

STATE OF THE RHINO UPDATE: RHINO POACHING NEARLY DOUBLES IN NAMIBIA

International Rhino Foundation February 01, 2023

<https://rhinos.org/blog/state-of-the-rhino-update-rhino-poaching-nearly-doubles-in-namibia/>

Earlier this week, officials reported that 87 rhinos were killed by poachers in Namibia last year. This is almost double the 45 rhinos poached in 2021 – and one of Namibia’s highest poaching rates in the last decade.

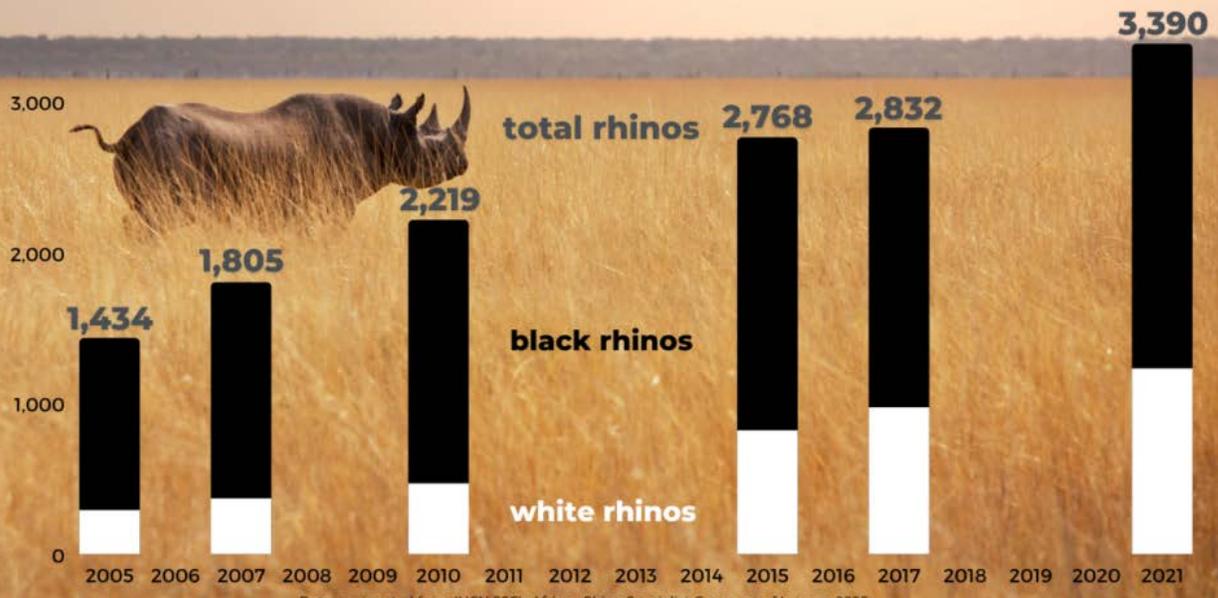
The International Rhino Foundation (IRF) shares in Namibia’s serious concern of the increase in rhino poaching seen in their borders last year, leaving 61 black rhinos and 26 white rhinos dead.

Namibia has become a stronghold for rhinos in Africa, with the second largest rhino population on the continent at an estimated 3,390. This includes the largest population of black rhinos and the second largest population of white rhinos in all of Africa.

Rhino Population Growth in Namibia



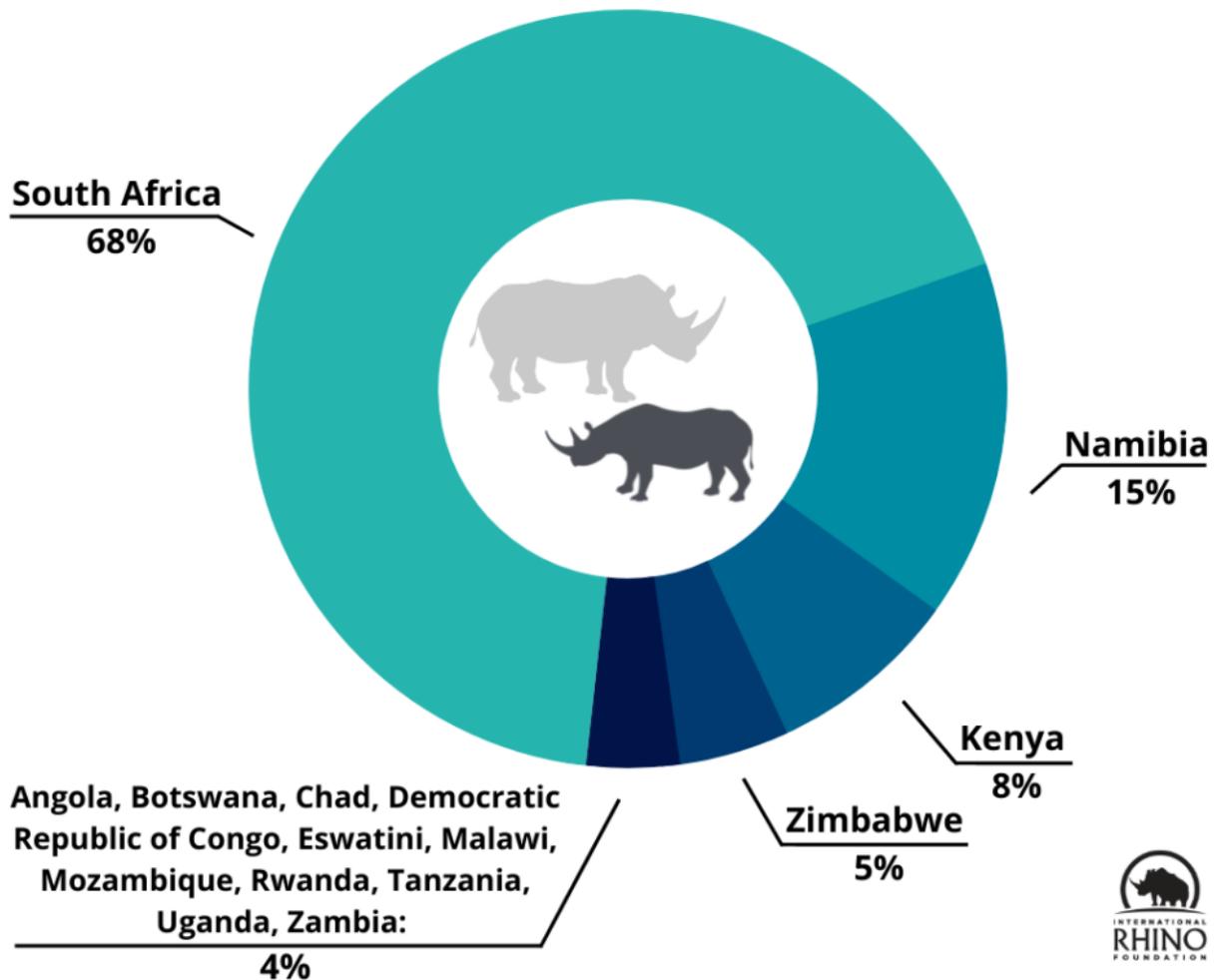
population estimates of Namibia's white and black rhinos



Data as reported from IUCN SSC's African Rhino Specialist Group, as of January 2023.

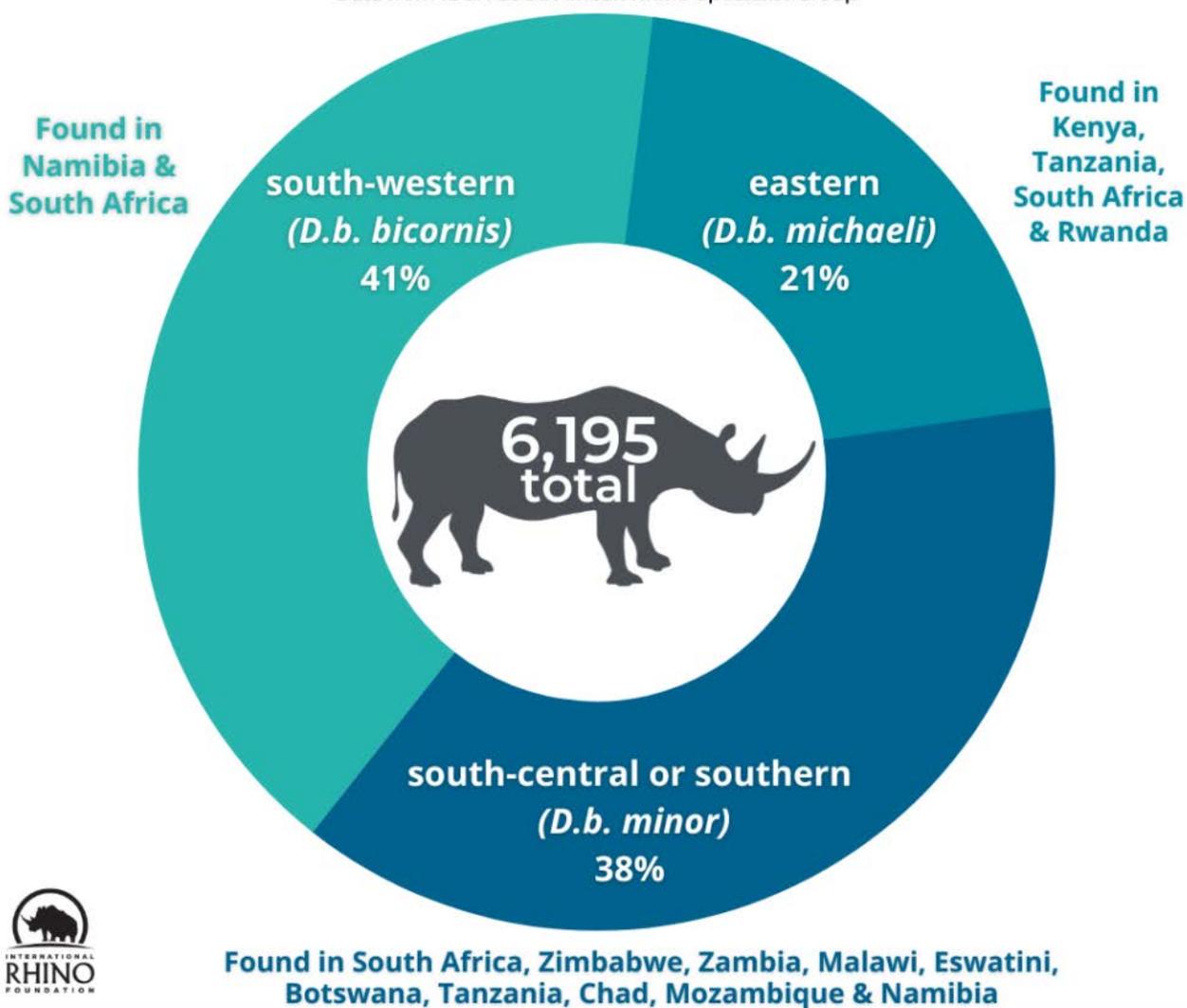
Current African rhino population by country

Data from IUCN SSC's African Rhino Specialist Group



Black rhino subspecies *Diceros bicornis* (D.b.)

Data from IUCN SSC's African Rhino Specialist Group

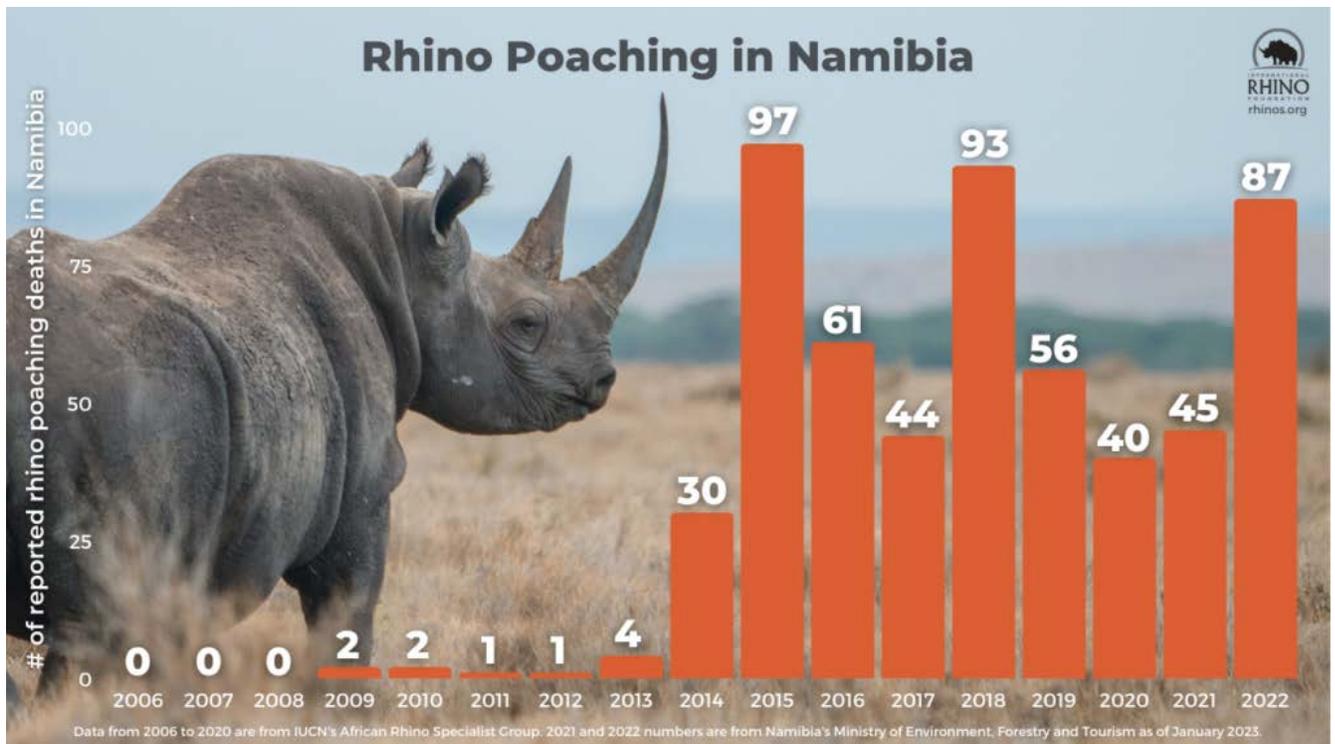


Namibia holds the world's largest population of black rhinos, representing more than a third of the entire species. Almost 85% of the south-western subspecies of black rhino lives in Namibia.

Despite a short period of relief during the global pandemic lockdowns, poaching is on the rise again throughout Africa, especially as many people are feeling the economic burden of global inflation, food shortages and supply chain issues.

Across Africa, poaching patterns are changing. As poaching efforts increase around the continent, white rhinos – the most populous of the rhino species – continue to decline in numbers. This makes it more difficult for poachers to find them as they become less concentrated, spread out across large national parks and reserves. Many of these parks have also greatly increased security measures to reduce the number of poaching incursions on their land. However, this is pushing poachers to hit other areas. Private reserves and populations that were once considered less threatened are now the target of much of the poaching efforts, which is orchestrated by highly organized, well-funded criminal syndicates.

Namibia has already taken steps to address the increase in poaching in its flagship Etosha National Park, and we are hopeful that with its long history of effective anti-poaching controls and rhino management strategies, it will be able to again curb this surge in poaching efforts.



Please note that it is common for countries to update their previous year's reported poaching numbers as carcasses are later discovered in remote locations and determined to have been killed the year before. IRF's 2021 State of the Rhino report originally reported 43 Namibian rhinos poached in 2021, that number has now been updated to 45.

Namibia is only one part of Africa's rhino poaching story, and it remains to be seen whether the increase in poaching there last year is due to a shifting of poaching efforts from other countries, or a part of a continent-wide increase in rhino poaching. As more countries report their 2022 rhino poaching numbers, we will know more about the current status of the global poaching problem.

There are fewer than 27,000 rhinos left in the entire world today, and without collaborative protection and management, the five rhino species are all at risk of extinction. IRF thanks all the individuals, governments and communities holding the front line to protect the planet's remaining rhinos.