

NEWS

Bitter twist to new double Sibuya rhino killings

By **Sue Maclennan** - 07 April 2023



Veterinarian William Fowlds and Nick Fox, the owner of the Sibuya Game Reserve, with a white rhino killed on the Eastern Cape reserve. Picture: THE HERALD

‘An incredible story of courage and survival that has now been obliterated’ is how wildlife veterinarian Dr William Fowlds has described the killing this week of two orphaned survivors of a 2016 rhino poaching incident at Sibuya Game Reserve. In a bitter blow to the rhino conservation community, two rhinos whose mothers were killed by poachers seven years ago were themselves killed by poachers on Tuesday April 4.

Staff at the private family-owned reserve and supporters of the Sibuya Rhino Foundation are reeling at the latest incident which comes amid a surge in poaching in the Eastern Cape.

The Sibuya Rhino Foundation posted: “It has been a dark and devastating day for all of us at Sibuya. Two of our precious rhino, Binky and Noelle, were brutally killed by ruthless poachers on Tuesday evening. We are all beyond words with grief. Binky and Noelle (whose year old calf is Mimi) were our two original orphaned girls from the last poaching incident in 2016. Both females were pregnant and neither calf survived the horrific attack.

“The loss of these magnificent creatures has left us heartbroken and outraged. Binky and Noelle were more than just rhinos – they were a part of our Sibuya family. They will live forever in our hearts. RIP.”

Fowlds said Noelle was so named because she’d been born on Christmas Day.

“Her story was inspiring because she was one of the first rhinos in the country to be orphaned, rehabilitated, released into the wild and then give birth. She had an incredible story that has now been obliterated.”

“The entire Sibuya family is devastated about losing these two magnificent Rhino that gave so many joy on a daily basis,” Sibuya co-owner Carol Fox told Talk of the Town.

“They themselves were orphaned in 2016 and now they’ve met the same cruel fate. Twenty three-month-old Mimi is now an orphan herself. We hope she survives the stress and depression caused by losing her mother.

“May these heartless brutal killers be brought to justice,” Fox said.

The incident comes just over a month after three rhinos were found killed with their horns hacked off at Lalibela Game Reserve near Makhanda, and two months after poaching survivors Bonnie and Clyde were killed at Schotia Safaris Private Game Reserve near Nanaga. Environmental Journalist Guy Rogers [reported in The Herald](#) that the Lalibela poachings had brought to 13 the number of rhinos brutally attacked in this way in the Eastern Cape in the past six months. [The Herald reported](#) that the Eastern Cape had gone without a rhino poaching incident for 4½ years until December 2022. Since then a dozen animals had been slaughtered and left in the veld with their horns hacked off.

“The reserves in the area are all on high alert and are doing everything they can to counter the threat to rhinos,” Fowlds told Talk of the Town.

The police had not yet responded to a request for comment at the time of publishing. — Talk of the Town