

281 rhinos killed by poachers in S. Africa this year

July 17 2012



A nine-month-old rhinoceros pictured at the animal orphanage of the private Rhino and Lion Nature Reserve in Krugersdorp, north of Johannesburg, in July 2010. Poachers in South Africa have killed 281 rhinos so far this year, with the world-famous Kruger National Park accounting for over half the killings, authorities said Tuesday.

Poachers in South Africa have killed 281 rhinos so far this year, with the world-famous Kruger National Park accounting for over half the killings, authorities said Tuesday.

"The [Kruger National Park](#) has lost a total of 164 rhinos to illegal killings," the environment department said in a statement.

With roughly 20,000 rhinos, South Africa is home to up to 80 percent of the [world population](#).

But the country has seen a devastating increase in poaching in recent years as black-market demand for rhino horn has grown.

Last year poachers killed 448 [rhinos](#), up from 333 in 2010 and just 13 in 2007. Heightened security measures have failed to stop the criminal syndicates that officials say are responsible for the killing.

The animals' distinctive horns are hacked off to be smuggled to the lucrative Asian black market, where the fingernail-like substance is falsely believed to have powerful healing properties.

On the black market, the horns are worth their weight in gold.

Soldiers and specialist investigators have been deployed to Kruger to battle the poachers. Police have arrested 176 suspects including 153 [poachers](#) while the others were classified as exporters, couriers or buyers.

(c) 2012 AFP

Citation: 281 rhinos killed by poachers in S. Africa this year (2012, July 17) retrieved 18 May 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2012-07-rhinos-poachers-africa-year.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--