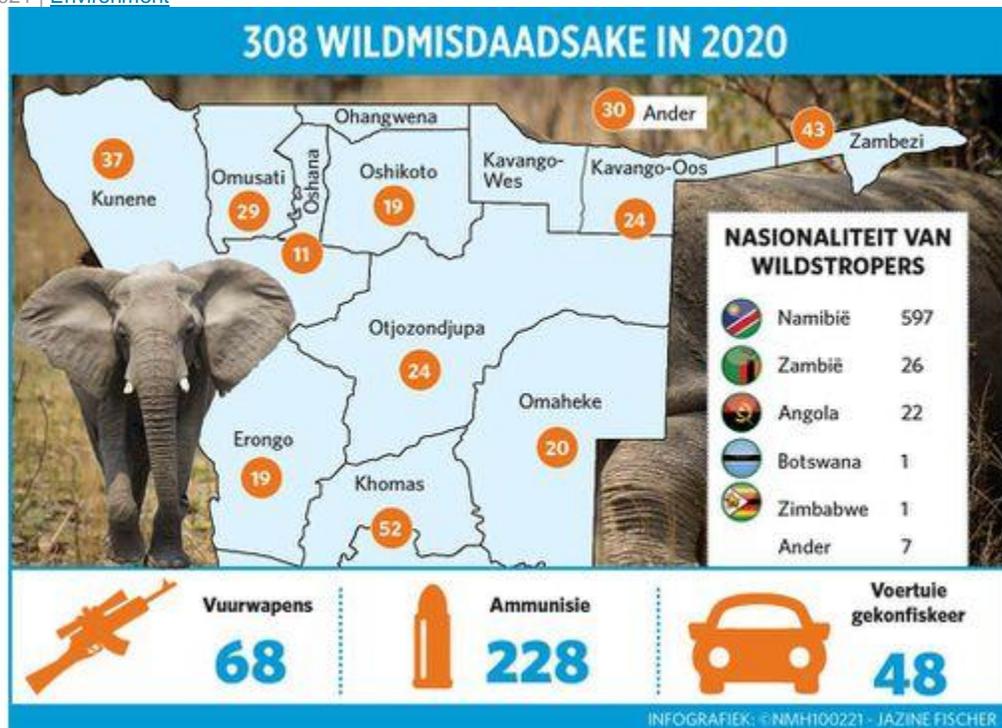


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Wildlife poaching largely captured in 2020 Two lives lost in conflict with animals

11 February 2021 | [Environment](#)



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Francoise Steynberg

Poaching showed a decline in 2020, with a total of 31 rhinos and eleven elephants poached and 654 suspected poachers caught.

The 654 suspects consist of 597 Namibians, 26 Zambians, 22 Angolans, one each from Botswana and Zimbabwe as well as seven other citizens involved in 308 wildlife crime cases filed in 2020.

The Minister of the Environment, Forestry and Tourism, Mr. Pohamba Shifeta, last week launched the revised national game protection and law enforcement strategy for the next five years.

According to wildlife crime statistics he released, 31 rhinos were poached in 2020, compared to 52 in 2019, 81 in 2018, 55 in 2017, 66 in 2016 and 97 in 2015 when poaching flared up.

Last year, eleven elephants were poached at 2019's 13, 27 in 2018, 50 in 2017, 101 in 2016 and 49 in 2015.

In terms of food, eight live animals were confiscated in 2020, as well as five carcasses, 59 skins, five pieces of skin and 924 scales.

Of the 308 game crime cases registered in 2020, 111 are related to high-value species: "Out of the 654 suspects, 113 suspects are linked to rhino poaching or horn smuggling, 100 to food magister poaching and smuggling and 64 to elephant poaching and smuggling.

"Most wildlife crime cases were lodged in the Khomas region (52), followed by Zambezi (43) and Kunene (37)," Shifeta said.

He says 36 suspects were also arrested in old cases in 2020 and 104 wildlife crime cases were finalized in courts.

"A total of 162 game criminals were convicted and 16 were acquitted. "A total of 1 595 game crime trials took place," Shifeta said.

"It is clear from the statistics that we are working hard with various role players to eradicate wildlife crime in the country and that significant success has been achieved."

The minister says that with regard to rhino poaching and horn smuggling, not only poachers have been arrested, but also various masterminds, middlemen, helpers and accomplices.

He thanked all the staff of the Namibian Army (NDF) and police (Nampol), the National Central Intelligence Service (NCIS), prosecutors and the combined team of intelligence services of the Blue Rhino task force and anti-poaching unit, as well as the dog unit, who cooperated has to catch poaching.

HUMAN-ANIMAL CONFLICT

As for human-animal conflict, Shifeta says two people were killed by crocodiles and claimed a total of 813 livestock lives by wild animals in 2020. These include 413 cattle, 12 donkeys, 234 goats and 154 sheep.

"A total of 3 450 hectares of crops were damaged, of which 3 346 hectares by elephants, 55 hectares by buffalo and 49 hectares by hippos," he said.

"Six people were injured by buffalo, three by leopards, two by lions and one each was injured by an elephant, hippo and baboon."

He says more than N \$ 5 million has been paid out from the Game Products Trust Fund to individuals, farmers and conservation areas for livestock losses, crop damage, injuries to people and loss of life.

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