

Rhino poaching numbers decrease

Environment, Forestry and Fisheries Minister Barbara Creecy says efforts to save the rhino are paying off as poaching numbers decrease. From January to June 2019, the number of rhino poached countrywide was 318, a decrease compared to the same period in 2018 when 386 rhino were killed for their horns.



Image source: www.pixabay.com

Creecy said the decline can be attributed to cooperation between law enforcement agencies and government departments, including collaboration with private rhino owners, NGOs and other stakeholders.

The implementation of the Integrated Strategic Approach to the Management of Rhino, the minister said, has also played a part in the decline of rhino poaching.

A total of 190 rhino have been poached in the Kruger National Park in the period under review, even though 1,202 incursions and poacher activities were recorded in the park in the first six months of this year.

Integrated approach paying dividends

“Although the battle to end poaching is far from over, we are proud to say that our efforts as government, private rhino owners and concerned citizens are paying dividends as we continue to implement the Integrated Strategic Approach to the Management of Rhino,” Creecy said.

The Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries has recently entered into partnership with the Endangered Wildlife Trust to enhance detection capabilities at ports of entry and exit through the use of highly trained canines. These canines will assist in screening cargo and luggage for wildlife products, including rhino horn.

South Africa joined the globe in marking the 9th World Rhino Day on Sunday, September. The annual day was launched by the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) in 2010 under the theme “Five Rhino Species Forever”. The day has since grown to become a global event drawing attention to the impact of poaching on the continued survival of the species.

Responsible citizenship

World Rhino Day serves as an opportunity to build a culture of responsible citizenship amongst communities living adjacent to conservation areas.

Creecy said government will redouble efforts to make sure that communities who live on the borders of wildlife parks benefit from conservation and the biodiversity economy so that they are not vulnerable to recruitment by syndicated poaching rings.

“We reiterate our assertion that communities living with rhinos remain as partners in the protection of this iconic species. We must all say that this scourge of rhino poaching cannot continue under our watch.

“It is on this Rhino Day that government, NGOs, business, ordinary citizens, communities, the youth and conservation bodies unite to celebrate the five species of rhino still left in the world – the Black Rhino, White Rhino, Greater one-horned rhino, Sumatran and Javan rhinos,” the minister said.

She also called on citizens to be vigilant and report any suspicious activities related to wildlife to the anti-poaching hotline number 0800205005 or the police on 10111.

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