



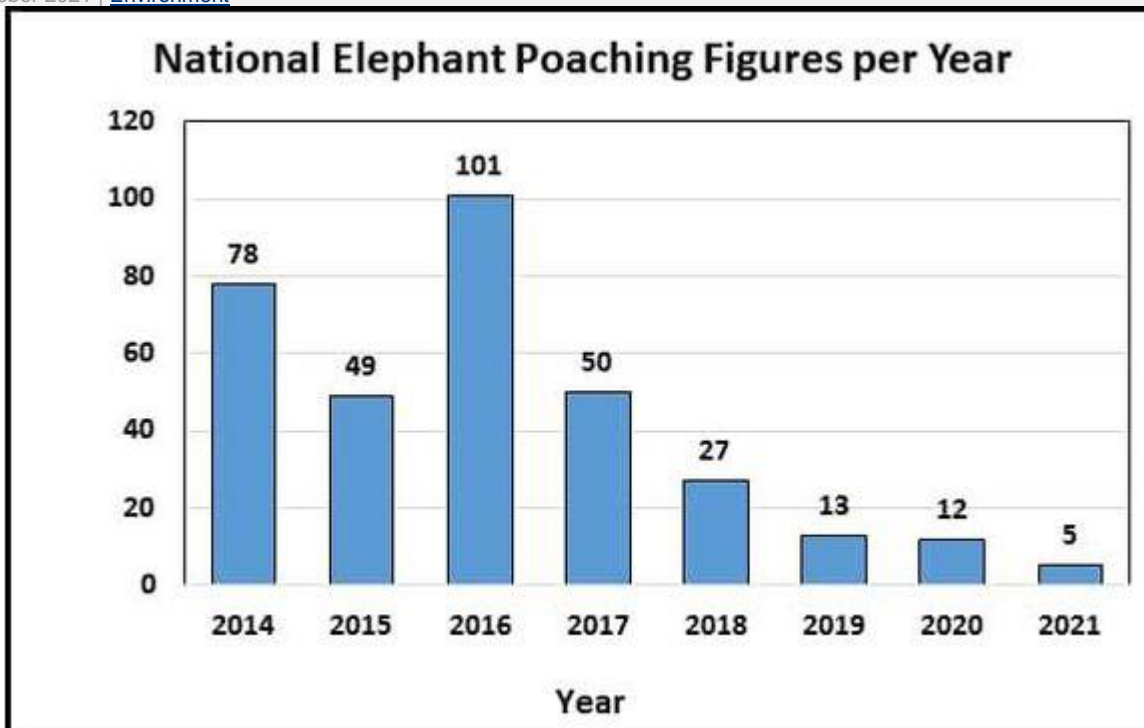
### N\$92m injection against wildlife crime

Nghitila said the figures are “encouraging and undoubtedly the result of improved coordination between different stakeholders involved, but also because of concerted and targeted interventions being undertaken”.

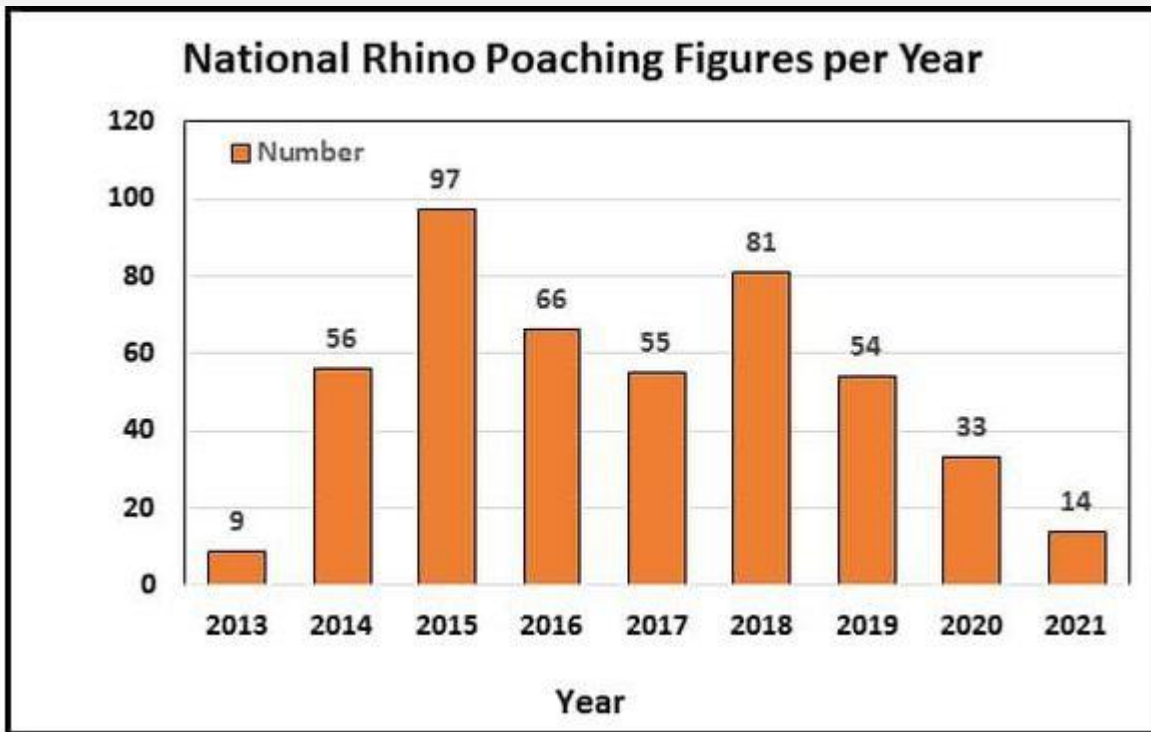
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PROGRESS: Yearly statistics on elephant poaching.



PAYING OFF: Yearly statistics on rhino poaching. Photos: Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism

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While recent statistics indicate that Namibia is winning the battle against both wildlife crime and human-wildlife conflict, an almost N\$100 million project will intensify these efforts.

This is according to the environment ministry executive director, Teofilus Nghitila. He was speaking at the signing of the project document.

The total budget of the project is approximately N\$92 million at current exchange rates and will ramp up Namibia's efforts to prevent and mitigate both human-wildlife conflict and wildlife crime in the period up to 2026.

He said the initial idea came up in 2018, shortly after the sixth assembly of the Global Environment Facility.

Nghitila said Namibia's Fifth National Development Plan identified human-wildlife conflict and wildlife crime as twin challenges to the conservation of wildlife.

Cases dropping

He added that cases of wildlife crime, particularly with regard to elephants and rhinos, have shown a significant decline in recent years.

According to the ministry, 14 rhinos have been poached this year to date. These included six black rhinos from Etosha and one that was under the custodian programme.

In 2014, rhino poaching numbers stood at 56, increasing to 97 in 2015 and then dropping slightly to 66 in 2016 and 55 in 2017. The figure then sharply increased again to 81 in 2018, dropping to 54 in 2019, and 33 last year.

This year to date, only five elephants have been poached, in comparison to the 12 elephants poached last year.

In 2014, when poaching started to increase in Namibia, 78 elephants were killed, peaking at 101 in 2016.

Since then, there has been a decline in the number of poached elephants with 50 poaching cases reported in 2017, 27 in 2018 and 13 in 2019.

Nghitila said figures from 2020/2021 also show an overall decline in damage caused by human-wildlife conflict, particularly livestock losses and damage to crops.

“This is encouraging and undoubtedly the result of improved coordination between the different stakeholders involved but also because of concerted and targeted interventions that are being undertaken,” Nghitila said.

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