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2021-02-05 [Maihapa Ndjavera](#)



Namibia has registered a drop in rhino poaching from 52 cases in 2019 to 31 since the beginning of last year.

In 2018, the country lost 81 rhinos due to poaching, 66 in 2016 and 97 in 2015. The 2020 figure is the lowest in the last five years.

Addressing a media conference yesterday, environment minister Pohamba Shifeta said more resources have been allocated to fight poaching, and more stakeholders have come on board to support efforts to stop the gruesome practice.

Since the start of the current elephant and rhino poaching problem, government, through the ministry, has supported law enforcement and security agencies by implementing measures to curb poaching in the country.

Shifeta added that 11 elephants were poached in 2020, 13 in 2019, 27 in 2018, 50 in 2017, 101 in 2016, and 49 in 2015.

As for pangolins, eight live animals were seized in 2020 as well as five full carcasses, 59 skins, five skin pieces, and 924 scales.

Also, the minister said that wildlife crime cases registered in 2020 totalled 308 and of those cases some 111 are related to high-value species. He said 654 suspects were arrested in line with the cases registered in 2020.

“Of these cases, 100 are related to pangolin poaching and trafficking, 64 are related to elephant poaching and trafficking while 113 are related to rhino poaching and trafficking,” quantified Shifeta.

Many high-level perpetrators of wildlife crimes were arrested in Namibia during 2020, particularly related to rhino poaching and trafficking. Arrests included kingpins, middlemen, and various aiders and abettors, rather than only poachers.

For the government to do more and improve on programmes and projects for wildlife protection and law enforcement, the ministry has come up with a revised strategy, launched yesterday, that will serve as a policy document with the primary objective of establishing common approaches to the protection and conservation of wildlife.

Shifeta further noted that the revised strategy would ensure the effective enforcement of laws governing wildlife resources. The new revised strategy will be effective for the next five years.

“The strategy has programme areas and activities on how we will generally operate in terms of wildlife crime prevention and law enforcement, investigations and intelligence, legal framework and prosecutions, transboundary illicit trade, protection of rhinos within protected areas, protection of rhinos outside protected areas, protection of elephants, protection of pangolins, community safety and security, partner and stakeholder coordination, as well as awareness and communication,” said Shifeta.

As for human-wildlife conflict incidents recorded in 2020, 813 livestock were killed by wild animals and 3 450 hectares of crops were damaged.

Unfortunately in 2020, Shifeta said, the country lost two human lives, both caused by crocodiles. One person was injured by a baboon, six by buffaloes, one by an elephant, one by a hippo, three by leopards, and two by lions.

The ministry through the Game Product Trust Fund spent over N\$5 million on individuals, farmers and conservancies for livestock losses, crop damages, injuries to people, and loss of life under the human-wildlife conflict self-reliance schemes

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