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Frightening figures in rhino poaching: the number of pachyderms killed is the third highest since 2013. Photo: Anita, pixabay

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# CONCERN ABOUT RHINO POACHING

Numbers at third highest - Fewer elephants killed

**On the one hand the numbers are frightening, on the other hand they are encouraging. While rhino poaching has seen the total number of animals killed since 2013, the number of elephants killed has fallen by half every year since 2016.**

**Edited by Olaf Mueller**

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It's been a sad year for wildlife conservation in Namibia as the numbers released by the Ministry of Tourism and Environment are startling. According to this, a total of 77 rhinos fell victim to poachers in 2022 because of the coveted rhinoceros horn. These are the third most incidents since 2013 behind 2013 with 97 poached pachyderms and 2015 with 84 rhinos killed. Statistics from previous years list fewer cases of hunting crimes. There were 61 dead rhinos in 2020, six less in 2019, 66 in 2017 and 56 the year before.

In contrast, the Ministry recorded only four kills in elephant poaching. Last year there were ten. Also in 2020, with 12, there were significantly more elephants that fell victim to poachers. If you look at the statistics from 2016 to 2019, the number of killings of these pachyderms is steadily decreasing, with 2016 standing out particularly negatively with 101 elephants. The following year, at 50, the number had already halved. Twelve months later, by around 50 percent (27) and the following year the total was halved again (13).

So far this year there have been no cases, as the spokesman for the authority, Romeo Muyunda, confirmed, but there have already been attempts to poach animals. Evidence of this was discovered in Etosha National Park. There has also been the arrest of a suspect who, according to the police report, is from Okangwati and is said to have dared an attempt. This incident therefore took place between January 4th and 6th, in which the suspect was then apprehended with a gun and live ammunition after following the trail of poachers.

Previous investigations had already led to the conclusion that several suspects had entered Etosha Park to hunt rhinos and obtain the rhinoceros horn with the aim of hunting crimes. The suspect arrested is charged with illegally entering Etosha Park with the intention of poaching. He also faces charges of illegal gun ownership.

The ministry's report also states that 106 suspects were arrested for precisely these offenses last year. Of these, 44 are in prison for poaching rhinos and 62 for poaching elephants. "It is disgraceful that 93 of those detained are Namibians," Muyunda noted. The others are Angolans (8) and Zambians (7).

The Ministry has invested in many anti-poaching programs across Namibia since

2014. However, Muyunda also warned that the involvement of all parties concerned is required in order to successfully fight poaching.