



Saturday 13 April 2013
News updated at 3:43 AM IST

Weather
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In Bangalore
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Poachers kill rhino in tiger reserve

Abhay Kumar, Patna, DHNS:

In a first of its kind incident, a female rhino was found killed in the Valmikinagar Tiger Reserve (VTR) area, some 350 km from here.

The adult rhino was apparently killed by poachers, as its horn was missing when the Forest Department officials reached there after receiving information from the local villagers. The officials found two bullet injury marks—one on the head and the other one on the rhino's shoulder.

"Prima facie, it appears to be a poaching case. But more details could be known only after the post-mortem report is available," district forest officer (DFO) S Kumarasamy told Deccan Herald on Wednesday.

The DFO said that the rhino, which appears to have been killed 15 days ago, perhaps had strayed from the adjoining Chitwan National Park in Nepal. "The Chitwan National Park, which is home to around 500 rhinos, is situated on the north of VTR. It's quite possible the female adult rhino strayed into the VTR as it shares a contiguous forest area with the Nepal park," the DFO said.

Though no rhino poaching case has been ever reported from VTR, forest officials suspect that the poachers, who are quite active in Chitwan, might have killed the animal as its horns command high prices in China and Southeast Asia. Used for making traditional medicines, one kg of rhino horn is estimated to cost Rs 15 lakh in international market.

Though VTR is not home to rhinos, still three of them which strayed into the reserve three years back have been staying here. Prior to their straying, one rhino was killed when it was hit by a running train in 2005. In another incident, a rhino died after it fell into a canal in 2006. This is for the first time that a rhino has been killed after being hit by poachers' bullets.

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