



IOS NEWS

## Surge in rhino poaching in KZN unexplained



*At least 61 rhinos have been confirmed killed in KZN from January 1 to March 25 this year. Picture: Armand Hough*

Published May 7, 2022



Written by  
Duncan Guy

SHARE



### Durban - Wildlife authorities cannot explain the dramatic increase in rhino poaching this year in KwaZulu-Natal.

Last year, 97 rhinos were poached in Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife reserves in 2021. Between January 1 and March 25 this year, 61 have been killed. According to some reports, the tally for the year so far is at least 75.

Story continues below Advertisement

During a brief interview at the Tourism Indaba on Thursday, Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife spokesperson Musa Mntambo suggested the rise may be explained in part by Covid.

“The poachers couldn’t poach and now things have opened up so they could be killing more rhinos than before,” he said, stressing that this was only speculation.

He also said poachers may think rhinos could be dehorned in the province in the future and they were trying to harvest horns in time, although he was not aware of such plans being in the pipeline.

## More on this

---

- **Brothers plead guilty to rhino poaching in Limpopo court**
  - **Rhino injured in poaching attempt at Inverdoorn gives birth to bull calf**
  - **SA woman held as over 12 pieces of rhino horn seized at OR Tambo International Airport**
  - **61 rhinos butchered for their horns in three months in KZN**
- 

Asked about inside jobs, he said: “I can’t say that can’t happen. If it happens, people should inform the police. Not us. But, really, we don’t know the answers.”

“For the past two or three years, our strategies have worked,” said Mntambo. “So we don’t think there is anything wrong with our strategies. We don’t know where the loopholes are.”

The national Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment said that with additional resources from police that are currently being deployed to the Hluhluwe-Imfolozi area, it expected an increase in arrests.

Story continues below Advertisement

“We will support investigations through to successful prosecutions,” said spokesperson Albi Modise.

“The department continually reviews the strategy and looks at refining elements of it.”

Modise said the Integrated Wildlife Zones (IWZ) initiative, aimed to achieve closer collaboration with the private sector while also increasing and integrating the country’s analysis and investigative capability to combat wildlife crime.

Story continues below Advertisement

“The IWZ initiative has also resulted in the establishment of the Environmental Enforcement Fusion Centre (EEFC) that is responsible for co-ordination at a national level and also provides analysis support at a national level to tactical operations as well as investigations,” said Modise.

“In the context of KZN, the department is supporting Ezemvelo and the SAPS in implementing a turnaround strategy, which includes key stakeholders within the Zululand IWZ. All efforts within the zone should act as a force multiplier and support what is currently taking place.”

He stressed that rhino in the Hluhluwe-Imfolozi Park were specifically vulnerable, in terms of their relatively high numbers, in proximity to high density settlements surrounding the park.

Story continues below Advertisement

Other areas the national department is contributing include:

- The EEFC’s Analyst Unit is assisting with support to law enforcement and joint operations managers with respect to suspects’ information.
- Monitoring systems and back-up to the nerve centre.
- Support for the reconvening the Provincial Priority Committee Wildlife Crime in December and which now reports to the Natjoints Priority Committee on Wildlife Trafficking.
- Weekly attendance at HiP (Hluhluwe-Imfolozi Park) law enforcement operational planning meetings and the Hluhluwe tactical operations command SAPS meeting.
- Collating weekly situation reports with inputs from rangers, technician and duty officers at the nerve centre/operational HiP operations co-ordinating centre.
- Support to Joint Investigations (SAPS, Crime Intelligence, NPA and DPCI), which includes possible Ezemvelo staff collusion with poaching syndicates.
- Assistance with the Wildlife Zones project alignment to the National Integrated Strategy to Combat Wildlife Trafficking.

This week two brothers – who first came to the attention of law enforcement 10 years ago for poaching rhinos in the Hluhluwe-Imfolozi Park – were sentenced to jail at the Giyani Magistrate’s Court in Limpopo.

Nicolaas, 56, and Gideon van Deventer, 53, pleaded guilty to charges of conspiracy to hunt rhinos, illegal hunting, killing and dehorning a rhino, possession of rhino horns, selling rhino horns, trespassing and possession of a loaded firearm.

Nicolaas was sentenced to 15 years’ imprisonment and Gideon to 10 years behind bars.

### The Independent on Saturday

#### RELATED TOPICS:

CONSERVATION   ENVIRONMENT   POACHING   MPUMALANGA RHINOS

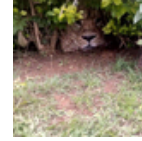
SHARE



## You may like

### LOOK: There's a lion in the forest! Lion printed carrier bag mistaken for the big cat in Kenyan town

By Chad Williams | Published May 6, 2022



### Man disarms, shoots cop before killing patients at Cape hospital

By Brandon Nel | Published May 7, 2022



### Speaker welcomes ConCourt ruling on Mkhwebane, now waits for PP on interdict application

By Siyabonga Mkhwanazi | Published May 7, 2022



## Read next

### Sharks' season 'far from over' after Pumas Currie Cup defeat

By Mike Greenaway | Published May 7, 2022



## Recommended Stories

Recommended by |



Diesen Trick verheimlichen  
Krankenkassen: Kostenloser  
Zahnersatz



Männer, ihr braucht kein Viagra  
wenn ihr dies einmal am Tag tut

iamhealth.life



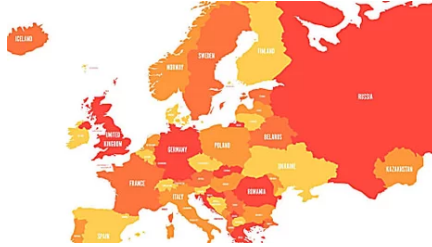
Snake handler critical after black  
mamba bites him



[Bilder] Dieses Boot wurde durch Unachtsamkeit fast 50 Meter in die Höhe gehoben

<https://mx.investing.com/>

MOST READ



15 European Cities with Highest Quality of Life

Far & Wide



Prison official and inmate caught in prison romp are not married

EDITOR'S CHOICE

## Still no running water in Reservoir Hills

## Back to the beach

## Weird 'clue' to bestiality video

## Durban International Marathon road closures

## Meet Dr Reuel Khoza, UKZN's new Chancellor



Independent Online, popularly known as IOL, is one of South Africa's leading news and information websites bringing millions of readers breaking news and updates on Politics, Current Affairs, Business, Lifestyle, Entertainment, Travel, Sport, Motoring and Technology. [Read more](#)



### SECTIONS ON IOL

News

Lifestyle

Entertainment

Travel

Business

Property

Sport

Home

Motoring

Opinion

IOL TV

Brandstories

MORE ON IOL

About IOL

Contact Us

Weather

Newspapers Highlights

Newspapers Contacts

SUBSCRIBE

Independent Media

Email Newsletter



© 2022 Independent Online and affiliated companies. All rights reserved.

[Press Code](#) [Privacy Policy](#) [Terms & Conditions](#) [Advertise with us](#) [Feedback](#) [Complaints Procedure](#)



