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- ETOSHA HOTBED FOR RHINO POACHING



WORRIED: The Etosha National Park has become a hotbed for rhino poaching. Photo: FILE

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ETOSHA HOTBED FOR RHINO POACHING

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A total of 87 rhinos were poached last year, of which 45 were killed in the Etosha National Park.

This is according to new statistics released by the environment and tourism ministry, which show that last year, 61 black rhinos and 26 white rhinos were killed.

In 2022, poaching cases included 15 rhinos poached on custodianship farms and another 25 white rhinos on private farms.

Namibia recorded 45 rhinos poached in 2021, 43 in 2020, 61 in 2019, 84 in 2018 and 55 in 2017. So far this year, one rhino has been poached.

Meanwhile, four elephants were killed last year. These include two in the Zambezi Region, one in Kavango West and one in Kunene.

Serious concern

According to ministry spokesperson Romeo Muyunda, elephant poaching figures have declined steeply over the years, from the highest figure of 101 in 2015.

Fifty elephants were poached in 2017, 27 in 2018, 13 in 2019, 12 in 2020 and 10 in 2021.

“We note with serious concern that our flagship park, Etosha, is a poaching hotspot. The ministry and its partners in wildlife protection and law enforcement will step up efforts against wildlife crime in Etosha, particularly to curb rhino poaching.”

He said immediate improved interventions have been put in place across the country under the leadership of the ministry to fight wildlife crime.

“Wildlife crime threatens not only the survival of the species but the reputation of the country’s conservation, socio-economic and tourism development. Namibia's growing tourism sector is hugely dependent of wildlife.”

Get involved

According to Muyunda, the rhino poaching situation requires the involvement of all stakeholders.

“Members of the public should report suspected perpetrators to the authorities. The perpetrators of these crimes are within our society, and therefore we should report suspicious activities to the authorities.

“We must - as a nation - stand against the illegal plundering of our natural resources by rejecting and condemning wildlife crimes in our beautiful country.”