

📅 January 31, 2023

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Rampant poaching at Etosha threatens tourism economy

By [Super User \(/index.php/component/k2/itemlist/user/801-superuser\)](/index.php/component/k2/itemlist/user/801-superuser) 🕒 January 30, 2023 👁 114 💬 0

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The government has expressed grave concern over increased poaching recorded at one of the country's leading tourism destinations, the Etosha National Park.

Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism's spokesperson Romeo Muyunda said the government is employing new strategies to curb poaching, which is detrimental to the economy and the tourism industry.

"We note with serious concern that our 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 rhino poaching," Muyunda said.

The spokesperson added that one rhino poaching incident has been reported so far since the beginning of this year.

Government statistics show that 87 rhinos were poached in 2022, consisting of 61 black rhinos and 26 white rhinos. During that year, poaching cases included 15 rhinos poached on rhino custodianship farms, another 25 on white rhino private farms and 47 in the Etosha National Park.

In 2021, Namibia recorded 45 cases of rhinos poached, 43 in 2020, 61 in 2019, 84 in 2018 and 55 in 2017.

Meanwhile, poaching of elephants has been on a decline from 101 cases recorded in 2015 to 50 in 2017; 27 in 2018 to 13 in 2019; 12 in 2020 to 10 in 2021; down to only four cases recorded last year.

"The four poached elephants in 2022 included two in Zambezi Region, one in Kavango West Region and one in Kunene Region. It is our hope that these figures will continue to descend until we reach the zero-poaching target. For this year, no elephant has been poached," Muyunda said.

These figures come as the country's tourism sector is forecast to be one of the biggest drivers of economic activity in 2023, according to economic firm Simonis Storm, despite recessions that are expected to take place in Namibia's main tourist source markets in the first half of this year.

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