

Rhino poaching in South Africa increases in 2023

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South Africa recorded 499 rhinos poached in 2023, 51 more than the previous year, despite efforts to protect the animals, the government said on Tuesday.



File photo: Black rhinos, one of the world's endangered animals, are seen at a farm outside Klerksdorp, in the north west province, South Africa, 24 February 2016. Reuters/Siphwe Sibeko/File Photo

South Africa is home to nearly half of the critically-endangered black rhino population in Africa and to the world's largest population of near-threatened white rhinos.

Rhinos are poached for their horns, which are used in east Asian countries for making traditional medicines and jewellery.

In 2023, 406 rhinos were killed on state properties and 93 on privately owned parks, reserves and farms, South Africa's Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment said in a statement.

"The pressure again has been felt in the KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) province with Hluhluwe-iMfolozi Park facing the brunt of

poaching cases," environment minister Barbara Creecy said.

"While KZN recorded 49 arrests and 13 firearms seized, multi-disciplinary teams continue to work tirelessly in an attempt to slow this relentless pressure."



'Animal activist' arrested for illegal possession of rhino horns

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Kruger National Park recorded a 37% decrease from 2022 with 78 rhinos poached in 2023. No rhinos were poached in any other national parks.

Rhino poaching often involves international criminal syndicates which rely on the help of local poachers and collude with park rangers.

South Africa's environment ministry said last year it was increasing healthcare, training and counselling services for rangers to discourage them from assisting the poachers.

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