



PRETORIA NEWS NEWS

Barbara Creecy says no rhinos killed in Pretoria parks last year



A de-horned rhino the Rietvlei Nature Reserve. Picture: File

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Pretoria - The parks and reserves in Pretoria did not lose a single rhino in 2022, said Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment Barbara Creecy.

Over the years, the city lost some rhinos in both private and national reserves, including Pretoria Lodge, Dinokeng Nature Reserve, Rhenosterfontein Game Farm in Cullinan, and Rietvlei Nature Reserve.

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Some of the biggest arrests were also made in Pretoria, including that of five heavily armed suspected rhino poachers after a gun battle in the heart of the Rietvlei Nature Reserve in 2013.

Creecy said last year, 124 rhino were killed in the Kruger National Park. The number of rhinos poached in the Kruger represents a 40% decrease compared to those killed for their horns 2021.

“The poaching threat shifted to KwaZulu-Natal, which lost 244 rhino to poaching last year. Of these, 228 were killed in provincial parks and 16 in privately owned reserves. Hluhluwe iMfolozi Park was specifically targeted,” she said.

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In total across the country, private rhino owners lost 86 rhinos last year, and the number of rhinos killed in the past year represents a slight decline (of 3%) compared to the 451 rhinos poached in South Africa in 2021.

“The steady decline in rhino poaching in national parks is related to the relentless war that has been waged by our fearsome anti-poaching machinery as well as a comprehensive de-horning programme,” said Creecy.

“This year’s outcome shows that collaboration between conservation authorities, the South African Police Services, revenue authorities and international agencies works.

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“We believe that if provincial authorities in KwaZulu-Natal follow our model, they will be able to significantly curb rhino poaching in their provincial parks before it is too late,” she said.

Last year, a number of successful arrests and prosecutions were recorded, adding weight to the integrated work of the law enforcement agencies, including the police, Hawks, SA National Parks (SANParks), Environmental Enforcement Fusion Centre, the Environmental Management Inspectorate or Green Scorpions, customs officials, provincial park authorities, and the National Prosecuting Authority.

A total of 132 arrests were effected during 2022 for rhino poaching, 23 in the Skukuza area in Mpumalanga, 49 in KwaZulu-Natal and the balance in Limpopo.

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The recent focus on money laundering and international co-operation with other law enforcement authorities saw the arrest of 26 rhino horn traffickers and 13 people for money laundering and bribing of rangers.

As part of continued efforts to ensure the survival of the rhino species, SANParks is in the process of identifying suitable safe habitats across South Africa for the introduction of rhinos.

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