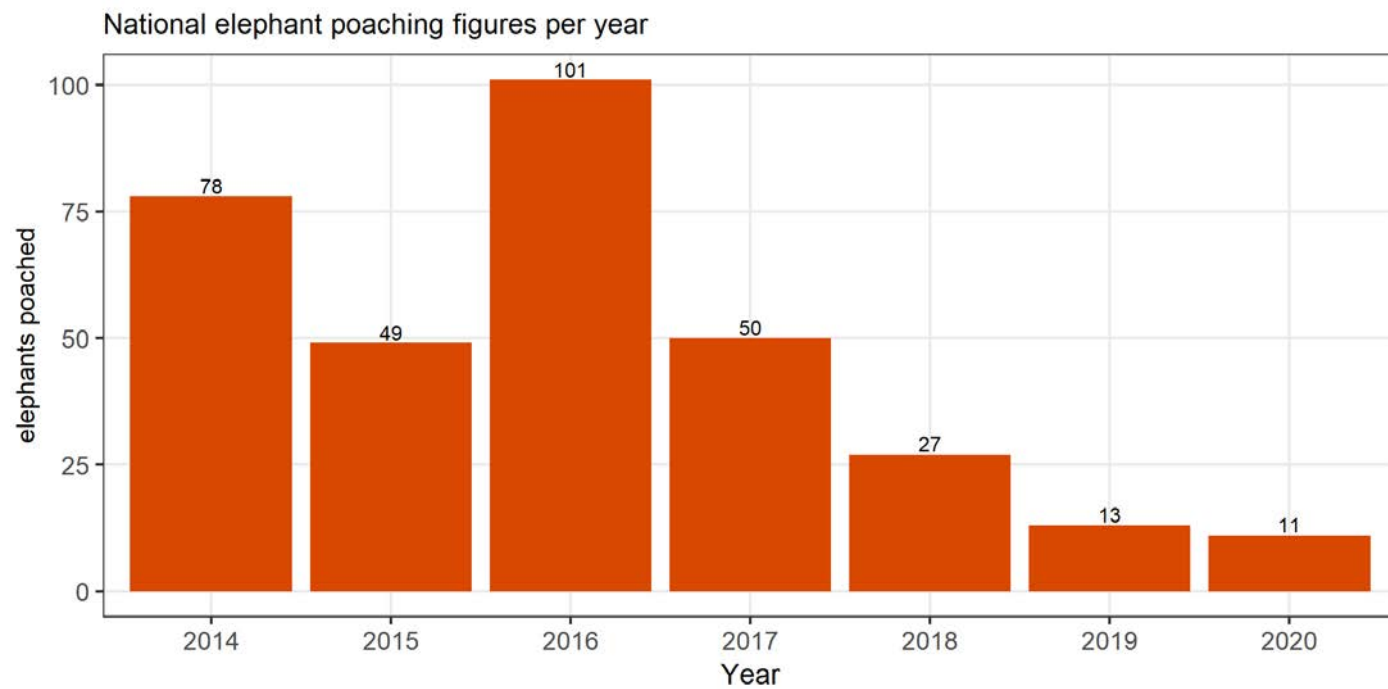
Seizures of rhino horn

- While the number of rhinos estimated to have been poached during 2020 shows a significant decrease compared to previous years, the number of horns confiscated in 2020 shows a clear increase compared to previous years. This may be attributed in part to the increased disruption of syndicates and the arrest of high-level dealers, which has forced poachers to seek new buyers. This has regularly brought them to the attention of investigators, resulting in sting operations, arrests and seizures.
- Effective monitoring, surveillance and forensics technology, has in some cases also enabled investigators to arrest suspects in possession of fresh rhino horns before a rhino carcass had been discovered; the location of the poaching incident was then determined through further investigations.
- Intricate trade routes exist for the rapid movement of rhino horns out of Namibia to neighbouring countries and destinations further afield. Evidence from investigations indicates that moving rhino horns out of Namibia appears to be the first priority for criminals involved in poaching and trafficking rhinos and their horns. The increase in rhino horn seizures is a sign of increasing law enforcement effectiveness.

14.7 ESTIMATES OF POACHED ELEPHANT (2014-2020)

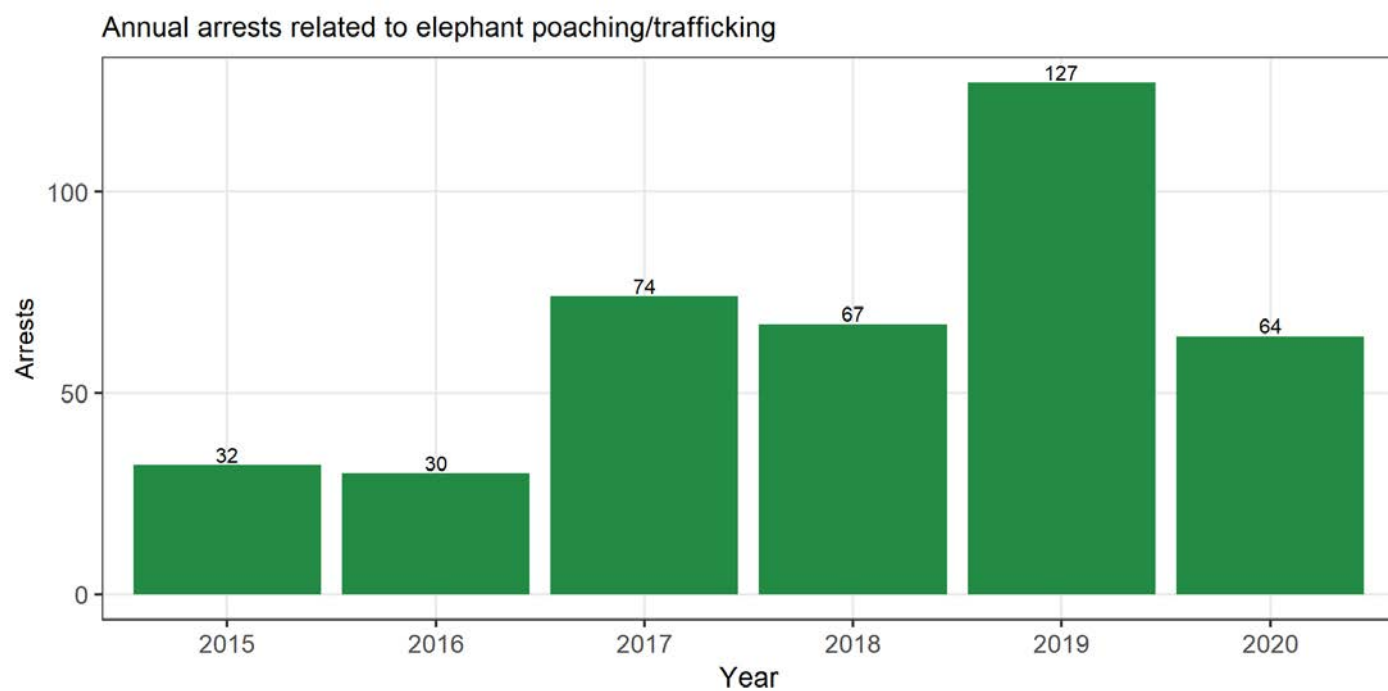
NOTE - STATISTICS REPRESENT ESTIMATES, BASED ON DISCOVERED CARCASSES OF POACHED ELEPHANTS. ESTIMATED DATE OF DEATH WAS USED TO ASCRIBE CARCASSES TO A PARTICULAR YEAR.

Estimating date of death for old carcasses is extremely difficult. Some carcasses may remain undiscovered.

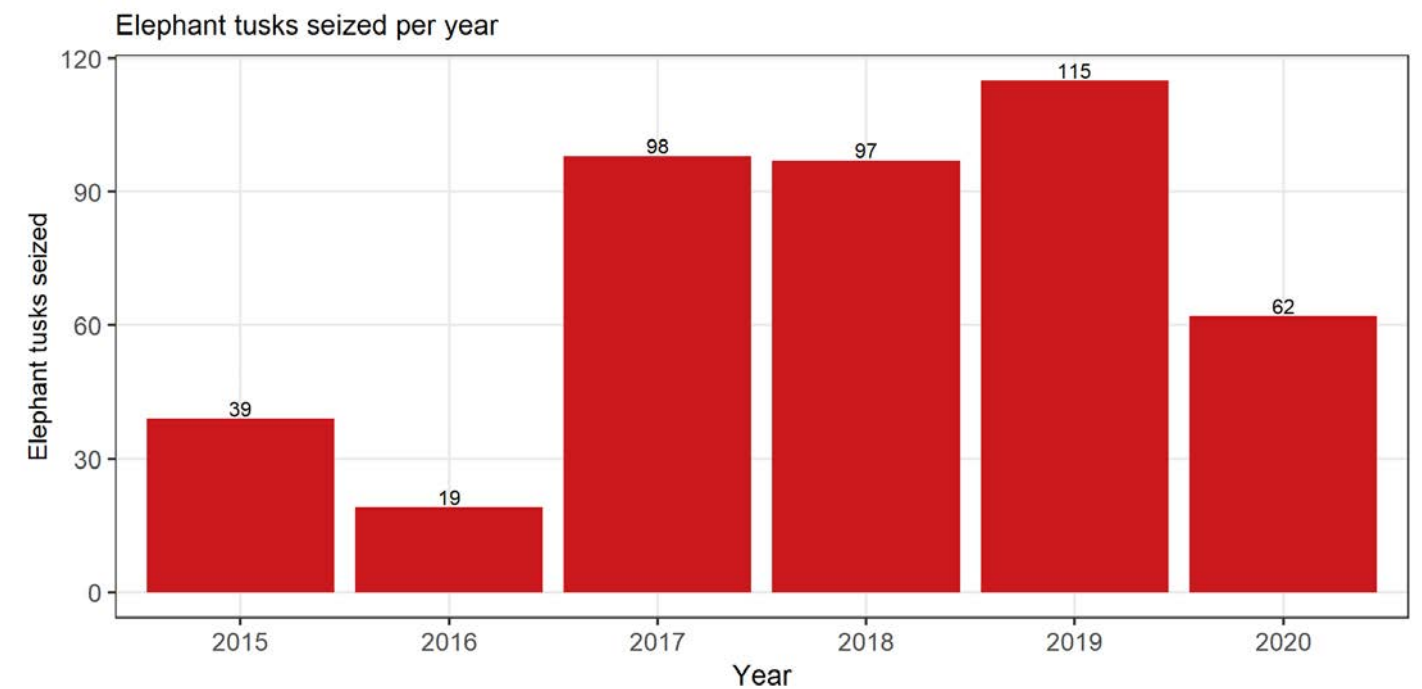


THE ABOVE STATISTICS REPRESENT ESTIMATES ONLY

14.8 ARRESTS RELATED TO ELEPHANT (2015-2020)



14.9 IVORY SEIZURES – number of complete tusks (2015-2020)



Interpretations and notes

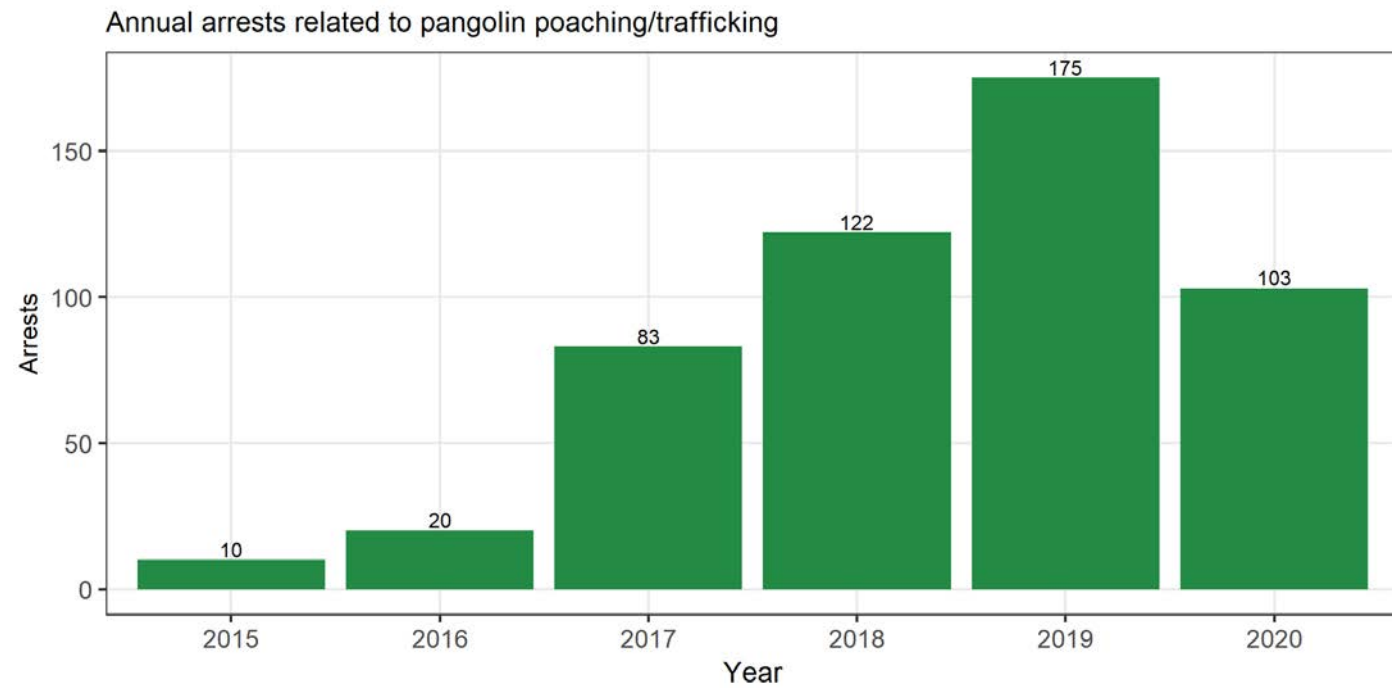
Estimates of poached elephant

- **Special Note** – all elephant poaching data presented in this report is based on estimated date of death of the animal, not date of discovery of the carcass.
- Statistics of elephant carcasses generally present a number of problems:
 - carcasses may be discovered a long time after the death of the animal (sometimes years).
 - the date of death of the animal may be difficult or impossible to determine.
 - some elephant carcasses may never be discovered.
- Presenting statistics of elephant carcasses based on estimated date of death is thus problematic, as statistics need to be adjusted retroactively when carcasses that are estimated to be quite old are discovered. This means that figures presented here may differ from figures previously published by the MET.
- Finding animal carcasses in vast bushland (e.g. Etosha National Park), or remote, inaccessible terrain (e.g. Erongo-Kunene Community Conservation Area) can be extremely difficult or impossible, even with the aid of helicopters and other modern technology.
- Fluctuations in numbers of discovered carcasses are thus influenced by search effort as well as poaching intensity.
- Investigations use the date of discovery of a carcass as the basis and then scrutinize all available evidence. CITES categories are used to classify the approximate age of carcasses to aid investigations.
- **The statistics show a clear reduction in the estimated number of elephants poached. While there may be some undiscovered carcasses, it is believed that improvements in law enforcement have led to a significant reduction in elephant poaching in Namibia.**

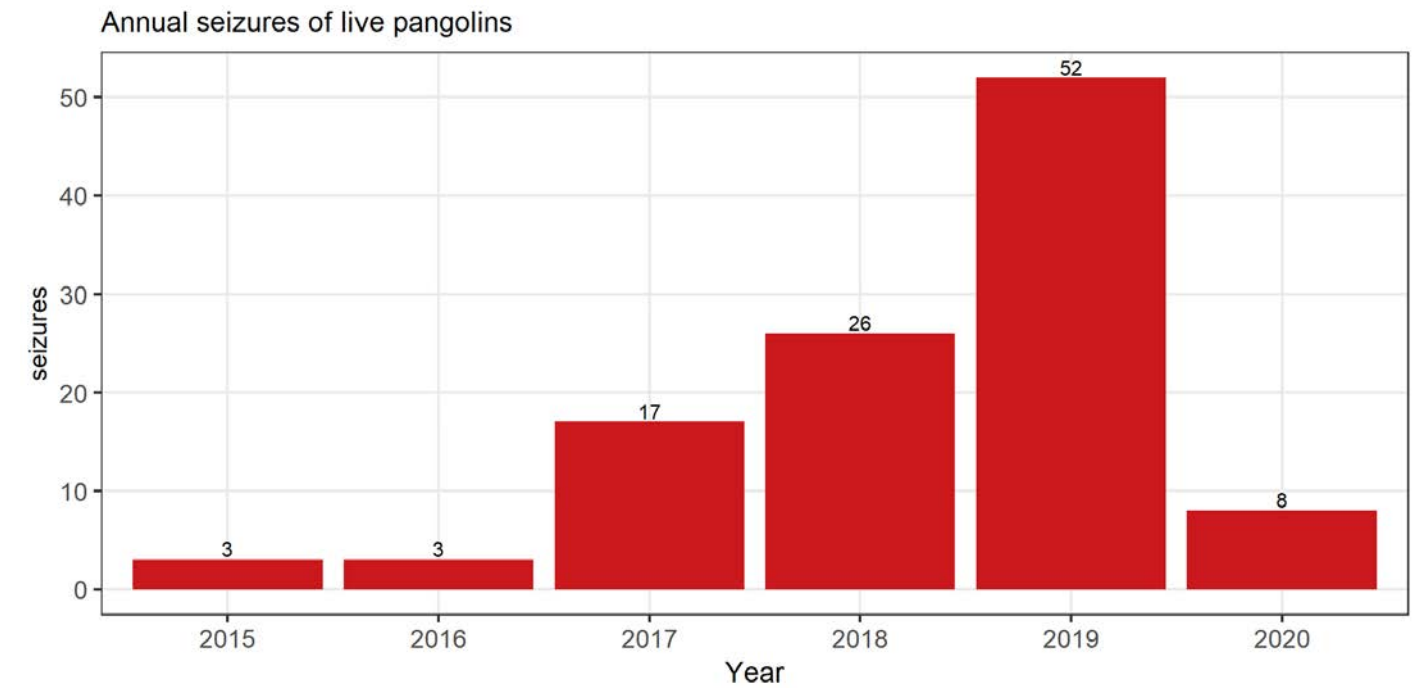
Seizures of ivory and arrests related to elephant

- Arrests related to elephant have decreased significantly in the past year.
- Ivory is regularly smuggled into Namibia from neighbouring countries, either for attempted sale in Namibia, or in transit to other destinations. The origin of the ivory can rarely be determined; animals may have been poached in Namibia or in neighbouring countries. This is of particular relevance in the Kavango and Zambezi regions of Namibia.
- Ivory may be hidden (sometimes even buried) by criminals for longer periods (sometimes years)
- Date of confiscation of ivory can rarely be linked to the date of death of the animal. Ivory confiscated in 2020 may originate from elephants killed in 2019 or earlier.
- **Special Note** – the amount of ivory seized does not relate directly to the number of elephants killed in Namibia, as some ivory may originate from elephants killed in neighbouring countries. Only 11 elephants are estimated to have been poached in Namibia during 2020.

14.10 ARRESTS RELATED TO PANGOLIN (2015-2020)



14.11 LIVE PANGOLIN SEIZED (2015-2020)

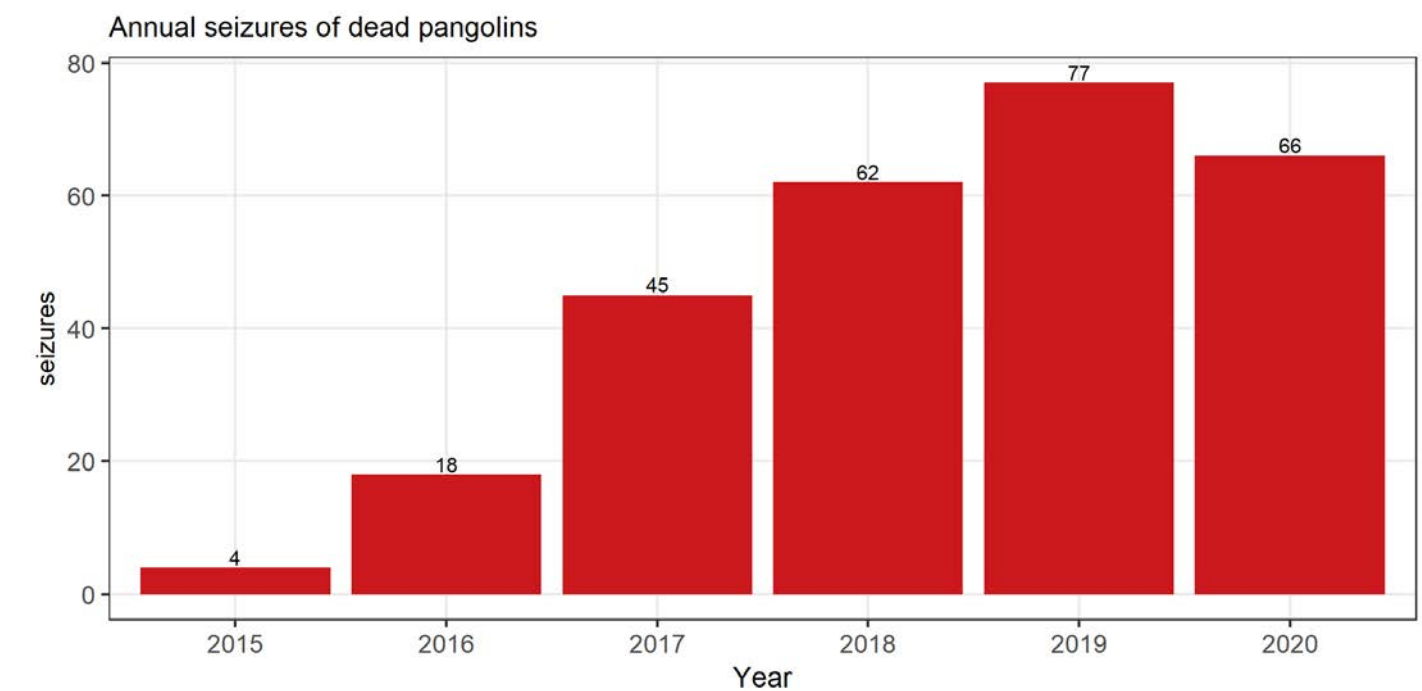


Interpretations and notes

Seizures and arrests related to pangolin

- Pangolin are currently one of the most-trafficked wild animals in Namibia – and the world.
- Arrests related to pangolin have decreased by about 41% in the past year, while seizures have decreased by about 43%.
- The overall increase in pangolin trafficking in Namibia in recent years is a response to the growing international trade.
- An awareness and reward scheme has been effective in raising awareness of pangolin trafficking in Namibia and has facilitated a number of arrests.
- The number of live pangolin seized decreased dramatically during 2020.
- Whenever possible, pangolin seized alive are rehabilitated and released back into the wild at secure sites.
- Most dead pangolin are seized as dried pangolin skins, although a small number of complete pangolin carcasses have been seized.
- During periods of extreme drought, pangolin may become increasingly day-active; this may lead to unusually high numbers of pangolin sightings and incorrect assumptions regarding their abundance; it may also lead to increases in incidental pangolin poaching.

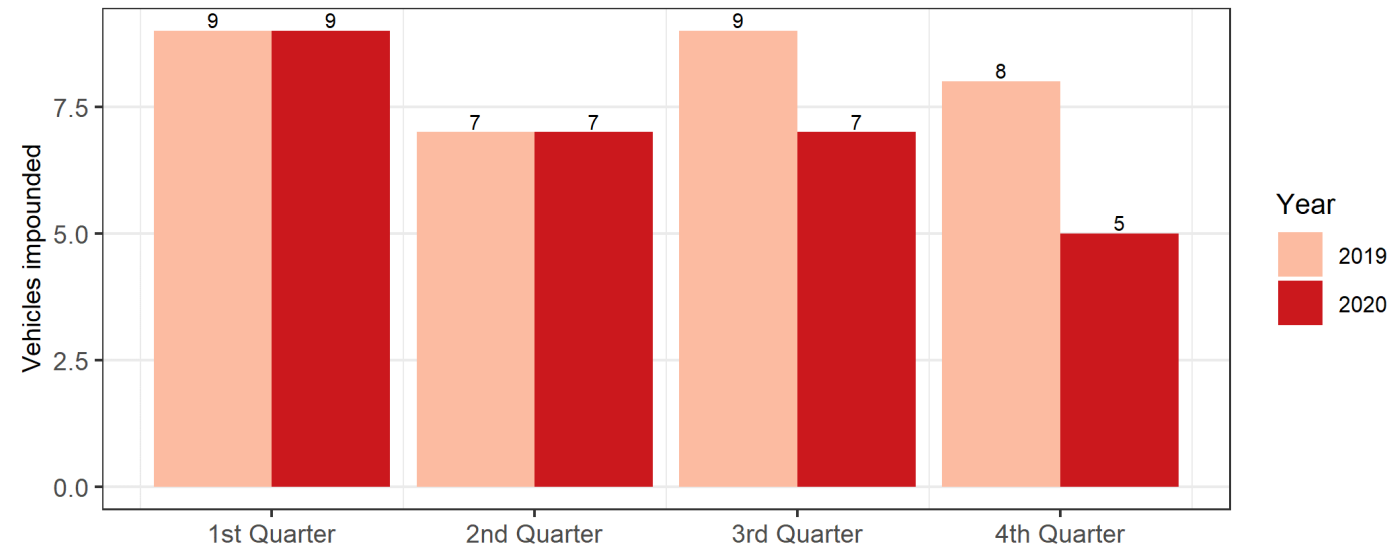
14.12 DEAD PANGOLIN SEIZED – mostly as complete skins (2019-2020)



14.13 VEHICLES IMPOUNDED (2019-2020)

Vehicles impounded (high-value species cases only) per quarter for the past two years

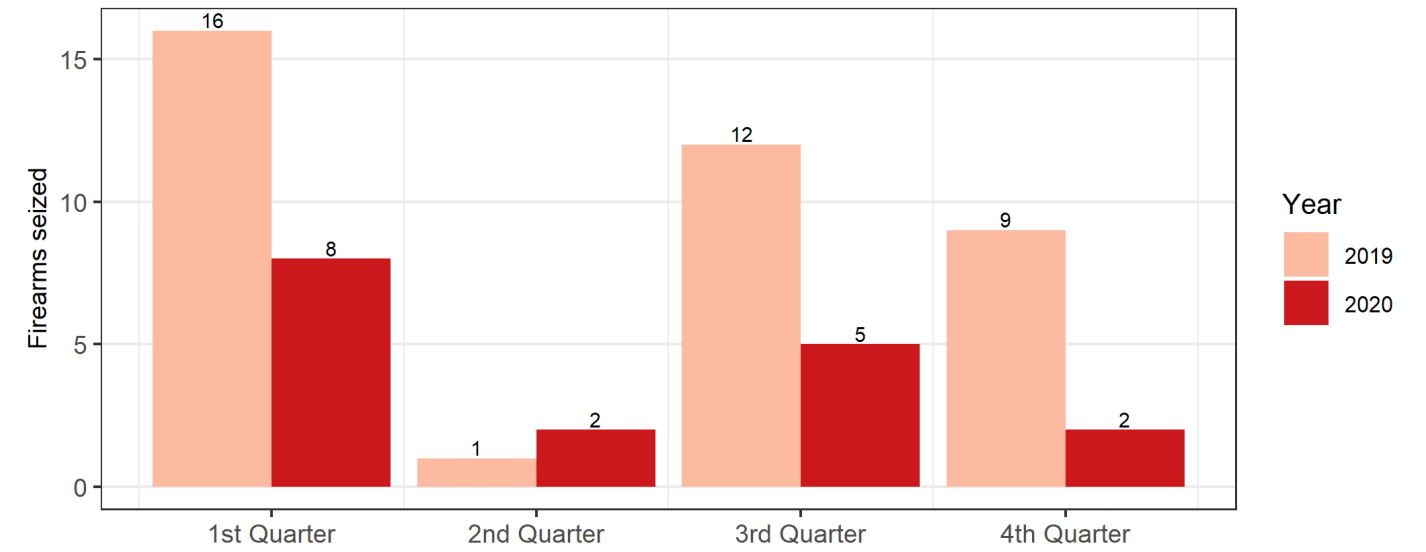
2019 Total (high-value species only): 33
2020 Total (high-value species only): 28



14.14 FIREARMS SEIZED (2019-2020)

Firearms seized (high-value species cases only) per quarter for the past two years

2019 Total (high-value species only): 38
2020 Total (high-value species only): 17



Interpretations and notes

Impounding of vehicles

- When suspects are found in possession of any contraband, such as illegal wildlife products, firearms or ammunition, the vehicles in which they transported those items may be seized as **instrumentality** in the commission of an alleged offence.
- If suspects are convicted as charged, any vehicles or other property that has been impounded in relation to the charges may be forfeited to the state.
- The forfeiture of expensive vehicles represents a significant additional punishment for criminals.

Interpretations and notes

Seizures of firearms and other contraband

- Suspects are regularly arrested in possession of illegal firearms and other contraband; these are often linked to previously reported poaching incidents, or in some cases to incidents that were previously unknown, but are uncovered through the arrest.
- Follow-up investigations may lead to the additional seizure of firearms used in particular poaching cases, or other illegal firearms kept by the suspects.
- The decrease in arrests during 2020 has also led to a decrease in the seizures of firearms.

15. Namibian Partnerships against Environmental Crime

15.1 General

Namibian Partnerships against Environmental Crime (N-PaEC) is a broad coalition between government agencies, NGOs, private sector, local communities, international funding agencies and the general public.

Disregard for all laws gives criminals an edge, as conservation and law enforcement agencies need to adhere to rules and regulations. By working together and creating strong partnerships across a broad range of institutions and individuals, N-PaEC can significantly reduce the criminal edge.

Through N-PaEC, the ministries of Environment, Forestry and Tourism and Home Affairs, Immigration, Safety and Security seek to engage all concerned stakeholders in the fight against wildlife crime. The below list is not exclusive and should be continually expanded to strengthen Namibia's conservation and law enforcement efforts.

The government welcomes all constructive stakeholder engagement.

15.2 List of current partner organisations

GOVERNMENT

Anti-Corruption Commission
Financial Intelligence Centre
Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform
Ministry of Defence
 Namibian Defence Force
Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism
 Directorate of Wildlife and National Parks
 Wildlife Protection Services Division
 Intelligence and Investigation Unit
 Game Products Trust Fund
Ministry of Finance
 Directorate of Customs & Excise
Ministry of Home Affairs, Immigration, Safety and Security
 Namibian Police Force
 Directorate of Criminal Investigations
 Protected Resources Division
 Serious Crime Unit
Ministry of Justice
Office of the Attorney-General
 Office of the Prosecutor-General

NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANISATIONS

Integrated Rural Development and Nature Conservation
Intelligence Support Against Poaching
Legal Assistance Centre
Namibia Animal Rehabilitation, Research and Education Centre
Namibia Nature Foundation
Rooikat Trust
Save the Rhino Trust
WWF In Namibia

NGO UMBRELLA ORGANISATIONS

Namibian Association of CBNRM Support Organisations
Namibian Chamber of Environment

INTERNATIONAL FUNDING AGENCIES

Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, USA
Global Environment Facility
Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau
United States Agency for International Development
Wildcat Foundation
WWF

LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Communal conservancies
 Communal farmers
Freehold conservancies
 Freehold farmers
Black-rhino custodians
White-rhino owners

PRIVATE INDUSTRY

General business community
Mining industry
Tourism and conservation-hunting industries

Support from Namibian companies and individuals is overwhelmingly positive and extremely wide-ranging. While it is impossible to mention all contributions here, each contribution is gratefully acknowledged.

16. Abbreviations and acronyms

16.1 Nationality abbreviations:

Ang	Angola
Bot	Botswana
Chi	China
Nam	Namibia
SA	South Africa
Zam	Zambia
Zim	Zimbabwe

16.2 Acronyms:

ACC	Anti-Corruption Commission
AG	Attorney-General
BRTT	Blue Rhino Task Team
CCPCJ	Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
CR	Crime Register
DC	Deputy Commissioner
FIC	Financial Intelligence Centre
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GPTF	Game Products Trust Fund, MEFT
ICCCWC	International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime
IIU	Intelligence and Investigation Unit, MEFT
INL	Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, USA
INTERPOL	International Criminal Police Organization
IRDNC	Integrated Rural Development and Nature Conservation
ISAP	Intelligence Support Against Poaching
KAZA	Kavango-Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area
KfW	Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau
LAC	Legal Assistance Centre
MAWLR	Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform
MEFT	Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism
MHAISS	Ministry of Home Affairs, Immigration, Safety and Security
MoD	Ministry of Defence
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MoJ	Ministry of Justice
NACSO	Namibian Association of CBNRM Support Organisations
NAMPOL	Namibian Police Force
NAPHA	Namibia Professional Hunting Association
NARREC	Namibia Animal Rehabilitation, Research and Education Centre
NCE	Namibia Chamber of Environment
NDF	Namibian Defence Force
NGO	Non-government organisation
NNF	Namibia Nature Foundation
N-PaEC	Namibian Partnerships against Environmental Crime
PG	Prosecutor-General
PRD	Protected Resources Division, NAMPOL
SRT	Save the Rhino Trust
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WCO	World Customs Organisation
WPSD	Wildlife Protection Services Division, MEFT



Wildlife Protection Services Division
Wildlife and National Parks Directorate
Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism



Protected Resources Division
Criminal Investigations Directorate
Namibian Police Force
Ministry of Home Affairs, Immigration, Safety and Security

Report wildlife crime at this number:
55 555
[all messages and calls are strictly confidential]

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