

Rhino slaughter continues

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THE killing of rhinoceroses in the supposed safety of Etosha National Park is continuing, despite intensified efforts to clamp down on poaching in Namibia.

The carcasses of another two black rhinos that had been killed for their horns were found in the south-western part of Etosha National Park early last week, a police spokesperson, chief inspector Kauna Shikwambi, confirmed on Friday.

Shikwambi said both carcasses were found in the area between the Otjovasando air strip and Renostervlei in the far western part of Etosha. The horns of both animals had been removed.

One of the animals was a cow that had been dehorned by the Ministry of Environment and Tourism in May. It was nevertheless killed by poachers who then removed the remaining stumps of the animal's horns, Shikwambi said. The rhino, whose carcass was found on Monday last week, had a calf which was missing when the carcass was found, she said.

The second carcass, of an animal that had not previously been dehorned, was found on Tuesday. Its horns had also been removed, Shikwambi said.

Nobody had been arrested in connection with the killing of the two protected animals, but the police were continuing to investigate the incidents, Shikwambi said.

According to figures released by the Ministry of Environment and Tourism, Namibia has so far this year lost at least 79 rhinos to poaching. That figure includes the two animals found killed last week. Most of the poached animals were black rhinos which were killed in Etosha.

Twenty-five rhinos were poached in Namibia last year – a sharp increase from the total of four rhinos poached in 2013, two illegally killed in 2012, and only one poached in 2011.

The Ministry of Environment and Tourism is still offering a reward of N\$60 000 for information that would lead to the arrest and prosecution of rhino poachers in Namibia.