

AFRICA

Namibia rhino poaching surged 93% in 2022

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Rhino poaching has plagued southern Africa for decades, especially in South Africa and Botswana.
File picture

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The number of endangered rhinos poached in Namibia reached an all-time high last year after 87 animals were killed compared to 45 in 2021, official government data showed on Monday.

Africa's rhino population has been decimated over the decades to feed demand for rhino horn, which, despite being made of the same stuff as rhino hair and fingernails, is prized in East Asia as a supposed medicine and as jewellery.

The ministry of environment, forestry and tourism spokesperson Romeo Muyunda said poachers killed 61 black and 26 white rhinos mainly in Namibia's largest park, Etosha, where 46 rhinos were found dead.

"We note with serious concern that our flagship park, Etosha National Park, is a poaching hotspot," Muyunda said, adding that the ministry and law enforcement officials have stepped up efforts against wildlife crime in Etosha National Park to curb poaching.

Rhino poaching has plagued southern Africa for decades, especially in neighbouring South Africa and Botswana, leading to anti-poaching programmes, including strict policing and de-horning or removing horns as a way of discouraging poaching.

Elephant poaching in Namibia has, however, declined over the years, from a high of 101 in 2015 to a low of four elephants poached last year.