



UNDER ATTACK:
These rhinos were bought by suspected poaching kingpin Dawie Groenewald. They are currently at a secret location in Limpopo.

PICTURE:
MOLOKO MOLOTO

Slaughter continues in Kruger Park

THREE rhinos have been killed in the Kruger National Park since the beginning of the year, SA National Parks said yesterday.

"The animals were lost in two separate incidents. A hunting rifle and two sets of horns were recovered," said SANParks spokesman Ike Phaahla,

In the first incident, two white rhinos were shot dead in the Houtboschrand section.

Kruger National Park managing executive Abe Sibiya said a poaching group from Mozambique shot the animals and removed their horns on January 1. The poachers had not been caught.

In the second incident, a group of rangers in the Lower Sabie area exchanged gunfire with three poachers, who escaped. They left behind a high-calibre hunting rifle and a bag containing a set of rhino horns.

The carcass of a white rhino missing its horns was later found.

"This is not an ideal way to start the year, but the initiatives that we have put in place,

especially the aerial surveillance one, is teaching us a lot and we are making a lot of progress," Sibiya said in a statement.

Two rhinos were killed at the Madikwe Game Reserve in North West on Monday, according to the provincial Environmental Affairs Department.

Spokeswoman Dumisa Seshabela said the first rhino was found dead on Saturday evening.

"It was confirmed as a rhino poaching on Sunday. Both the horns of the bull were removed. The cause of death was a shot near the front of his neck."

The carcass of the second rhino was found on Monday evening.

Seshabela said park rangers heard shots about 7.45pm.

"The horn was not removed. It is suspected that the poachers were disturbed."

No arrests had been made.

On December 19, the national Environmental Affairs Department said 633 rhinos were killed for their horns in South Africa last year.

The Kruger National Park lost 395 rhino to poaching, and 197 were killed in North West, KwaZulu-Natal and Limpopo.

In 2011, 252 rhinos were killed for their horns in the Kruger National Park, with 74 killed in Limpopo, 21 in North West and 34 in KwaZulu-Natal.

Meanwhile, international mathematicians and graduate students will converge at Wits University next week to come up with mathematical solutions to the increasing threat to South Africa's rhino population, focusing on white rhinos.

The workshop will seek answers by modelling the problem mathematically. – Sapa

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