

Reward for info on Etosha rhino poaching

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A REWARD of N\$30 000 is being offered for information that would lead to the arrest and prosecution of the people responsible for the poaching of a rhinoceros in Namibia's premier wildlife sanctuary, the Etosha National Park, about a week ago.

The reward is being offered by the Namibian Police and the Ministry of Environment and Tourism, a police spokesperson, deputy Commissioner Edwin Kanguatjivi, said yesterday. All information provided to the police would be treated confidentially to ensure that the identity of informers assisting with the investigation of the poaching incident would not be revealed, Kanguatjivi said.

The Ministry of Environment and Tourism announced on Wednesday afternoon that the carcass of a black rhino bull was discovered in the Etosha National Park on Tuesday morning. It is believed that the animal had been killed about two to three days before the discovery was made.

Both horns of the endangered animal, which was found dead in the vicinity of the Galton Gate in the south-western corner of the wildlife reserve, had been removed, Kanguatjivi added yesterday.

The discovery of the poached black rhino brings to 15 the number of rhinos found dead in Namibia so far this year as a result of suspected poaching. More than 40 elephants have also been killed illegally, mostly in the north-eastern part of the country, since the start of this year.

The Ministry of Environment and Tourism on Wednesday called on all citizens of Namibia to be extra vigilant and to report any suspected cases of poaching or related activities to the relevant authorities.

The ministry stated that it “condemns such ill-intentioned activities or illegal plundering of wildlife”. It warned that “the security apparatus of our country is ready to confront whoever will be caught taking part in these barbaric activities”, and that perpetrators would be made to face the full wrath of the law.

The ministry, together with relevant authorities such as the police, customs officials and the Namibian Defence Force, will be intensifying its efforts to firstly prevent such incidents and to identify and bring to task people who threaten the country's conservation efforts, it was also stated.

“Government, particularly the Ministry of Environment and Tourism, recognises that collective responsibility is the best approach to control poaching,” it was stated in the ministry's press release.

Kanguatjivi said information that could assist the police with the investigation of the Etosha poaching can be sent by SMS to the toll-free wildlife crime alert number 55555. Anyone with information can also contact the Protected Resources Unit's detective chief inspector Barry de Klerk at 081 129 0054, or inspector Louretha Tsuses at 081 268 6646.