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CRIME (/CRIME)

WHITE RHINO BULL POACHED ON FARM

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1 MONTH AGO - 2024-07-18 00:30:00

A farmer in the Okahandja district encountered rhino poachers for the third time after discovering the carcass of a white rhino bull on his farm on Monday afternoon. Initially, the poachers injured the bull in a failed attempt last week.

Two renowned veterinarians, Drs HO Reuter and Ulf Thubbesing, visited the farm last week to treat the injured rhino after the poachers shot him in the forehead.

The eight-year-old bull was then marked with a large cross on his back to facilitate easy identification and monitoring from the air. The farm owner said he had flown over the farm with his gyrocopter around 18:00 on Sunday and had seen the bull alive. "Monday around 12:00, I discovered his carcass – roughly in the same place where he was Sunday evening – along with the poachers' footprints," the owner said. The poachers had cut off the bull's two horns.

12 rhinos poached

Poachers slaughtered nine white rhinos on the farm in 2017, two black rhinos in December, and now this white rhino. The rhinos are currently being dehorned on the farm to prevent poaching.

Rhino owners are disheartened by the rampant poaching, especially as they are also struggling with drought and having to feed the rhinos.

"It seems the poachers are now targeting the rhinos at the feeding troughs," the owner said. Another rhino owner in the Otjozondjupa Region, whose four white rhinos were also recently poached, said he is throwing in the towel and selling all his rhinos. "We are not getting help from the ministry of environment or the government to help conserve rhinos. Our only hope is that the trade in rhino horns will be legalised," he said. At least 58 rhinos have been poached this year.

Livestock theft

Farmers in the Otjozondjupa Region, meanwhile, are also suffering significant losses due to livestock theft. Cattle were driven from a neighbouring farm to

Hohenfels Farm after the chain on the gate was sawn off.

7 | USD to ZAR 17.93 | USD to ZMW 26.96 | USD to ZWL 321 | Stock Exchange: JSE All Share Index Same 0 | Namibian Stock Exchange (NSX) Overall Index 18

"The cattle were herded into the cattle crush early Saturday morning, their tendons were cut, and five cattle were slaughtered, of which only two carcasses were taken," said Hohenfels owner Micki zu Bentheim. Hohenfels is located on the Okakarara road, and Zu Bentheim found one of the four suspects along the road where he had made a fire, "but he just ran away."

According to Zu Bentheim, the suspect also slaughtered a sheep during the night, cut off only one leg, and left the rest of the sheep carcass behind. "The cattle thief also threatened the workers that he would come back and kill them."

The police conducted an investigation on the farm on Sunday morning, but no suspects have been apprehended yet.

Arrests made

At Hochfeld, cattle thieves were caught red-handed last week. According to the Namibian Police crime report, four men – aged 20, 30, 34, and 39 respectively – were arrested on Friday after a silver Micra sedan vehicle carrying half a cow carcass was intercepted. "Information was received around 07:00 on Friday about a silver Micra travelling from Hochfeld with people loading near the farm. Tracks were followed to the slaughter site where the cow's head, neck, back, intestines, liver, heart, leaf, ribs, leg, and skin were found," reads the crime report.

The total value of the slaughtered animal amounts to around N\$80 000. Four suspects, aside from the driver, were arrested and were scheduled to appear in the Okahandja Magistrate's Court.

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Namibian Sun 2024-08-23

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