

Protection needed for rhinos in Kunene - Murorua

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The chairperson of 'Save The Rhino Trust' in Namibia (SRT), Dudu Murorua says the organisation will intensify its operations and shift its future focus from monitoring to adopting a more proactive approach for the extensive protection of rhinos.

According to Murorua, this shift was prompted by the recent sudden increase in rhino poaching in Namibia, and especially in the Kunene Region.

Murorua told Nampa in a telephonic interview on Thursday that rhino poaching has become a great concern not only for Kunene Region, but for the world as rhinos worldwide are very limited in their numbers.

"We have been doing the monitoring and data collection work for the rhinos in Namibia in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment and Tourism (MET) where they've been taking stock and tracking the movements of all the rhinos. But now we have to start deploying personnel in order to protect these rare and highly endangered animals," he said.

Two rhinos and their calves were poached in the Kunene Region during the month of December 2014. No suspects have been arrested yet in either of the two poaching cases, and police investigations continue.

The SRT is committed to protect the desert-adapted black rhinos (*Diceros bicornis bicornis*) found in the Kunene Region, which is a region in the arid north-west of Namibia.

The SRT website states that these protected animals in the Kunene Region are the only rhino population in the world that has survived on communal land with no formal conservation status.

In 2014, at least 16 rhinos were poached in Namibia. Two of these rhino cows and calves were from the Kunene Region.

Murorua also raised some concern about the SRT's limited resources, as it is not being funded by the government and relies heavily on donations.

"We have only one airplane, which is not enough. We are going to work in collaboration with our partners to have more personnel on the ground so that we can protect the rhinos better," he said.

(NAMPA)