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- [HOMEPAGE](#)
- [ENVIRONMENT](#)
- RHINOS ARE DEHORNED AFTER POACHING INCREASES



Dehorning to protect rhinos

- [ENVIRONMENT](#)

RHINOS ARE DEHORNED AFTER POACHING INCREASES

Already 48 stripped this year

The environment ministry and relevant actors will pool resources and forces to stop this increase in poaching incidents.

Ella Smith

- 19 HOURS AGO - - 2022-09-02 00:00:00

Ellanie Smit

Private rhino owners are currently dehorning their animals to protect them from the recent increase in poaching incidents.

A total of 48 rhinos have already been poached this year, which already exceeds last year's figure of 44, as well as the 42 rhinos in 2020.

Out of these 48, 32 were black and 16 white rhinos - of which 12 black rhinos were poached on conservation farms and 16 white rhinos on private farms.

According to the spokesperson of the Ministry of the Environment, Forestry and Tourism, Mr. Romeo Muyunda, three carcasses were discovered in June after a thorough inspection in the Etosha National Park and recently confirmed as poached.

"Unfortunately, we discovered two more carcasses during the course of last week."

He said this brings the total number of rhino poached in Etosha to 20.

Furthermore, two black rhino carcasses were recently discovered in the Otjozondjupa region.

The two carcasses were discovered on two different private game farms in the Otjituuo and Otjiwarongo areas. However, the names of these farms have not been made public to protect them from any further poaching incidents.

According to the police spokesperson in the Otjozondjupa region, Insp. Maureen Mbeha, one of the rhinos, a pregnant cow, was shot during August on a game farm in the Otjiwarongo district.

In a separate incident, a black rhino cow was found on 22 August after being poached on a private farm in the Grootfontein district.

Both rhinos were shot with unknown firearms and in both incidents both horns were cut off.

The value of the pregnant rhino is estimated at N\$1 million, and that of the other cow at N\$500 000.

No one has yet been arrested in connection with either incident, but police investigations continue.

CONSERVATION

“We are tackling this problem head on to ensure that we effectively combat poaching. As previously noted, poaching has become a more common occurrence on private farms as well as black rhino conservation farms. We are implementing new measures across the country to counter this trend,” said Muyunda.

He said anti-poaching units are being strengthened on private farms, and police and law enforcement officers from the ministry are being used to assist private farm owners with intelligence, law enforcement and patrols.

"We will also use our helicopter for patrols in areas where poaching is common."

Muyunda added that the ministry and relevant actors will pool resources and forces to stop this increase in poaching incidents.

"In the meantime, however, we appeal to members of the public to remain vigilant and report any suspected poaching incident and other wildlife crimes."

DEHORNING

Mr. Jaco Muller, the owner of a rhino farm and founder of the Help our Rhino's Now (HoRn), told our sister newspaper Namibian Sun that the past few weeks have been the worst in terms of rhino poaching, especially on private farms.

He says that in the past six weeks, around 14 white rhinos have been poached.

According to him, they started dehorning all their rhinos in an effort to protect the animals.

"It is very sad for me. You never know if you will ever see rhinos with these horns. We had a rhino cow with a 34 inch horn that we had to cut off. I was almost in tears because it is such a magnificent animal and now you have to cut off that horn. But it is for the animal's own good."

In 2019, a total of 57 rhinos were poached, 83 in 2018 and 55 in 2017.

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