

AFRICA

Suspected elephant poachers shot dead by ZimParks rangers

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Zimbabwe says it has a shoot-to-kill policy when it comes to suspected poachers in its game reserves.

Image: Bloomberg

Two suspected poachers were killed in a shoot-out with Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority (ZimParks) rangers in Chirundu at the weekend.

ZimParks spokesperson Tinashe Farawo said the poachers were killed and “freshly poached ivory” was recovered.

“There was armed contact with suspected poachers in Chirundu. Two suspects were shot dead in that armed contact. The rangers managed to recover a rifle and freshly poached ivory. Investigations are in progress,” said Farawo.

“We are warning would-be poachers that national parks are no-go areas for criminal activities. If you are found in a protected area armed there is no way that we can apprehend you, you will be shot on site. We have a shoot-to-kill policy.”

Poaching has become rampant throughout Zimbabwe with poachers targeting elephants for their tusks.

The country has the second-largest elephant population in the world.

The 100,000-strong population — which is double the carrying capacity of its national parks — is controlled through culling, hunting and conservation efforts by ZimParks.

Zimbabwe is seeking international support to be allowed to sell its stockpile of seized ivory, estimated to be worth \$600m, saying the proceeds would fund its elephant conservation and wildlife management.

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