

/ LOCAL NEWS

Zim losing forex to poaching

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Mr Tinashe Farawo

Yoliswa Dube-Moyo, Matabeleland South Bureau Chief

COMMUNITY participation is key to reducing wildlife crimes amid concerns that the country is losing revenue as a result of poaching. Poachers kill elephants for their tusks and rhinos for their horns.

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The official value of ivory is US\$250 per kilogramme yet poachers can sell it for as little as US\$50 per kilogramme.

In Matabeleland South province, most wildlife is found at the Matobo National Park and the Greater Mapungubwe Transfrontier Conservation Area.

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A number of conservation efforts are being implemented at the Matobo National Park to avoid extinction of some animal species with rhino dehorning done as part of efforts to protect the animals from poachers that kill them for their horns.

Zimparks public relations manager Mr Tinashe Farawo, in an interview, said conservation efforts are ongoing and stressed the need to engage communities on the importance of conserving wildlife.

“We’re doing everything in our power to address the poaching problem. We’ve gone down from as high as 400 in 2014/15 to as low as 20 cases. The numbers are going down. The area where we were having problems was the Hwange-Matetsi block.

Last year, we never lost a single elephant due to poaching. If you go to areas like Bubi and many others where we have rhinos, at some point we were losing rhinos almost every day but the numbers are going down.

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We’ve employed policies such as the shoot to kill. If you’re found within a protected area with a rhino, it’s non-negotiable because you become an enemy. All those things have assisted in making sure we deal with poaching,” said Mr Farawo. — @Yoliswa