

48 rhinos fall prey to poachers

News - National | 2022-09-01

by Donald Matthys



POACHED ... Thirty-two black and 16 white rhinos have been poached in the first eight months of 2022. File photo

NAMIBIA saw 48 rhinos killed for their horns in the first eight months of 2022, four more than the 44 cases reported in 2021.

The country recorded 44 rhinos poached in 2021, 42 in 2020, 57 in 2019, 83 in 2018, and 55 in 2017.

Etosha National Park alone saw 20 cases this year, with two carcasses discovered in the area just last week.

The Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism said of the poached rhinos, 32 are black and 16 are white.

Twelve of the black rhinos were poached on custodianship farms and 16 white rhinos on private farms.

Ministry spokesperson Romeo Muyunda said poaching has become more prevalent on private farms as well as black rhino custodianship farms.

"We are busy implementing new measures across the board to counter this surge," he said.

Muyunda said the ministry is strengthening anti-poaching units on private farms and law enforcement officials are being deployed to assist private farmers with intelligence, law enforcement and patrols.

"We will also be making the services of our helicopter for aerial patrols available in hot spots," Muyunda said.

He said while the ministry, along with its stakeholders, will pull resources together to stop the new surge in poaching, members of the public must remain vigilant and report any suspected cases of poaching and other wildlife crimes.

In June this year, the ministry recorded an increase in rhino poaching cases after the discovery of 11 carcasses in less than two weeks.

This prompted the ministry to launch an investigation into some of its workers at the Etosha National Park for possibly playing a part in the rhino poaching syndicate, which recently left 11 animals dead.

Minister Pohamba Shifeta at the time said the ministry is broadening investigations to determine whether its workers were complicit in the matter.

"This is not a normal incident of 11 rhinos poached in such a short time frame, because rhinos do not move together. But the situation is under control as we have arrested some of the perpetrators, and we will continue to arrest more," Shifeta said, adding that his ministry has deployed the head of wildlife protection to ensure loopholes in the area are closed and no stone is left unturned.

The government last month announced its push for permission to trade its white rhinos, which would include live sales and making them available for trophy hunting.

Namibia will ask the United Nation's Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora to allow the sustainable hunting and trade of white rhino.

The government said the revenue derived from it would go directly back into conservation and anti-poaching programmes, as well as equipment, law enforcement, education, community initiatives, infrastructure and habitat management.

Advertise Here
728 x 90 px