



Elephant poacher shot dead

22 December 2016 | Crime

A shootout in Bwabwata National Park has left one poacher dead with three that got away and the public is warned they are armed and dangerous.

A poacher was on Monday fatally shot during crossfire between an anti-poaching unit and a group of poachers in the Bwabwata National Park.

Deputy Commissioner Peter Williams of the Kavango East Region said that the anti-poaching unit consisting of ministry of environment officials and police members on Monday afternoon heard shots fired in the park and upon inspection came across an elephant that was gunned down.

The tusks were however still intact, confirmed Williams.

The anti-poaching team then followed the footprints of the suspects and according to Williams the poachers started to fire. He said that the team in self-defence fired back and in the crossfire one poacher was shot.

According to him three other suspects managed to escape.

"One was lying dead with his hunting rifle," he said.

Williams further stressed that it has not yet been determined whether members of the anti-poaching unit or the other suspects had shot the poacher during the exchange of fire.

He also said that no documentation was found on the deceased and therefore he has not yet been identified.

Furthermore, he said that the team tracked the footprints of the suspects but that the other three poachers have not been arrested yet.

Although he urged community members to assist with tracing these suspects, he warned that they should not approach them as they are armed and dangerous.

Williams said that if members of the public should come across the suspects, they should call the police immediately.

According to Williams, about a week ago two elephant cows were also found gunned down in the same vicinity and it is suspected that this was done by the same group of poachers. In these incidents the tusks were removed.

"Are these people killing our animals to deliberately drive them to extinction?" he wanted to know. "We are not only protecting rhino and elephants, but all animals that are protected under law. We are here to protect all wildlife to save them from perishing, for future generations."



(<https://d3rp5jatom3eyn.cloudfront.net/assets/poacher-shot-dead2016-12-220.jpg>)

POACHED: Elephants that have recently been killed in the Bwabwata national park. PHOTOS: CONTRIBUTED

ELLANIE SMIT