

CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES OF
WILD FAUNA AND FLORA



Seventy-eighth meeting of the Standing Committee
Geneva (Switzerland), 3-8 February 2025

Rhinoceros

1. This document has been prepared by Namibia* to report on the implementation of Recommendation d) contained in the SC 77 Summary Record, agenda item 45, on rhinoceros.
2. Regarding the trend associated with Illegal killing of rhinoceros, Namibia experienced one of its worst years of rhino poaching in 2022, with 94 cases of rhino poaching, a significant increase from previous years (*Figure 1*). During 2023, the poaching figures reduced but remained at high levels as the number of incursions into rhino areas were at an all-time high. This trend continued in 2024 and the country reported its fourth worst year of poaching, having lost 81 animals (January-June – 59 and July to December – 22). From May 2024, a number of interventions were implemented after the meeting referred to in Paragraph 56 of Doc SC 78 Doc. 45, prepared by the Secretariat. As a result of those interventions, during the last half of 2024, we lost 22 animals compared to 59 animals lost in the first half of the same year, and none in 2025. These interventions are contained in paragraphs 5 and 6 of this document.

* *The geographical designations employed in this document do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the CITES Secretariat (or the United Nations Environment Programme) concerning the legal status of any country, territory, or area, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. The responsibility for the contents of the document rests exclusively with its author.*

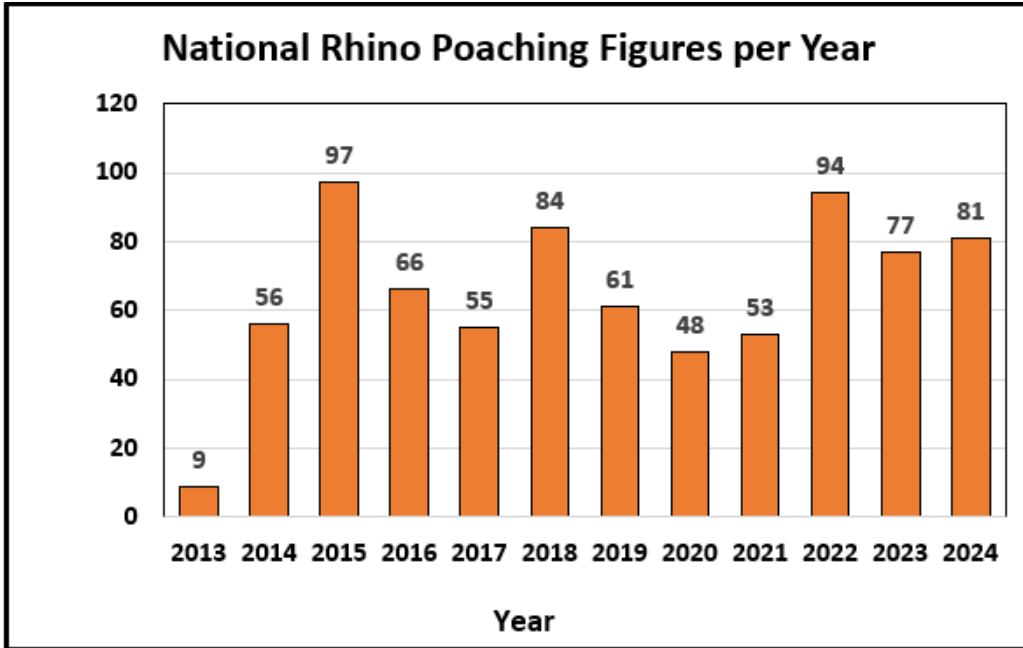


Figure. 1: Rhino poaching trend from 2013 to 2024. Credit: Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism (MEFT)

3. A total of 14 rhino horns were confiscated in 2024 compared to 21 in 2023 (see Figure 2).

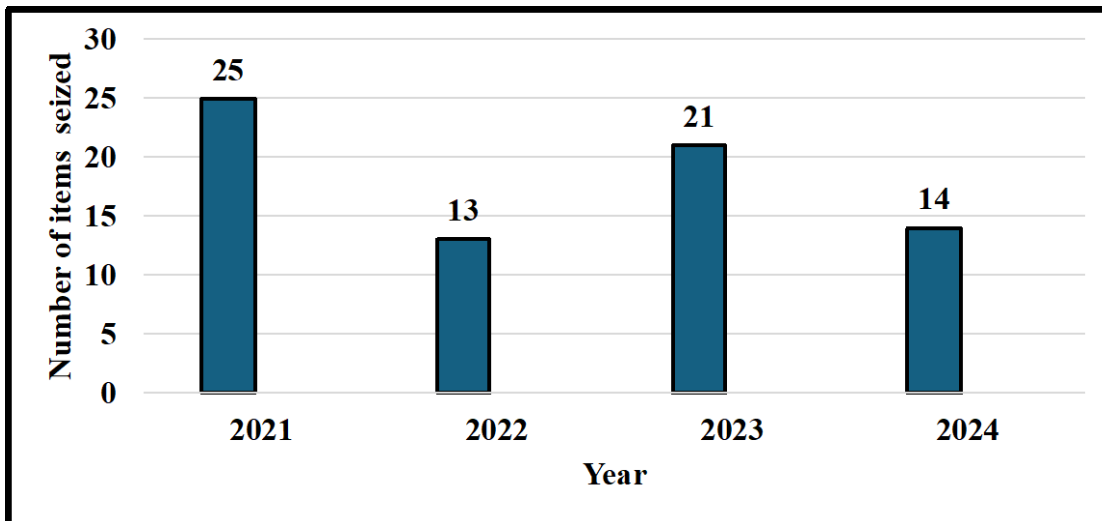


Figure 2: Summary of number of rhino horns seized 2021-2024. Credit: MEFT

4. A total of seventy seven (77) suspects were arrested for rhino-related crimes, of which fifty nine (59) remain in custody and eighteen (18) are out on bail at the time of reporting, fifteen (15) firearms were seized and six (6) vehicles impounded. Of the arrested suspects, seventy three (73) are Namibian nationals, while the remaining four (4) are Angolans.

5. The following Strategic Interventions were taken/improved during the period under review:
- (i) During May 2024, all our K9 Units participated in a follow-up training.
 - (ii) The Revised National Strategy on Wildlife Protection and Law Enforcement (2021-2025) provides the policy directives and framework as well as a detailing of the common approaches to the protection and conservation of wildlife in the country. It also makes provision for the effective enforcement of laws governing wildlife resources in the country. The Strategy presents an overarching view of the wildlife protection and law-enforcement approaches in Namibia, detailing a strategic program for wildlife protection and law enforcement, investigations and prosecutions, transboundary illicit trade, as well as protection of rhinoceroses within and outside of protected areas. Aspects such as community safety and security, partner and stakeholder coordination, and awareness and communication are also covered. A revision of this strategy took place during June 2024, with the inclusion of integrity management systems as the focus going forward. This Strategy has led to the initiation of Horse Units in two of our National Park. The acquisition and training of horses have been carried and training of the riders is expected to commence in this year.
 - (iii) Numerous CCTV camera systems supported by well equipped control rooms have been installed to improve monitoring and security in some of the strategic areas and National Parks. Additionally, one of our Parks with rhinoceros also received a state-of-the-art digital radio system with tracking capabilities. We have also introduced SMART systems in all our National Parks with rhinoceroses.
6. Namibia has also undertaken the following national and international collaboration efforts to curb illegal activities involving rhinoceros:
- 6.1 During June 2024, Namibia officially approved the Black Rhinoceros Custodianship Program Strategy 2024-2033, which will be implemented for the next 10 years. This is envisaged to improve working relations with private farmers who are participating in the program.
- 6.2 MEFT has been collaborating with the Namibian Police Force (NamPol), National Defense Force (NDF) and National Intelligence to combat wildlife crime nationally. The Blue Rhino Task Team (BRTT) has been set up by the Investigation Unit of MEFT and the Protected Resource Division (PRD) and has members from all the above-mentioned entities. The BRTT handles all rhino-, elephant- and pangolin-related cases. Members of NamPol and NDF are deployed in several national parks and the Kunene Region. MEFT continued to collaborate with NGOs such as Save the Rhino Trust – Namibia (SRT) and the Integrated Rural Development and Nature Conservation (IRDNC) in the Kunene Region.
- 6.3 Internationally, security clusters continued to collaborate with neighboring countries to fight wildlife crime. The BRTT has also been working with INTERPOL and the Angolan authorities to apprehend syndicate members in Angola, through which most of the Namibian rhino horns are being smuggled.
7. In conclusion, Namibia commits to continuously review the illegal wildlife activity trends and revise her preventative measures to ensure effectiveness.