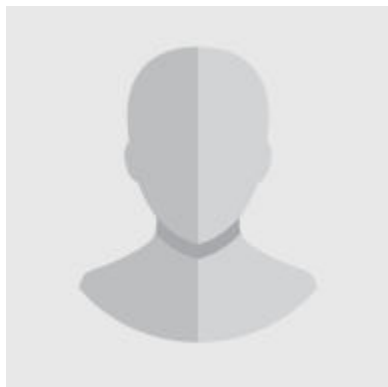


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More rhinos poached in Limpopo

In Limpopo, which shed over 90 000 jobs between January and March, the impact of rhino poaching was hugely felt by its nearly 6.8 million population.



Picture: iStock

More than 80 rhinos were killed through poaching in Limpopo parks and game reserves between 2020 and 2022 – which is of major concern for the Limpopo economics development, environment and tourism department.

Rhino poaching stats

According to recent statistics from the department of forestry, fisheries and the environment (DFFE), 18 rhinos were poached in 2020, 38 in 2021 and 25 in 2022 in Limpopo. The majority of those killed were in the Kruger National Park.

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However, KwaZulu-Natal recorded the highest number of rhinos poached in the same period, with 93 in 2020, 103 in 2021 and a staggering 244 in 2022.

In Limpopo, which shed over 90 000 jobs between January and March, the impact of rhino poaching was hugely felt by its nearly 6.8 million population.

“Poaching poses a serious safety risk to tourists, therefore abstinence by tourists has direct economic impact to the tourism and the provincial economy,” Rodgers Monama, the Limpopo MEC for economic development, environment and tourism, said in a statement.

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“Poachers invest an enormous amount of money into their activities. Usually, such syndicates are based within the country – usually, the ivory and the rhino horn are sold in foreign markets.”

‘Economic destruction’

Monama said the monies made from such sales is usually used to finance further economic destruction, illicit cigarettes trade, sex trafficking and prostitution, wars and to bribe nature reserve employees and corrupt officials who are entrusted with the safekeeping of the magnificent species. He said wildlife contributed greatly to the Limpopo economy.

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Since the lifting of Covid restrictions, many jobs had been created through tourism. Monama called on those responsible for killing rhinos for their horns to refrain from such activities, adding that by working with members of the community and law enforcement agencies, the fight against poaching could be won.

The Democratic Alliance, which has been at the forefront of fighting stock theft, called on Limpopo provincial police commissioner Lieutenant-General Thembi Hadebe to increase the capacity of stock theft units to effectively combat rhino poaching.

The party said rhino poaching and the illicit trade of rhino horns were not only a conservation issue, but crimes enabled by dangerous crime syndicates.

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“These syndicates will only be brought to justice if our police are well-resourced and trained in advanced investigative techniques and intelligence gathering,” DA MPL in Lebowakgomo, Katlego Phala, said in a statement.