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- RHINO POACHING IN AFRICA DROPS DURING COVID-19



DROP: Rhino poaching in Africa decreased during the Covid-19 pandemic. Photo: FILE

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# RHINO POACHING IN AFRICA DROPS DURING COVID-19

39 rhinos killed by poachers so far this year

**Overall, Africa's rhino population has declined by around 1.6% per year, from an estimated 23 562 individuals in 2018 to 22 137 at the end of 2021.**

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Rhino poaching rates in Africa declined to 2.3% in 2021 from 3.9% of the population in 2018.

This is according to a new report by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the global non-governmental organisation Traffic.

The report was compiled for the 19th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), which will be held in Panama in November.

According to the report, at least 2 707 rhinos were poached in Africa between 2018 and 2021.

Numbers down

Information was gathered from 13 rhino range countries, namely Namibia, Botswana, Chad, Eswatini, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Overall, Africa's rhino population has declined by around 1.6% per year, from an estimated 23 562 individuals in 2018 to 22 137 at the end of 2021.

According to the report, global lockdowns and restrictions due to the Covid-19 pandemic saw several African countries experience dramatically reduced poaching rates in 2020 compared to previous years.

South Africa lost 394 rhinos to poaching in 2020, while Kenya recorded no rhino poaching that year.

However, as Covid-19 travel restrictions were lifted, some range states reported new increases in poaching activities.

Data problems

The total number of rhinos poached in Namibia for the year to date is 39.

Last year, 44 rhinos were poached in Namibia, while 2020 saw 42 rhinos poached.

In 2019, 57 were poached, 83 in 2018 and 55 in 2017.

The report also noted that not all parties making seizures regularly report stockpile information to the CITES Secretariat.

"Additionally, Namibia submitted data to the Secretariat but indicated to the Secretariat that the data is confidential and could not be shared. Therefore, data from Namibia was not provided as anticipated."