



Poachers kill rhino calf

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WINDHOEK

A one-year-old white rhino calf has been killed by poachers on a farm in the Gobabis district.

Farm owner Walter Kinnear says the calf's tiny horn was removed by the poachers.

"The calf wasn't even weaned yet," he said.

The farm manager, Ernie Erasmus, discovered the calf's carcass on Sunday after spotting vultures circling the area.

"I first thought the calf had died of natural causes but then we found a rifle cartridge at the scene and realised she had been poached," Kinnear told Namibian Sun's sister paper Republikein yesterday.

According to the police, the calf was poached sometime between 17 and 24 October.

Kinnear confirmed that the police had visited the farm to look for clues.

The head of the Blue Rhino task force, Commissioner Barry de Klerk, said his team and Nampol's Protected Resources Unit were jointly investigating the case with the assistance of local police. De Klerk said no arrest had been made yet.

Labour of love

Kinnear, who co-owns the farm with his father, says they dehorn all their rhinos every year to protect them from poachers. The operation costs about N\$18 000 per rhino.

They also pay game guards who patrol the farm on foot every night.

"Despite all these precautions, the poachers are cruel enough to kill a baby rhino for her horn bud," he said.

It is not the Kinnears' first loss at the hand of poachers. Just before Christmas in 2016, a rhino bull and a pregnant cow were killed on the farm. In the same attack, two young rhinos were wounded and one of them died of her wounds a month later.

Five suspects were arrested. They are: former Brave Warriors team medic Gerson Kandjii, Domingo Justice Moma, Erwin Tjiteere, David Stephanus and a farmworker, Zee Shekumba.

Kandjii, who remains in custody, is charged with several counts of rhino poaching, as well as robbery and the murder of Kalkrand farmer Reinhard Schmidt in February 2015.

He and his co-accused will appear in the Gobabis magistrate's court again on 20 November.

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