

Everyday News for Everyday People

NEWS DAY

BREAKING

[Home](#) [Local News](#) Zim anti-poaching unit receives award

- [Local News](#)

Zim anti-poaching unit receives award

By
Newsday

-
July 28, 2022

0
78



BY CATHERINE MUCHIRI

THE Zimbabwe ranger team, Anti-poaching Tracking Specialists (ATS K9 Unit), has won an international award in recognition of its work in fighting poaching.

The ATS unit, operating in the Save Valley Conservancy was awarded the International Ranger Award in Rwanda, last week.

"The World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA), together with the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) recognised the Zimbabwe ranger team in awards that were established with the support of the International Ranger Federation, Conservation Allies, Re:wild and the Global Tiger Initiative," the WCPA said.

According to the Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority (ZimParks), 322 elephants were killed by poachers between 2016 and 2019, largely for their tusks which are shipped out to Asia, via South Africa.

The actual number of poached elephants could be much higher, wildlife groups say.

Much of the poaching occurs in northern Zimbabwe in game reserves straddling the border with Zambia, according to ZimParks.

"This award to the ranger team has come despite operating in the face of adversity, with the results of a positive growth population of rhino.

"Under the protection of ATS, the rhino population in Save Valley Conservancy has seen a biological growth rate of 7%, this is above the 5% IUCN recommendation for game reserves protecting rhino, and maintained a poaching mortality rate of below 2%, also IUCN recommended," the WCPA statement read.

"The ATS is a rhino protection, anti-poaching and anti-trafficking, security organisation in Zimbabwe contracted for rhino monitoring and special species protection unit for Zimbabwe's black rhino population; along with speciality protected white rhino, elephant, panelling, painted dog, cheetah, lion, sable, python, ground hornbeak, lapped-facet vultures and more in the largest private game reserves in Africa."

Commenting on the award Bryce Clemence, director and head ranger at ATS, said: "It has been a 10-year effort in the Save Valley Conservancy to create what is today, the anti-poaching, K9, rhino monitoring and ecology teams, as the foundation for the Special Species Protection Unit in the SVC. We commend

our unit for the dedication and commitment to ranger principles and wildlife practices.”

Chairperson of the Game Rangers Association of Africa, Andrew Campbell said: “ATS has developed and field-tested standard methods for monitoring rhino population and conservation efforts.

The ATS K9 unit has pioneered the use and handling of their highly trained dogs to support co-ordinated anti-poaching operations.”

The United Nations Environment Programme and Interpol estimate illegal wildlife trade is valued between US\$7 billion and US\$23 billion annually, and illicit ivory trade accounts for much of that.

- ***Follow us on Twitter @NewsDayZimbabwe***