

[Write a letter to the editor](#)

08 July 2021 | [Nature & Environment](#)

Slight decrease

Wildlife crime is a threat nonetheless

In Namibia, the number of wildlife crimes fell slightly last year, according to the Ministry of the Environment. Yet this remains a problem with serious financial consequences worldwide, according to the annual report of the International Consortium to Combat Wildlife Crime (ICCWC).



The number of rhinos poached in Namibia fell from 52 in 2019 to 31 in 2020. Photo: Claudia Reiter



A mother pangolin with her offspring. The animals are the most traded species in the world. Photo: Kelsey Preacher

- 1.
- 2.

E. Smith and C. Reiter

Windhoek

According to the 2020 annual report of the Namibian Ministry of the Environment and the police, the number of rhinos poached in Namibia decreased from 52 in 2019 to 31 in 2020. However, the number of nasal horns confiscated increased in comparison significantly compared to previous years . In 2018 and 2019, 13 and eight horns were seized, respectively, compared to 21 last year.

It was also announced that “only” eleven elephants were poached in 2020, compared to 13 in the previous year. In the past year, 62 ivory seizures were carried out, in 2019 there were 115. The pangolin was again the most traded species in Namibia in 2020 with 74 confiscated animals. However, this means a decrease in seizures compared to previous years (129 animals in 2019 and 88 in 2018). In addition, 91 percent of the 304 suspects arrested last year for poaching valuable species were Namibians.

Despite some successes, the threat to numerous species from wildlife crime persisted in 2020, according to the annual report of the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (ICWC) entitled “Together Against Wildlife Crime”. The report says that despite significant efforts by the global community, poaching remains a threat.

According to this, 22 percent of the species are threatened with extinction, while the pangolin is the most traded animal in the world. "Wildlife crime affects not only iconic animal species, but also over 7,000 species of wild animals and plants that are on the list of the CITES International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, and it is driving many towards extinction." an average of 150 rangers killed each year who are on duty to protect animals.

The report also notes that in 67 African and

Asian countries spend \$ 260 million annually on wildlife crime, with the United States alone spending \$ 30 billion annually on drug-related crime. It goes on to say that between 2016 and 2018, the gross annual illegal income generated from ivory sales alone was estimated at \$ 400 million and nasal horn was estimated at \$ 230 million. Governments also lose \$ 7 to 12 billion annually in potential tax revenues from illegal logging, fishing and wildlife crime.