

Team set up to tackle wildlife poisoning

Environment authorities say a dedicated task team has been established to tackle the ongoing crisis of wildlife poisoning.



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[More than 120 vultures are believed to have died recently](#) in the Kruger National Park after feeding on an elephant carcass that was laced with poison, allegedly by poachers.

Around 80 of the endangered scavenger birds narrowly survived.

KwaZulu-Natal has also seen a sharp decline in vulture populations, with vulture poisoning cases reported in the northern parts of Zululand - including Hluhluwe and Pongola.

However officials say there's been a sharp decline.

Flora Mokgohloa is the Deputy Director-General for Biodiversity and Conservation in the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment.

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She spoke to the reporters about the department's efforts at the Global Wildlife Programme Exchange Workshop taking place in Mkuze in northern KZN.

"So they're looking at various interventions, one of which is to work with the chemicals industry and the veterinarian industry to say, how do we take some of these chemicals off the market or otherwise find alternatives that can be used for whatever treatment that they're being used for."

She says the department is also engaging with traditional healers to better understand the use of vultures in traditional medicine.

"Some of them, they prefer to do things themselves. Others they buy from the market. If you're a healer, you have to do it yourself. So what we are finding is the people in the mill that are giving us a problem, because someone would hear, 'Healers are using vulture heads.' And then the next thing they do, uh, these illegal activities, and then they go, they sell the vulture heads."

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