

Two hippos poached at Muyako, Zambezi

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POACHED ... Muyako villagers on Sunday morning discovered the carcass of a poached hippo. Photo: Contributed.

THE Ministry of Environment, Forestry, and Tourism has launched an investigation into the poaching of two hippos in the Muyako area of the Zambezi region.

This comes after the carcass of a hippo was on Sunday found by community members, who then alerted ministry officials

Ministry spokesperson Romeo Muyunda on Monday said it is suspected that the hippo died as a result of a bullet wound, and that it was shot on Saturday night.

He said this was the second hippo killed in the same way in the area this year, with the first incident reported in February.

"We strongly condemn poaching as it takes away the tourism potential of the area and affects ecological processes."

Hippos as grazers are important for maintaining vegetation cover in reasonable amounts, making it easy for people to access riverbanks and other areas around rivers.

"Hippos are a village resource, where at an appropriate time and at the request of the village, meat is distributed to them

through the correct channels," he said.

Muyunda said the ministry distributed the meat to the Khwe community and not to hopeful Muyako villagers to discourage further poaching incidents in the area.

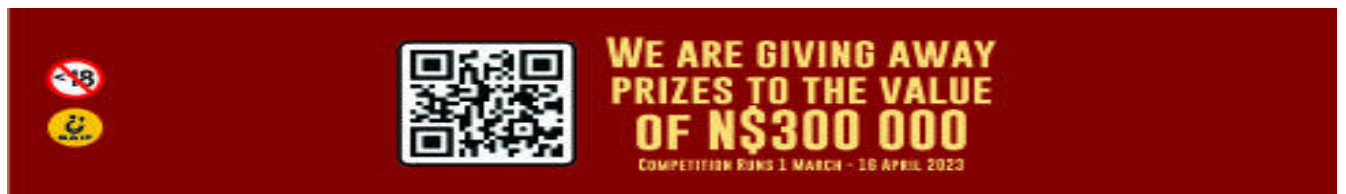
"If you give meat, it's like encouraging the community to shoot hippos whenever they want meat, which is not sustainable," he said.

Muyako Khuta secretary Charles Simasiku has vowed to do everything in his power to find those responsible for killing hippos in the area.

"We as the Muyako village leadership do not condone lawlessness. In the same vein, we must act swiftly on cases of human-wildlife conflict as farmers' crop fields are being destroyed by hippos," he said.

Jim Ben, the headman of the Kyaracen village, which received the meat, has expressed his gratitude towards the government for the donation.

He called upon Namibians to protect the riches of the country and to avoid unnecessary killing.



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