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Photo: Canva

## 249 rhino poached in SA since the start of 2021 and it is increasing

249 rhinos have been poached in SA since the start of 2021, and it is increasing. Most of the killings happened at the Kruger National Park.

by **Corne van Zyl**

01-08-2021

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## LOCKDOWN CURBED THE MOVEMENT OF RHINO POACHERS

Barbara Creecy, [the Minister of environment, forestry, and fisheries](#), said that the easing of lockdown curbs increased the movement of poachers.

“While the national lockdowns that curbed the movement of people to halt the spread of the virus in 2020 contributed to a decrease in rhino poaching, the lifting of the stringent lockdown regulations appears to have seen an increase in rhino poaching in the first six months of 2021.”

She said from January to the end of June 2021, 249 rhino have been poached for their horn in South Africa.

**ALSO READ: [Update: Two in court for possession of 19 rhino horns worth millions](#)**

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“While this is higher than the number of rhino killed for their horns in the same period last year, at 166, it is less than the 318 rhino that was poached in the first six months of 2019.

“During the six months, January to June 2021, the Kruger National Park experienced 715 poacher activities, an increase of 3.77% compared to the number in 2020, which was 689 for the same period.

“From January to end of June 2021, 132 rhino were poached for their horns in the Kruger National Park. One elephant was poached for its ivory in the Kruger National Park during this period.”

Creecy furthermore said a number of successful arrests and prosecutions have also been recorded in the past six months.

“This again underscores the success of the collaborative work being done by law enforcement agencies. These include the police, the Hawks, SANParks, the Environmental Management Inspectorate or Green Scorpions, customs officials, SANDF, provincial park authorities and the National Prosecuting Authority.”

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Numerous confiscations of rhino horn have also taken place since January, both within the country as well as at OR Tambo International Airport.

“The cohesive partnership with the South East Asian countries is also showing concrete results with the recent collaboration between the South African and the Vietnamese authorities, resulting in one of the largest seizures of rhino horns and other wildlife products, thereby disrupting syndicate activities.”

She added that 14 cases had been finalised since the start of the year with a verdict, representing a 93% conviction rate.

World Ranger Day was celebrated on Saturday.

“We want to pay tribute to our rangers for the incredible work they do each and every day to keep our National Parks and our iconic species safe. We also want to pay tribute to eleven of our staff members at SANParks who lost their lives to Covid 19 over the past year.”

“We find ourselves in a position where the efforts being made to combat wildlife crime, such as rhino poaching, are influenced to some extent by the extraordinary circumstances surrounding the battle to beat the Covid-19 pandemic.

“In the battle to conserve our wildlife and halt poaching, it is our rangers who remain at the forefront, putting their lives on the line daily to conserve our environment and vulnerable species despite the additional risk of contracting Covid-19.”

Privacy

She also wanted Field Ranger, Checkers Mashego remembered.

Mashego’s lifeless body was discovered in Kruger Park late last year.

“May the souls of all our SANPARKS staff and field rangers rest in peace after serving our nation with diligence and passion.”

**ALSO READ:** [Two arrested for possession of 19 rhino horns in Nelspruit](#)

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