

Environment ministry concerned over pangolin poaching



Romeo Muyunda

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The Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism has expressed concern over crimes related to pangolin poaching.

This was announced in a media statement by ministry spokesperson Romeo Muyunda, released yesterday.

“The ministry is happy to observe that more suspects have been arrested for crimes related to pangolin trafficking between 1 September and 30 November.

“We are concerned that this may indicate an increase in crimes related to pangolins,” he said.

Muyunda said 18 skins, 12 live animals, and 146 scales were confiscated during this time, resulting in 23 registered cases and 38 suspects arrested.

He said these numbers surpass those for elephant and rhino poaching combined for this period.

“These cases are predominantly from the northern regions, with Kavango West having the most cases registered (six), and the Kavango East, Ohangwena, Oshana and Zambezi each registering three cases.

“The central regions cumulatively registered four cases, and only one case was registered in Kunene,” Muyunda said.

He said only six live animals were recovered and 19 skins confiscated from January to August this year.

“In association with registered crimes, the total number of animals poached this year between live animals, skins and scales comes to 50, with an additional two fetuses miscarried by live confiscated female pangolins.

“Pangolins are under serious threat, and the ministry would like to remind the public that the trafficking of wildlife is a serious offence, and you will be arrested and if found guilty, sentenced for this crime,” he said.

“To date the heaviest sentence for the trafficking of a pangolin or its parts has been nine years’ direct imprisonment and the heaviest fine N\$800 000.”

The possession of a pangolin or its parts carries the same maximum sentence as for rhino horn – up to 15 years’ imprisonment and a fine of up to N\$15 000 000, the spokesperson said.

The trafficking or sale of pangolins carries a sentence up to 25 years’ imprisonment and a fine of up to N\$25 000 000, Muyunda added.

He encouraged the public to anonymously report any information on wildlife crimes to the authorities or to the wildlife crime hotline at 55555.