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WATCH | Pilanesberg National Park: Zero poaching in 3 years, thanks to the dehorning of rhinos

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WATCH | Zero poaching in 3 years thanks to dehorning of rhinos in the Pilanesberg National Park

The Pilanesberg National Park has established itself as a refuge for rhinos. Thanks to a flurry of conservation and protection efforts, they're labelled the park's most protected citizens.

The 55 000ha park is home to both the Southern White and Black Rhino species, which are under severe threat from poachers.

[Poachers kill the animals for their horns](#) because it's falsely believed the minerals therein have medicinal properties.

With rhino populations becoming critically endangered, Netstar and Toyota SA partnered with the Pilanesberg Wildlife Trust to help eradicate rhino poaching and to provide rangers with the improved technology needed in tracing and security.

However, the park's key strategy to combat poaching has been to dehorn its entire rhino population - with great success. The Pilanesberg has had no poaching incidents in the three years since 2020.

Veterinarian Gerhardus Scheepers told News24, during a visit to the park, that dehorning the animals was not a painful procedure.

"It is minimally invasive – we make sure we use the correct parameters so that there is no harm to the animal," Scheepers said.

He added that whether the horn was cut did not make a difference to the rhino. He said the herd structure stayed the same regardless, with the dominant bull still the leader.

[READ | 20 years and 200 rhinos later: How conservationists are growing the black rhino population](#)

In 2019, Toyota and Netstar joined the connected car project – with cutting-edge, connected devices deployed to anti-poaching vehicles. Netstar has tracked over 80 000km, mainly within the park's borders, giving the anti-poaching unit access to meaningful data.

Netstar's group managing director, Grant Fraser, said that, as a vehicle tracking company, they were always looking for ways to improve their technology.

"The telematics and the technology that we use plots information on a map, and, from that perspective, we can see different parts and routes that are being travelled. On our heat map, we've refined it, so we can see gaps in places that haven't been travelled.

"We are honoured to contribute our advanced vehicle tracking technology and data insights to help safeguard rhinos from the devastating threat of poaching," he said.