

Record 1,215 rhino poached in S.Africa in 2014: official

January 22 2015



A rhino at the private game reserve of French Damien Vergnaud, 200 kms north east of Cape Town, March 23, 2013. The slaughter of rhinos worsens in South Africa as 1,215 animals were killed by poachers in 2014

A record 1,215 rhinos were poached in South Africa in 2014, a 21 percent increase from the previous year, environmental authorities said Thursday.

"During 2014, the number of 1,215 rhinos were killed, this is a rise in

the number of poached rhino from 1,004 in 2013," said Minister of Environmental Affairs Edna Molewa.

"The figure remains worryingly high."

Over two thirds of the animals were killed in the famed Kruger National Park.

Molewa told journalists that "over 100 [rhinos](#) have been moved to more secure locations" in a bid to save the threatened animals, killed for the purported medicinal quality of their horns.

"Through this method we aim to create rhino strongholds, areas where rhino can be cost-effectively produced," said Molewa.

Some of the [animals](#) were moved to neighbouring countries, in a program that started last year.

"Despite these successes that we're talking about, the organised transnational [illicit trade](#) in rhino horn undermines our efforts," said Molewa.

"This is indeed very worrying, we therefore have to ensure that we continue to work together in stepping up all the measures that we have adopted."

Molewa described poaching as part of an "multi-billion dollar worldwide illicit trade."

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Citation: Record 1,215 rhino poached in S.Africa in 2014: official (2015, January 22) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2015-01-rhino-poached-safrica.html>

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