


POACHING THREATEN
ENDANGERED SPECIES

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The Ministry of Environment, Forestry, and Tourism has sounded the alarm on the rapid decline of wildlife habitats due to deforestation and industrial emissions, exacerbating the impacts of climate change and hindering efforts to sustainably manage natural resources.

In a statement released over the weekend to mark World Wildlife Day, Romeo Muyunda, spokesperson for the ministry, highlighted the


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urgent need to confront the challenges confronting local wildlife.

“The imperative to boost our economies has led to the swift disappearance of forests and woodlands, making way for development projects. These ecosystems serve as crucial habitats for rare and endangered wildlife species. Simultaneously, escalating industrial activities emit greenhouse gases, exacerbating ozone layer depletion and contributing to climate change,” Muyunda remarked.

Poaching poses another significant threat to Namibia’s wildlife, particularly targeting high-value species like rhinos, elephants, and pangolins.

“Recent trends indicate a surge in plant poaching within our borders. The unprecedented levels of poaching are depleting our invaluable resources,” Muyunda lamented.

“Our globally recognized endangered species face a dire future. At the current rate of poaching, the extinction of these magnificent creatures looms,” he warned.

According to Muyunda, the poaching statistics are alarming, with 67 rhinos and eight elephants falling victim to poaching last year alone. Additionally, eight rhinos have already been illegally killed this year.

Over the past decade, Namibia has documented 631 poaching incidents, with the highest numbers reported in 2022.

Muyunda attributed the persistence of poaching to poverty, with individuals enticed by meager payments despite the lack of local demand for ivory, horns, and pangolin scales.

However, he noted that law enforcement efforts have yielded results, with 139 suspects arrested in 2023 for rhino and elephant-related crimes, alongside significant seizures of firearms and vehicles.

Muyunda called upon Namibians to unite against wildlife crimes, emphasizing the importance of preserving wildlife resources for current and future generations.

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