

Etosha's new anti-poaching patrol facility

ETOSHA

The illegal hunting of rhinos and elephants in Namibia is afflicted with can negatively impact wildlife and may drive these magnificent animals to local extinction. Environment and Tourism Minister Pohamba Shifeta says.

Shifeta made the remarks whilst officiating at the inauguration of new facilities of the Skerpioenbult [Scorpion Hill] Anti-Poaching Patrol Camp in the Etosha National Park on Saturday. Rhinos and elephants, he said, are highly significant animals and high value species, both ecologically and economically.

"Overall, wildlife is the driver of the tourism economy and tourism holds major socio-economic benefits for the country through employment creation, poverty alleviation and national development at large," he explained.

All these benefits, Shifeta noted, are on the brink of disappearing due to ongoing poaching in the country. However, the minister took note of a decline in poaching this year.

He pointed out that 27 rhinos were poached this year, compared to 60 last year. He further said that poachers had killed 20 elephants in Namibia so far this year in comparison to 101 poached in 2016.

Shifeta indicated that with continued support from its partners, the Namibian government has committed significant resources and the deployment of security to the hotspot areas.

"The Skerpioenbult Anti-Poaching Patrol Camp is another step in the fight against poaching, and enables the deployment of anti-poaching personnel to this hotspot area," the minister said.

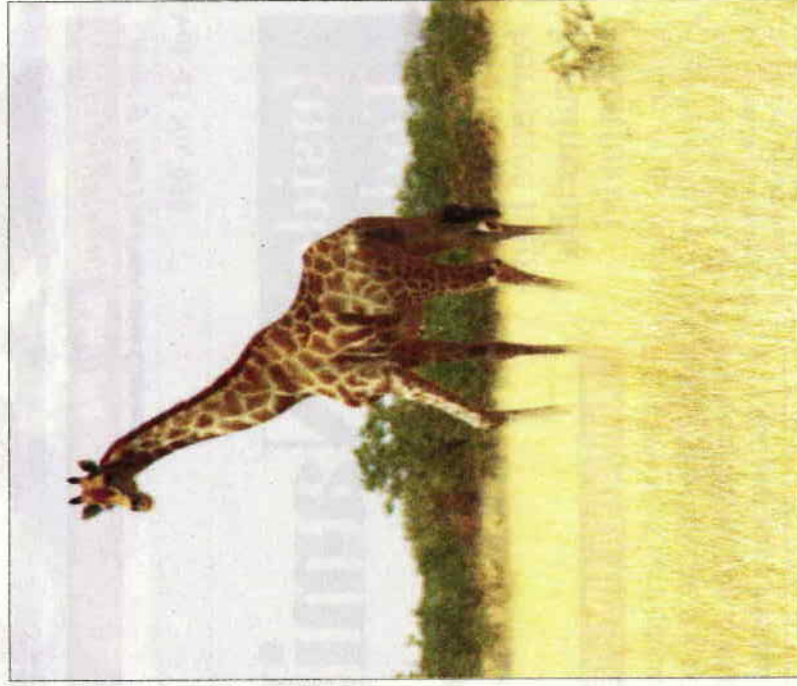
Speaking at the same event,

United Nations Development Programme resident representative Anita Kiki Gbeho said over 20,000 elephants were reportedly poached on the African continent in 2013. In 2015, poachers reportedly killed over 1,300 rhinos in Africa, she added.

There is a high concentration of rhinos in the Skerpioenbult area and it is where the highest cases of rhino poaching were recorded for the past few years.

Yahoo Japan Corporation, one of the leading media houses in Japan, in March donated N\$5 million, through the Namibian Protected Areas System Strengthening (PASS) Project, to construct the patrol camp.

Anti-poaching personnel, consisting of MET officials, the Namibian Police Force and Namibia Defence Force members, will be deployed to the camp for anti-poaching patrol purposes. — *Nampya*



In the savannah... Giraffe are among the increasingly rare animals roaming Etosha National Park.