

Local news News News

Rhino poaching numbers increase from 2021

A total of 82 rhinos have been poached in the Kruger National Park between January and June this year.

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Ten more rhinos were poached in the first half of 2022 compared to the first half of 2021.

A total of 259 rhinos have been poached for their horns in South Africa from January to June. Eighty-two of these were poached in the KNP. This is according to a statement by the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment released earlier this week.

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“Recent trends in rhino poaching show a move away from the KNP to private reserves and KwaZulu-Natal, where the majority of rhinos have been killed this year. This makes it all the more important for National Government to shift its focus to supporting provincial authorities and private reserves in the war on rhino poaching,” said the department’s minister, Barbara Creecy.

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This year's poaching statistics show a loss of 210 rhinos on state properties and 49 in privately owned parks. As indicated, hit hardest during this period was KwaZulu-Natal, which recorded a loss of 133 rhinos. This is more than triple the 33 rhinos killed in this province in the first six months of 2021.

The department said partnerships between the public and private sectors remain key to combating wildlife trafficking. In addition to work being undertaken within the seven Integrated Wildlife Zones, the partnership now includes both the financial and transport sectors, as well as transit and end-user countries in Southeast Asia, especially with the People's Republic of China, Malaysia and Vietnam.

Between January and June, 69 people were arrested in connection with rhino poaching and rhino horn trafficking. Of these, 13 alleged poachers were arrested in the Kruger.

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On April 23, an integrated operation was conducted to address money laundering and corruption linked to rhino horn trafficking activities within the KNP. Various search and seizure warrants were authorised and executed at multiple premises in and around the park with the aim of effectively dismantling the operations of some of the main targets.

Three suspects were arrested during the operation, which included two Kruger field rangers. One of the rangers was dismissed during the departmental hearing on July 21. The other ranger's departmental hearing is ongoing pending the outcome of the court process.

The Skukuza Regional Court sentenced four Mozambican nationals and two South Africans to prison sentences ranging from 18 to 24 years. Charges included poaching and possession of unlawful firearms and ammunition.

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