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Environment minister Pohamba Shifeta says poaching instances of high valued and iconic species such as rhino and elephant were reduced significantly. More than 1 790 suspects were arrested at the end of 2018 up to May this year. He said the arrested suspects doubled than ever before since the launch of the Anti-Poaching Unit in 2016.

“At this juncture, our appreciation goes to the joint operation between our security forces (NDF, Namibian Police Protection Resources Unit, the Namibia Central Intelligence Service) and anti-poaching unit of the ministry,” he said last week.

The Blue Rhino Task Team is after all wildlife criminal syndicates in Namibia.

“Most of these syndicates if not all are known and members of those syndicates that are not yet arrested is just a matter of appropriate time and appropriate place, they will be arrested soon or later. Bravo to all our dedicated men and women in these units,” Shifeta applauded.

According to Shifeta, wildlife and national parks are the key engines for socio-economic development in Namibia’s rural areas.

He commended considerable efforts that were made in the 2019/2020 financial year to maintain

and upgrade the standards of infrastructure in the national parks - particularly roads network, fencing, water infrastructure as well as staff housing and park information stations. Shifeta cited progress achieved such as the electrification of a 20km stretch of Waterberg Plateau Park, which is significant for preventing the escape of buffaloes into the surrounding farmlands.

The other is a three-year action plan to construct and upgrade 712km of the 824km fence of the Etosha National Park boundary by the ministry's staff members which was launched and commenced in February. However, he stated due to Covid-19 interruption, only less than 10km has been completed so far but they expect the full work to commence again as soon as the situation normalise.

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