

# SA monitoring major rhino poaching case

PRETORIA: The Department of Environmental Affairs says it has noted the indictment of two South Africans in the United States for rhino poaching-related offences.



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"The department has noted the indictment of two South Africans by the United States Department of Justice. The indictment of the owners of Out of Africa Adventurous Safaris is noted. We will monitor developments related to the case," said the department's spokesperson Albi Modise.

The Directorate for Priority Crime Investigation, also known as the Hawks, assisted the US Justice Department's Environment and Natural Resources Division in their investigation.

Modise said the department understands that there is a criminal case against Dawie Groenewald and 10 co-accused, who are expected to stand trial in South Africa in August 2015 on 1,872 charges including racketeering, illegal trade in rhino horns, fraud, corruption, assault and illegal possession of firearms and ammunition.

## Kruger National Park

Legal action by the United States Attorney General's Office comes less than a week after the police and SANParks officials successfully apprehended 14 suspected rhino poachers in joint operations at the Kruger National Park.

"The success of the joint operations undertaken by the SAPS and SANParks is an example of the commitment of South Africa's police and rangers to work together to eliminate rhino poaching from our country," said the department.

The three successful operations had been undertaken in the Kruger National Park between 17 and 19 October 2014.

The arrest of the 14 suspected rhino poachers brought to 113 the number of poachers arrested in the Kruger National Park this year.

The department congratulated all those involved in the operations.

"The department is confident that joint operations such as these will send a strong message to all those intent on poaching any species, particularly rhino in our national parks, provincial reserves and on private conservation land, that they will be caught and face the full might of the law."

The successful arrests in the Kruger National Park came as the number of rhino poached in South Africa since the start of 2014 increased to 899.

The Kruger National Park continued to bear the brunt of rhino poaching in South Africa, having lost 581 animals since 1 January 2014.

A total of 109 rhino have been poached in Limpopo, 74 in KwaZulu-Natal, 57 in Mpumalanga and 53 in North West. A second rhino has been poached in the Northern Cape.

Since January 2014, a total of 282 alleged rhino poachers have been arrested.

The department urged the public to report incidents of poaching and tip-offs to the anonymous tip-off lines 0800205005, 0860010111 or Crime-Line on 32211.

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