



Rhino death toll rises

16 rhinos poached this year

29 June 2017 | Crime

Seven rhino carcasses discovered during aerial patrols in the Etosha National Park at the weekend have been confirmed to have been poached.

This brings the total of poached rhinos to 16 this year, while there have also been 16 elephants poached this year.

Altogether 59 rhinos were poached in the country last year and 95 rhinos in 2015, 56 in 2014 and 9 in 2013.

The Ministry of Environment and Tourism yesterday confirmed in a press release that eight rhino carcasses had been discovered over the weekend, and not seven as it had told Namibian Sun on Tuesday.

According to the ministry only one of these rhinos died of natural causes.

The ministry said poaching remained a major problem and tackling it remained a priority of the ministry.

"In this regard we will do anything possible within the framework of our laws and policies to bring poaching under control as it robs the nation of valuable resources."

The ministry said investigations into these cases and other wildlife crimes were continuing and urged the public to report any suspected cases of poaching to the ministry or the police. No arrests have been made yet.

Etosha is Namibia's flagship wildlife conservation area and has experienced a shocking wave of rhino poaching over the years.

"This situation can be detrimental to the tourism sector and the economy of our country and threaten to reverse our conservation gains made since independence," the ministry said.

The ministry has intensified patrols in protected areas in conjunction with the police, the Namibian Defence Force and other relevant authorities.

"The ministry will continue with its efforts to strengthen effective crime prevention and law enforcement through coordinated and integrated clusters of activities such as security planning, monitoring and adaptive management," it said.

Any person who provides the ministry or other relevant authorities with information leading to the arrest and successful prosecution of a rhino poacher will receive a N\$60 000 reward.



(<https://d3rp5jatom3eyn.cloudfront.net/asse-death-toll-rises2017-06-290.jpg>)

PROTECT: Seven poached rhino carcasses were discovered in Etosha National Park at the weekend. Photo: NWR

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