

103 rhinos poached in the last 10 years

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NINETY-FIVE black rhinos and eight white rhinos have been poached in Namibia since 2005, the ministry of environment and tourism revealed yesterday.

Minister of environment Pohamba Shifeta said this, when he revealed the outcome of tests conducted on the latest rhino and elephant carcasses discovered since 2014.

Shifeta said over the last 10 years, 294 black rhinos died of natural causes, while 95 others were poached and seven others were killed for trophy hunting.

The minister further announced that 16 white rhinos died of natural causes, eight were poached and three were trophy hunted in the past 10 years.

Shifeta said Namibia is home to the largest black rhino population in the world and that the country should maintain this record by protecting its natural heritage.

He further said world records show that there are only 5 000 black rhinos left in the world. The minister said the country lost 78 elephants and 24 rhinos to poaching last year alone. "This year, 68 rhino carcasses were discovered in the country. Out of 68, 62 were discovered in Etosha and four in the Kunene region," he said.

The ministry said 21 more carcasses have been found in Etosha but they died of natural causes. Shifeta said this year, 68 rhinos were poached and 29 died of natural causes.

"As for the elephants, 23 have been poached this year. Out of 23, 21 were poached in the Bwabwata National Park and two in Mashi conservancy in the Zambezi region," he said. Shifeta said the ministry has decided to reshuffle many of its staff members in the national parks as away to combat poaching.

He said the ministry will continue to put long-term and short-term strategies in place to curb poaching in the country and enhancing and maintaining discipline within the ministry's structures and collaborating with other law enforcement agencies in Namibia and abroad.

The minister also said the ministry will continue to enforce the 'no private guns in national parks' rule as well as monitor the firearms of rangers inside the parks and surrounding areas.

Shifeta said that several suspects have been arrested in connection with poaching but said the nature surrounding their arrests remains classified information until investigations are complete.

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- This is not a good revelation honourable minister, I do agree with you that Namibia is the only country on the globe to have big number of rhinos population. That will soon change if strong measures are not put in place to control poaching. A peace of info is that, as you are the line minister, you will be held accountable if the situation don't improve. If we don't have enough man power please recruit more people to work as game rangers. As people who work at entrances to parks not exclude VIP cars. Most culprits are linked to big people in the society including even ministers. Fire all line directors since they are doing nothing rather just reading news papers in offices while poaching is on the increase. - Roberts Ntesa Ntesa | 2015-06-03 [15228]