



Save the Rhino Trust Namibia says its success can be attributed to local communities' sense of ownership and pride for their rhinos. Photo Tanja Bause (<https://cdn.nmh.com.na:2083/S3Server/republikein/uploads/images/2024/01/15/263307.JPG>)

LOCALLY (PLAASLIK)

SRT TAKES SIMPLE APPROACH TO POACHING

Local people the driving force

The last incident of poaching was reported in August 2020.

Tanja Bause

1 MONTH AGO - 2024-01-15 08:22:00

Ellanie Smit

Save the Rhino Trust (SRT) Namibia's approach to rhino poaching has challenged conventional military-style rhino protection tactics, which in many cases has widened the gap between local people and rhinos.

"These conventional tactics against poaching see and target local people as part of the problem, SRT said in its new strategic plan for 2023/28.

SRT said the organisation therefore took an extremely simple but efficient approach by employing respected local people to hone their skills.

The skills included traditional tracking honed over generations, and knowledge of the landscape and animal behavior to monitor and protect rhinos, rather than poaching the animals.

"This approach promoted a newfound, locally-grown pro-rhino attitude and together with efforts to build a local community wildlife monitoring system in collaboration with traditional leaders, it has helped reduce poaching in the area."

It also created a new sense of the value of rhinos in the local people. According to SRT, the positive value of keeping rhinos alive lies mainly with rangers and local people who play an active role in the conservation areas.

"They realised the positive value of keeping rhinos alive, not only for the monetary value they bring, but also for a sense of ownership and pride they have for having rhinos on their land. SRT was established in 1982 after a severe drought coupled with uncontrolled hunting, left the Kunene region barely with any game.

"SRT mobilised groups of men, most of whom grew up in the area, to monitor the remaining black rhinos.

"During the late 90s, numerous communal conservation areas were established, which strengthened local people's control over and responsibility for wildlife.

"The common conservation areas allowed local people to make decisions about managing their wildlife."

ently paying their last tribute to the former first lady, Monica Geingos Heroes Acre will be closed to the public, the National Council will announce once it is reopened

SRT said more than 40 rhinos were released between 2005 and 2010 in 13 communal conservation areas that expanded their areas by about 20%, helping to further increase rhinos' numbers.

"Since SRT began its efforts, the number of black rhinos has tripled."

SRT said its success can be attributed to local communities' sense of ownership and pride for their rhinos, a strong sense of trust and partnerships with the Namibian government and various civil society organisations, and above all their grassroots approach.

"We employ 45 staff members. The majority (40 people) are trackers, drivers and support staff at the camps and all are from the local communities."

According to SRT, its trackers cover an area of 25,000 km2 and endure extreme conditions during long patrols.

"These patrols are mainly done on foot in rough terrain, in an area with no national park status, no fences and no control over who enters and exits."

SRT said coupled with the realisation of and interest in new opportunities stipulated in conservation legislation, the organisation's outreach efforts have led to an increased demand for conservation areas to get rhinos back on their land.

The conservation program has had a major impact on the return and increase of wildlife populations that have nearly disappeared in the Kunene region.

Poaching has fallen by 78% over five years. Between 2012 and 2016, a total of 38 rhinos were poached in western Kunene, while between 2017 and 2022 a total of eight rhinos were poached in the same area.

"SRT sustained patrol efforts, resulting in the single greatest achievement – the absence of reported poaching since August 2020, that means 26 months without poaching at the end of October 2022."

The organization noted that conservation areas have increased their investments in rhino protection, through an increase in conservation contributions for overall program expenses. It also helped fuel an increase in patrol efforts and rhino sightings.

☐ – republikein@republikein.com.na

- [SRT \(/search?query=SRT\)](/search?query=SRT)
- [renosters \(/search?query=renosters\)](/search?query=renosters)
- [Stroop \(/search?query=Stroop\)](/search?query=Stroop)



(<https://nmh.my.na/advert/track/>)

KOMMENTAAR



Republikein 2024-03-02

Geen kommentaar is op hierdie artikel gelaat nie

MELD ASSEBLIEF AAN OM KOMMENTAAR TE LEWER

➔ [Klik hier om aan te meld](#)

VERWANTE ARTIKELS