

## JUST IN: 59 poachers arrested



Mr Tinashe Farawo

### Victor Maphosa Herald Correspondent

AT least 59 people have been arrested for poaching by the Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Authority (ZIMPARKS) as from January this year to date.



rifles and ammunition were recovered during the same period.

“This year alone, we have arrested 59 people for poaching and nine of them have since been sentenced to nine years imprisonment. Most of these poachers were targeting elephants.

“We managed to recover at least 103 kilogrammes of ivory, five live pangolins which we have rehabilitated and released back into the bushes,” Mr Farawo said.

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He also said they recovered ten rifles and 74 rounds of ammunition which were allegedly used by poachers. Mr Farawo said there are measures which are being put in place to stop poaching.

“We are currently doing joint operations with other law enforcement agencies in a bid to curb poaching. We have increased our presence in all hotspots and also our officers are receiving training on the subject matter.

“We are also carrying out public awareness campaigns to educate communities on issues of poaching and we are happy with the response we are getting from the public.”

He said wildlife crimes are now regarded as Serious Economic Crimes which he said is a positive step towards fighting poaching.

“Wildlife crimes have been elevated to the category of Serious Economic Crimes, which is a major positive step in reducing poaching activities and we welcome the development,” said Mr Farawo.

Zimbabwe has recorded many cases where poachers have clashed with law enforcement agents with the latest fatal incident leaving two ZIMPARKS rangers murdered in Kariba.



ZIMPARK officers were reportedly overpowered by poachers who allegedly killed them and disposed of their bodies in the lake where a search team recovered them later with multiple wounds.

During the burial of the officers, Zimparks Director General Mr Fulton Mangwanya said there is need to adjust some of the conservation laws to save life.

“We will be lobbying with the authorities to try and change some of the conservation laws that are there. There is a law which says poachers or prisoners being moved on water cannot be handcuffed. The poachers could have taken their chances and attacked our rangers because they were unrestrained,” Mangwanya said.

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