

Herald LIVE

YOUR WEEKEND

Schotia rhinos Bonnie and Clyde killed by poachers and dehorned

BY GUY ROGERS - 04 FEBRUARY 2023



BLOODY ATTACK: This male rhino was killed by poachers at Schotia Safaris on Thursday. The poachers apparently used pangas to remove its horn. Schotia, the oldest private game reserve in the Eastern Cape, borders the eastern side of Addo Elephant National Park
Image: SUPPLIED

Two rhinos that survived a poaching attack at Schotia Safaris Private Game Reserve, near Nanaga, nearly 10 years ago were killed by poachers on Thursday.

After disabling the pair of male and female white rhinos in the attack, the poachers hacked off their horns with pangas before making their escape.

Schotia Safaris owner Peter Bean described his heartache and anger about the incident.

“We had a game drive on Thursday afternoon and they sent us the news that a rhino carcass had been found.

“My son, Justin, went out and found the other one as well.

“He tracked the culprits 9km through the night but lost them when they got to the N10.”

He said anti-rhino poaching forensic experts were still on the reserve but it seemed both animals had initially been shot.

“Tracks show how after Clyde, our male rhino, was hit he ran through the bush and over a dirt road, leaving blood everywhere.

“We could see his tracks where he stumbled and eventually collapsed, where they were able to move in and hack off his horn.”



AGONISING END: After being shot, the male rhino ran for some distance through the bush before collapsing

Image: SUPPLIED

He said Schotia had taken ownership of the two rhinos in 2008.

“They were poached in 2013 and though their horns were removed then as well, and though they have never bred since, they survived.

“Now, in 2023, they have both been killed and their horns have been hacked off.”



TOURIST MAGNET: White rhinos Bonnie and Clyde were acquired by Schotia in 2008 and became a prime attraction for tourists at the reserve. After surviving a poaching attack in 2013, they were killed by poachers on Thursday
Image: SUPPLIED

He said one of the big difficulties rhino owners had was that they were not allowed to regularly remove the horns of their rhinos, without causing them pain or harm, and thereby generate money to help combat poaching.

“If we could do that, we could invest in better protection and buy more rhinos, which would help preserve the species.

“Incidents like this happen because the owner is not allowed to trade in his own horn.

“The criminals can because they don’t abide by the law.

“We can’t because we abide by the law.

“This is 100% the fault of not being allowed to trade in rhino horn legally, freely as an owner.”

He said the SA justice system also needed to increase the penalties for poaching.

“This poaching will continue until the punishment fits the crime.

“These poachers have hacked to pieces two beautiful animals that have been with us for many years.”

According to the Rhino Foundation’s 2022 State of the Rhino Report, since 2017 there have been 2,707 recorded rhino poaching incidents in Africa, 90% of which took place in SA.

“South Africa accounts for about half of the total black rhino population on the African continent and is also home to the world’s largest population of white rhinos,” it says.

“Currently, 2,056 black rhinos and 12,968 white rhinos are estimated to remain for a total of more than 15,000.

“Following a welcome respite during Covid-19, poaching is again on the rise in South Africa.

“A staggering 259 rhinos were poached for their horns in the first six months of 2022.

“This is 10 more than the 249 poached countrywide in the first six months of 2021.

“The government used to supply monthly poaching statistics but now only releases them annually despite criticism from the conservation fraternity and the DA, which argue that lack of information is undermining efforts to combat poaching.”

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