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Namibia records drastic drop in elephant poaching

By Xinhua News Agency

Elephant poaching figures in Namibia have declined steeply since 2015, an official said Monday.

In a poaching update of high-value species, namely elephants and rhinoceros in Namibia, the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism (MEFT) spokesperson Romeo Muyunda revealed that the elephant poaching cases have dropped from 101 recorded in 2015, to 50 in 2017, 27 in 2018, 13 in 2019, 12 in 2020, 10 in 2021 and only four in 2022.

The four poached elephants in 2022 include two in the Zambezi Region, one in the Kavango West Region, and one in the Kunene Region, according to Muyunda.

"We hope that these figures will continue to descend until we reach the zero-poaching target. For this year, no elephant has been poached," he said while commending anti-poaching units across the country.

Despite the reduction in elephant poaching, Muyunda said rhinoceros poaching remains a serious concern as 87 rhinoceros were poached in 2022, consisting of 61 black rhinos and 26 white rhinos.

"The 2022 poaching cases include 15 rhinos poached on rhino custodianship farms, another 25 on white rhino private farms, and 46 in the Etosha National Park. In previous years, Namibia recorded 45 rhinos poached in 2021, 43 in 2020, 61 in 2019, 84 in 2018, and 55 in 2017. This year, one rhinoceros has been poached," he said.

According to Muyunda, Namibia's flagship park, Etosha National Park, is a poaching hotspot.

"The ministry and its partners in wildlife protection and law enforcement will step up efforts against wildlife crime in Etosha National Park particularly to curb rhinoceros poaching," he said, adding that immediately improved interventions have been put in place across the country, under the leadership of the MEFT to fight wildlife crime.

Currently, Namibia's growing tourism sector is hugely dependent on wildlife, and the rhinoceros poaching situation requires the involvement of all stakeholders, he said.