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Rhino and elephant poaching declines in Namibia

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By Nyasha Nyaungwa

WINDHOEK (Reuters) – Rhino and elephant poaching has declined significantly this year in Namibia, home to the only free-roaming black rhinos left in the world, government data showed on Monday.

Nine rhinos have been illegally killed by hunters so far in 2021, the lowest number in eight years for the period, according to the figures from the ministry of environment and tourism. Four elephants have been killed this way, a five-year low.

The southern African nation is home to the second-largest white rhino population in the world after South Africa and also accounts for a third of the world's remaining black rhinos.

It is also home to the only free-roaming black rhinos left in the world, growing in number after nearly becoming extinct some years ago from poaching and drought. The Save the Rhino Trust estimates there are over 200 free-roaming black rhinos in Namibia, mainly in the northeast.

Ministry statistics dating back to 2013 show rhino poaching peaked at 97 in 2015 as a whole before dropping to 66 in 2016 and 55 a year later. Poaching picked up again in 2018 when 81 rhinos were killed, before a drop to 54 in 2019 and 32 last year.

Elephant poaching peaked at 101 in 2016 and has since been on a downward trend.

A ministry spokesperson attributed the drop in poaching to collaboration between law enforcement agencies and engagement with members of the public.

(Reporting by Nyasha Nyaungwa; Editing by Promit Mukherjee and Pravin Char)

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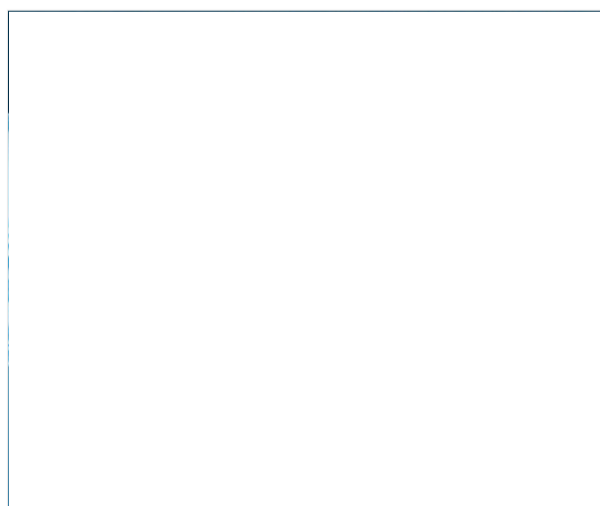
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