

S. Africa rhino toll hits 428 this year

June 20 2013



Rhinoceros rest in the Kruger National Park near Nelspruit, South Africa, on February 6, 2013. Poachers have slaughtered at least 428 rhinos in South Africa so far this year, more than two a day, official figures showed Thursday, despite high-profile efforts to curb poaching.

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South Africa's environment ministry said [Kruger National Park](#) had lost

267 rhino to [poachers](#), while the number poached in the northern province of Limpopo increased by 15 in the last week alone.

Last year, 668 [rhinos](#) were killed, a record high that could be surpassed if the poaching continues at today's pace.

The lucrative Asian black market for rhino horn has driven poaching in South Africa, which has the largest rhino population on the world.

Asian consumers falsely believe the horns, the same composition as fingernails, have powerful healing properties.

The killings have escalated from 13 reported incidents of poaching in 2007.

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