

Rhino Poaching in 2024 / 2025

Rhino Poaching Decreases In 2024 But We Still Don't Have The Full Picture

South Africa's Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE) have released updated full year rhino poaching statistics for 2024, and while it is good to see an overall decline of roughly 15%, an increase in poaching in the latter part of the year means we are currently in the midst of the greatest poaching spike since 2019.

420 rhinos were killed by poachers across South Africa in 2024, 79 less than were lost in 2023.

Mass dehorning efforts in KwaZulu-Natal (the global epicentre of poaching) and the Kruger National Park yielded encouraging results part way through the year, however following these interventions poaching syndicates rapidly altered their approach, with many of last year's victims being dehorned rhinos. This should serve as a significant reminder that dehorning is not a silver bullet, it can only be an effective deterrent when teamed with wider anti poaching and community efforts.

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76%

**OF ALL POACHING ON
STATE & NATIONAL PARKS**



55%

OF POACHING OCCURRED IN KWAZULU-NATAL



The news that many poached rhinos had been previously dehorned shows that dehorning does not replace traditional anti-poaching methods and should rather be seen as an additional tool in the toolbox against rhino poaching. There is a clear indication that private reserves are vital custodians of rhinos, acting as a Swiss bank account where anti-poaching is not hindered by red tape and where innovative techniques can be deployed and tested.
Craig Spencer, Founder of the Black Mambas

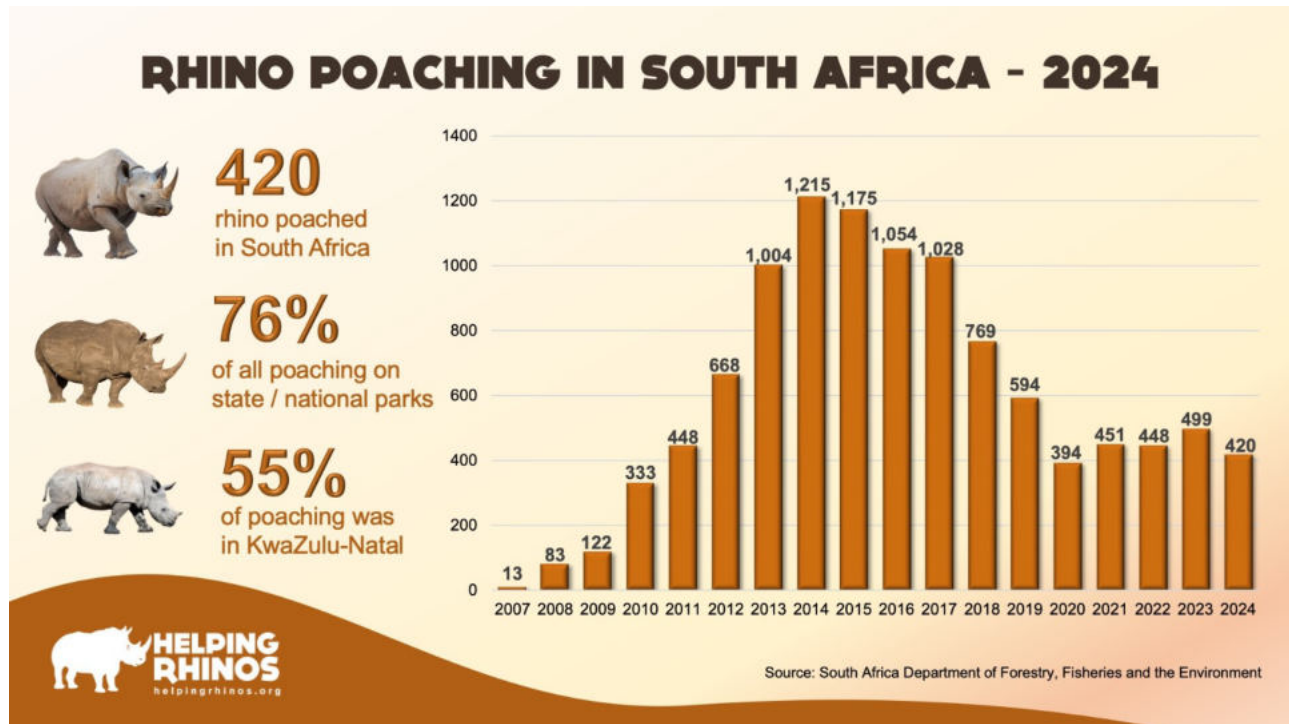
Once again the majority of losses were on State owned land, **with 76% of all poaching taking place in State run and National Parks.** While the number of rhinos lost on privately owned land did increase slightly from 93 in 2023 to 100 in 2024 the role of private rhino custodians cannot be understated. If it were not for the work of private reserves and landowners, it would likely already be too late for rhinos.

KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) continues to be the province hardest hit losing 232 rhinos, though this was 93 less than were lost in 2023. While it is good to see this number decreasing, we cannot underestimate the work that still needs to be done within the region.

Kruger National Park lost 88 rhinos, ten more than the year before. **Worryingly over 30% of Kruger's losses occurred in the last month of the year,** with 21 rhinos killed during December. This spike, which has continued into 2025 is deeply concerning, however we appreciate the ongoing efforts to weed out corruption and deal with the complex socio-economic situation around

the park will take time to show results. The current park management should be commended for the proactive stance taken to address these issues.

Disappointingly the poaching stats were not contextualised as percentage losses of the current national herd. This key level of detail was greatly appreciated when it was provided in the 2024 mid-year stats and alongside many of our colleagues, we would implore the South African Government to include these numbers in future updates. **Without knowledge of the current living population the true impact of these losses cannot be fully understood and analysed**, and we cannot know for sure if the rhino population is in net decline, although we strongly suspect that it is.



While a first glance at these stats gives the impression that rhino poaching is on the decline, a deeper dive into the last 4 months shows the exact opposite is true. This is a time to re-focus and do all we can to protect these amazing animals, and I call upon everyone involved, from the South African Government to the dedicated teams on the ground to international NGOs to work together to provide a safe and sustainable future for our rhinos.

Simon Jones, Founder & CEO, Helping Rhinos

2025 Update

As we feared the spike in poaching numbers seen at the end of 2024 has continued into the first months of 2025 – with South Africa’s DFFE announcing that 103 rhinos have been killed by poachers in the first three months of the year.

Once again, the greatest losses were on State owned land, with 63% of the total poaching. The numbers so far are comparable with the same period in 2024, highlighting the relentless pressure these rhino populations are under.

More encouraging news from the announcement is that four Provinces have managed to maintain clean records, with the Western Cape, Northern Cape, Gauteng and the Eastern Cape losing no rhinos in this period. Given the Eastern Cape’s status as a key Rhino Stronghold this is an immense achievement. Results like these tell us that our Eyes in the Sky aerial anti-poaching support and technological interventions in the form of cutting-edge rhino tracking devices are working, and we hope that you our supporters feel proud of the tangible difference your support is making in this pivotal region.

The killing of 103 rhinos in the first 90 days of 2025 means we are still losing more than one rhino every day – and without knowing what percentage of the total population this amounts to we cannot know the true impact of these losses.

How You Can Help

We are steadfast in our commitment to create and expand [Rhino Strongholds](#) – secure habitats where rhinos and the species they share them with can thrive, whilst creating long term socio-economic benefits for the people who live alongside these wild spaces. The track-record of the Eastern Cape – one of our key Rhino Stronghold locations – tells us that these interventions are working, but we can only continue to fund them with your support – please [donate](#) today.

THANK YOU

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