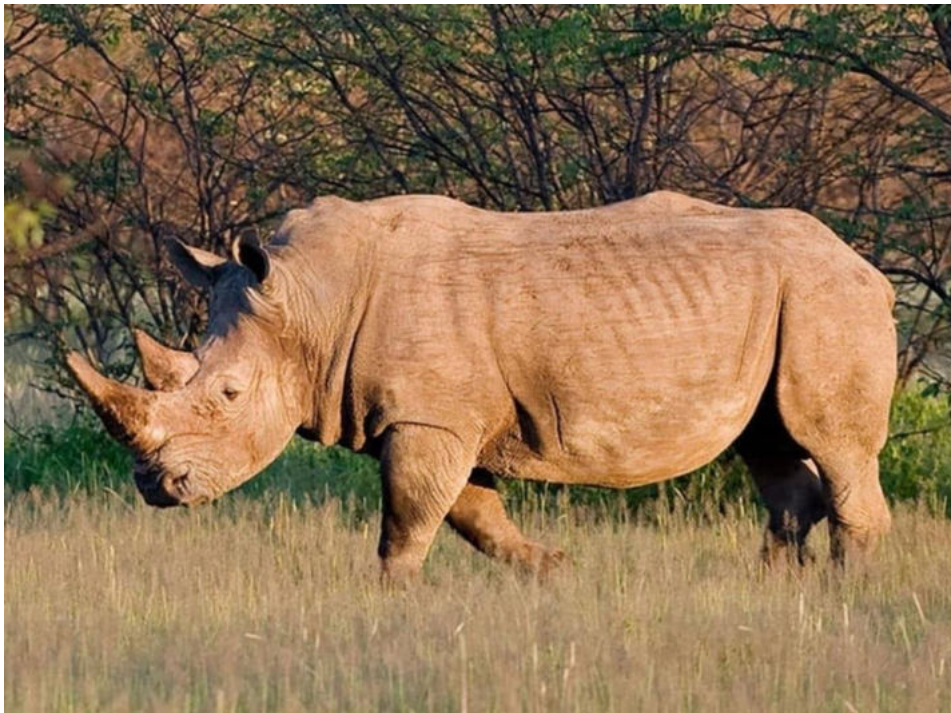


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- 77 RHINOS, 4 ELEPHANTS POACHED IN 2022



77 rhinos poached

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# 77 RHINOS, 4 ELEPHANTS POACHED IN 2022

## Suspected poacher caught in Etosha this year

**More than 80% of the suspects arrested last year in connection with poaching are Namibians.**

**Christine Kruger**

- 19 HOURS AGO -- 2023-01-13 00:00:00

Ellanie Smit - Last year ended with one of the highest rhino poaching figures in almost a decade. A total of 77 rhinos were poached last year - 32 more than in 2021.

According to the latest statistics released by the Ministry of the Environment, Forestry and Tourism, last year's figures are the third highest since 2013. The two highest figures are in 2015 and 2018 recorded with 97 and 84 rhinos respectively poached in those years.

Further statistics show that 43 rhinos were poached in 2020 - while 61 were killed in 2019, 55 in 2017, 66 in 2016 and 56 in 2014.

Only four elephants were poached last year compared to ten in 2021.

In 2020, a total of 12 elephants were poached, while 13 elephants were killed by poachers in 2019, 27 in 2018, 50 in 2017, 101 in 2016, 49 in 2015 and 78 in 2014.

### ETOSHA

Although the ministry's spokesperson, Romeo Muyunda, could not confirm whether there have already been any poaching incidents this year, police reports indicate that there have indeed been poaching attempts in the Etosha National Park.

According to a recent police report, a 28-year-old suspect from the Okangwati area in Etosha was arrested after he was allegedly involved in a plan to poach a rhino. The incident took place between 4 and 6 January on the west side of Etosha and the suspect was apparently caught with five rounds of live ammunition.

The arrest was made after suspected poachers were pursued following information gathered by intelligence.

"Preliminary investigations indicate that suspects entered Etosha with the intention of searching for, hunting and killing a rhino in order to remove the rhino horns for commercial purposes."

The suspect was charged with conspiracy to hunt protected wildlife, as well as possession of a firearm

and ammunition without a license and valid documents. He was also charged with trespassing for entering Etosha without a valid permit and illegally taking a weapon into Etosha without a valid permit or document.

#### MOSTLY NAMIBIAN

The ministry said in November last year that 106 suspects had been arrested for poaching so far in 2022 - of which 44 were in connection with rhino poaching and 62 in connection with elephant poaching.

Muyunda said at the time that it was disturbing to realize that 93 of these suspects were Namibians, who, according to the ministry, should be at the forefront of the fight against poaching. Among the other suspects are eight Angolans and seven Zambians.

"After the increase in poaching incidents in 2014, numerous intervention efforts were launched across the country under the leadership of the ministry to combat wildlife crime. Wildlife crime threatens not only the survival of the species, but the reputation of the country's conservation, as well as socio-economic - and tourism development," said Muyunda.

The issue of rhino poaching requires the involvement of all stakeholders, especially members of the public who must report suspected offenders to the authorities.