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Conservation projects such as the Rhino Momma Project are important in view of their high risk of poaching - more on page 6. Photo: Katharina Moser

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# WORLD RHINO DAY: RHINOS MUST BE PROTECTED

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Windhoek (km / dpa) - Today is World Rhino Day: A day that reminds of the fascination and beauty of the gray giants - but also of their endangerment and need for protection in the face of numerous threats worldwide. According to the environmental foundation WWF, the population of rhinos in Africa is declining by three percent annually. Hundreds of rhinos are killed each year for their horn; in South Africa the animals are particularly endangered. International trade in rhino horns is prohibited. But in Asia, especially in Vietnam and China, horn is popular as an ingredient in traditional medicine and brings high returns.

According to the WWF, the southern white rhino subspecies is a conservation success story, recovering from fewer than 100 animals in 1895 to over 20,000 individuals. "Recently, however, white rhino numbers have declined due to increased poaching, with only 15,942 left in the wild today. Unfortunately, there are no more animals of the northern subspecies of the white rhino in the wild and only a handful in captivity."

The worst time for the black rhino was between 1970 and 1992, when around 96 percent of the animals fell victim to poaching. "Today, only 6,195 animals remain in the wild."

During the corona pandemic, poaching and the illegal rhino trade declined due to travel restrictions. In East Africa, however, the situation has recently deteriorated again, as many national parks had to reduce their staff due to the lack of income from tourism.

In Namibia too, rhino poaching has recently increased again at an alarming rate. Protection projects are all the more important in order to preserve the species, combat poaching and create awareness of the value of the species. An exemplary protection program is, for example, the Namibian Rhino Momma Project at Outjo - you can get an insight into the admirable work of the employees and the need for protection of the rhinos on page 6.

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