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The Ministry of the Environment not only wants to preserve parks and conservancies, but also set up wildlife corridors to reduce human-animal conflict. This young elephant was practicing mock attacks in Khaudum National Park. Photo: Frank Steffen

- **ENVIRONMENT**

MORE CONSERVATION EFFORTS

The MEFT draws up protection plans for endangered animal species. **Protected areas are also Namibia's top tourist attractions and are considered key to the recovery of the tourism sector. Namibia has 86 registered communal conservancies and 43 community forests, which together cover nearly 22% of the country's landmass.**

Brigitte Weidlich

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Brigitte Weidlich, Windhoek

If you add the 20 state nature conservation parks and other nature conservation areas, over 43 percent of Namibia's total area is under some form of nature conservation administration. The Minister for the Environment, Tourism and Forestry (MEFT) announced this to Parliament.

Minister Pohamba Shifeta stated in his budget speech that as part of the implementation of the decisions of the second national land conference in 2018, his ministry is preparing a strategy for wildlife corridors for the Zambezi region. This strategy includes key wildlife corridors, strategic interventions and an action plan to identify ways in which corridors can be established and maintained to manage human-wildlife conflicts.

Hotspots identified

In addition, a nationwide mapping of hotspot areas for human-wildlife conflict was undertaken, and the ministry supported communities and farmers with practical measures in these areas. This included the construction of 60 predator-proof kraals in the Kunene region, the rehabilitation of six wells in the north of the Kunene region and the construction of three crocodile cages each in the Kunene, Kavango and Zambezi regions.

At the same time, science-based approaches and technologies are to be used to help reduce and manage human-wildlife conflicts.

In the past 12 months, the Ministry of Environment has been preparing conservation and management plans for elephants and lions. Conservation strategies for black rhino and white rhino are also being finalized.

The ministry is also planning conservation strategies for pangolins, the most trafficked species in Namibia, and the African wild dog, the most threatened large carnivore species in Namibia. Another priority is the observation of the lion, elephant and rhino populations.

Aerial photography to monitor wildlife has been successful in Hardap, Mangetti and Waterberg National Parks, as well as in smaller game reserves such as Daan Viljoen and Von Bach. Biodiversity monitoring frameworks have been developed for Mudumu and Tsau //Khaeb

National Parks to guide activities within and adjacent to these protected areas.

Poaching remains a challenge

“Unfortunately, Namibia is still losing significant amounts of wildlife to poaching, which particularly targets our prized species such as rhino, elephant and pangolins. A total of 43 rhinos were poached in 2021, compared to 40 in 2020 and 56 in 2019. Currently, two rhinos were poached in 2022, Shifeta said. Eight elephants were poached in 2021, compared to 12 in 2020 and 13 in 2019. Namibia has recorded a total of 320 cases of pangolin crime since 2017, Shifeta said.