

Poaching cases down this year

News - National | 2017-10-24

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by Tataleni Pinehas



FEWER cases of poaching have been recorded across the country so far this year, announced environment minister Pohamba Shifeta in Windhoek yesterday.

Shifeta said this at a media conference at which he announced that 27 rhinos have been poached so far this year, compared to 60 in all of 2016 and 95 in 2015. Shifeta also said 20 elephants have been poached this year, compared to 101 in 2016 and 49 in 2015.

He said the Namibian Police and the environment ministry have been involved in a significant number of arrests, with 75 people arrested so far this year, compared to 82 in 2016 and 96 in 2015, for wildlife related crimes, including illegal hunting and possession of either rhino horns or elephant tusks.

"The latest arrest incident is that of two suspects last week in the Etosha Natinal Park. The two suspects went [sic] for illegal hunting of rhinos in the Etosha park, but through the ministry's intelligence their activities were known by the authorities," he said.

The Namibian last week reported that the two suspects were attacked and injured by a rhino during their illegal hunting activities. While the two suspects were tracking a rhino, it appeared from nowhere and charged at them. It appears that one of the men fell and the rhino severely injured his leg.

The suspects were arrested with serious injuries, and moments after their arrest, one of them died from suspected dehydration and injuries sustained during the rhino attack. Shifeta said that so far this year the ministry has recovered and confiscated 30 rhino horns, 103 elephant tusks and 69 pieces of elephant tusks.

He called on Namibians to value and protect Namibia's wildlife.