

Environment ministry ups fights against rhino poaching



Pohamba Shifeta

By [Shania Lazarus](#)

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The Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism has launched a new initiative to fight against rhino poaching.

Speaking at the launch of the initiative, which coincided with the commemoration of the World Rhino Day hosted at Okaukejo over the weekend, environment minister Pohamba Shifeta said Namibia has the second-largest white Rhino population in the world after South Africa and the largest population of black Rhinos in the world.

However, Shifeta said that rhinos have become an endangered species, and, in some areas, they have even become extinct.

“This year, 39 rhinos have been poached in Namibia, compared to 92 last year, 50 in 2021, 47 in 2020 and 61 in 2019,” said Shifeta.

In response to poaching, the ministry launched the use of horses in the conservation and protection of rhinos.

“The environment ministry has purchased 13 horses, with funding support from the Game Product Trust Fund,” said Shifeta.

He said eight horses will be stationed in the Etosha National Park, while five will be stationed in Waterberg Plateau Park.

Shifeta said, "Horse-mounted patrols will help us cover more patrol distances, enable us to carry more equipment than on foot patrol and provide superior off-road mobility and tracking ability compared to vehicles".

He said rangers on horseback can travel faster than foot patrols, yet more silently than vehicle patrols and get superior visibility from the horseback vantage point.

"The use of a combination of horse unit, dog unit, airwing or helicopter and fixed-wing patrols, foot patrols, CCTV, intelligence gathering and drones, will help us improve and do more with the protection of rhinos from illegal activities," said Shifeta.

Furthermore, said, "The ministry has completed the rhino management plan, which will be effective in protecting and preserving the endangered species."

According to Shifeta, the rhino management plan will help the ministry conserve and sustainably manage a growing free-ranging population of both black and white rhinos of the subspecies.