



## Poaching stats confusion

### Fewer than 80 arrests last year

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Huge inconsistencies have been uncovered in the environment ministry's statistics on wildlife crimes, with conflicting statistics on the number of poaching suspects arrested.

Last week, the ministry released figures on the nationalities of people arrested in wildlife crimes in Namibia between 2014 and 2017.

These figures did not correspond with the figures issued to Namibian Sun in February during an exclusive interview with the environment minister.

Upon enquiry, the ministry issued new figures yesterday, saying there had been some confusion in the delivery of the data.

The conflicting data, for instance, indicated that hundreds of people were arrested last year for poaching, but a few months later the ministry's July data showed that fewer than 80 suspects were arrested in 2016.

According to figures released in February, the total number of suspects arrested in 2016 was almost as high as the number arrested from 2014 to 2017 (data released last week).

Figures released by the ministry at the beginning of February indicated that 231 suspects had been arrested during 2016 and January this year.

Apparently, the majority of these suspects were arrested in 2016 when 222 people were arrested for poaching.

However, the new statistics released by the ministry last week indicated that between 2014 and June this year 246 suspects had been arrested.

According to yesterday's figures released by the ministry, only 78 people were arrested in 2016 for wildlife crimes.

In 2015 a total of 96 arrests were made, in 2014 there were 29 people arrested, and this year 43 suspects have been arrested.

However, the February figures indicated that during last year 83 Namibians were arrested for poaching, along with eight Chinese, 17 Zambians and 14 Angolans.

Furthermore, there were 100 people whose nationalities were not specified.

According to these statistics, the arrests for 2017 indicated that 28 suspects were Namibians, two were Zambians, seven were Angolans, two suspects were from Botswana, two were Chinese and two Congolese.

For 2016 there were 53 Namibians, 11 Zambians, eight Angolans and six Chinese.

Namibian Sun sent the two sets of contrasting figures to the ministry, which responded that the February statistics were



(<https://d3rp5jatom3eyn.cloudfront.net/assets/stats-confusion2017-07-260.jpg>)

INTOLERABLE: A poaching scene discovered last year. Photo: FILE

inflated and in some instances the cases and arrests were counted together.

The ministry yesterday confirmed the discrepancies in their data for rhino and elephant poaching arrests.

According to the ministry it has been using data from various sources.

"After careful scrutiny it was realised that some cases which have been opened were reported as arrested suspects."

The ministry informed Namibian Sun that it had verified and released new figures.

It said someone had been employed to coordinate with stakeholders to ensure such discrepancies did not occur again.

According to the new data 252 people have been arrested since 2014. This year 49 people were arrested and 78 were arrested last year. A total 96 suspects were arrested in 2015 and 29 in 2014.

Breaking down the nationalities, the ministry said 14 Chinese had been arrested since 2014 - three of them this year.

The number of Namibians arrested totalled 185, including 33 arrested last year.

Twenty-three Angolans were arrested - seven last year - and six people from Botswana, including two last year. One Tanzanian and three Congolese were arrested.

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