

229 rhinos die at Kaziranga

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GUWAHATI: A total of 229 rhinos have died in Kaziranga wildlife sanctuary in the past three years, according to information tabled in the Assam assembly in its just concluded session.

Of these animals, 81 were killed by poachers while 148 died of natural causes. Poachers killed 42 rhinos in 1995 and 38 in 1996. The forest department could seize ten rhino horns from them. Forest guards killed 12 poachers in these years and held 21 others.

Apart from forest guards, the forest department has also deployed personnel of Assam forest security force and home guards for the protection of animals in the Kaziranga sanctuary. There is no encroachment inside the sanctuary, but there is unauthorised occupation in areas proposed to be included in the sanctuary.

At the Orang reserve forest, three rhinos were killed this year by poachers, but an investigation instituted by the forest department had not led to any result.