

Etosha rhino losses rise to 11

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NAMIBIA continues losing rhinoceroses and elephants to the greed of poachers, with seven carcasses of poached rhinos having been discovered in the Etosha National Park so far this year.

The discovery of the carcasses of seven poached rhinos in the Etosha National Park since the start of this year brings the number of rhinos killed by poachers in Namibia's premier wildlife refuge since October last year up to 11, the permanent secretary in the Ministry of Environment and Tourism, Simeon Negumbo, announced in a media statement on Friday.

Except for the rhino carcasses discovered in Etosha, of which six were bulls, the remains of five rhinos suspected to have been killed by poachers, have also been found in the Kunene region since the start of the year, Negumbo said.

With a significant increase in the illegal killing of endangered wildlife experienced in Namibia last year, the country has lost 24 rhinos and a reported 76 elephants to poaching during 2014.

Since February this year, the carcasses of 11 elephants that had been killed by poachers have also been found in the north-east of the country, Negumbo announced. Nine elephant carcasses were found in the Zambezi region, while two were reported from Kavango East.

Negumbo said the ministry was greatly concerned about recent cases of poaching in Namibia.

The ministry has increased the presence of patrol teams and has intensified ground and aerial patrols in areas experiencing a problem with poaching, he said.

The ministry is continuing to cooperate with the Namibian Police and the Namibian Defence Force in that regard. Negumbo also repeated an appeal to anyone with information about poaching to assist the ministry or the police in their efforts to track down poachers and protect the country's wildlife.

Anyone providing the ministry or the police with information leading to the arrest and successful prosecution of people involved in poaching would receive a reward of N\$30 000, Negumbo said.