

# Government condemns killing of rhinos in North West

The Department of Environmental Affairs has condemned the rhino killings witnessed in the North West province this past weekend. The attack saw a total of seven rhinos killed at a game farm on the Klipkopspruit Farm near Rustenburg, North West. The Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) has reiterated government's commitment to the fight against the on-going plundering of our natural resources.



The department has also noted that the North West Department of Economic Development, Environment Conservation and Tourism, along with the country's law enforcement agencies, have since launched an investigation into the killing of the seven rhinos this weekend. This investigation forms part of and will be dealt with in conjunction with a series of other similar investigations related to the on-going scourge.

## Co-operate with law enforcement officials

The DEA has called on all South Africans to co-operate with the country's law enforcement agencies to get to the bottom of the recent increase in poaching, especially the recent spike in the North West province. The DEA also calls on all officials employed by the various conservation authorities and provincial departments of environment to put the interests of the country above any personal goals by reporting any potential corrupt activities or any officials suspected of involvement in poaching.

All these on-going efforts by the South African government to curb rhino poaching have to date resulted in a total of 230 arrests. The number of rhinos poached in 2012 thus far stands at 570, with the Kruger National Park being the worst affected, followed by the North West province and KwaZulu-Natal.

With initiatives such as Operation Rhino (a national project established and mandated to handle all rhino related investigations and cases) and the implementation of the norms and standards for the marking of rhino horn and hunting of rhinos for trophy hunting purposes, the DEA believes government will see success in its fight against rhino poaching.

Rhino poaching statistics:			
SA	2010	2011	2012
KNP (SANParks)	146	252	347

MNP (SANParks)	0	6	3
GP	15	9	1
LIM	52	74	52
MP	17	31	26
NW	57	21	73
EC	4	11	7
FS	3	4	0
KZN	38	34	59
WC	0	6	2
NC	1	0	0
Total	333	448	570

Members of the public are urged to report incidents of rhino poaching or any tip-offs that could lead to arrests and prevention of illegal killings to +27 (0)800 205005.

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