



**forestry, fisheries
& the environment**

Department:
Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
(For written reply)**

QUESTION NO. 113 {NW117E}

INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 1 of 2022

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Mr D W Bryant (DA) to ask the Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment:

- (1) Whether the numbers of rhino are available on a monthly basis; if not, why not; if so, will the numbers be published on a monthly basis as received, **including the numbers of rhinos that were poached;**
- (2) what is the estimated rhino population for Kruger National Park in 2031, taking into account the 2011 rhino population, the current rhino numbers and the negative birth rate caused by poaching;
- (3) whether she has found that the current enumeration formula for rhinos is effective and providing accurate results; if not, what is the position in this regard; if so, what are the relevant details?

113. THE MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT REPLIES:

- (1) The population numbers of rhino in national and provincial parks/reserves are not available on a monthly basis as most government institutions do game counts on an annual basis, if resources are available. It is therefore not possible to publish rhino population numbers on a monthly basis.

The national poaching figures for rhino are collated monthly. Publishing these figures at monthly intervals, does not provide a sufficient time for law enforcement authorities to undertake a


detailed analysis of the statistics; and to plan and execute appropriate response strategies, including the initiation of joint operations and arrests of key individuals. Rhino poaching statistics are therefore published every six months (usually in January and July) to allow sufficient time for the effects of targeted compliance and enforcement activities to be included in the published statistics.

- (2) SANParks does not have formal projections of rhino numbers into 2031. A number of variables would inform models to project population estimates into the future. These would include the poaching rates, poaching impact on the population, management interventions such as anti-poaching initiatives and their impact, environmental factors such as droughts, mortality of females, proportion of males in a population, amongst others.

It is not clear what is meant by "the negative birth rate caused by poaching". Currently the observed decline in the number of rhinos in Kruger National Park (KNP) can be explained by the fact that the combined annual natural and poaching mortality rates exceed the annual birth rate. Please see <https://journals.co.za/doi/abs/10.3957/056.051.0100>.

- (3) The current methodology for estimating the rhino population in KNP is sound, backed by science and produces reliable results. It is an internationally recognised method for estimating populations of large mammals in large areas where total counts are not possible. The results from this methodology are regularly published in peer-reviewed journals to ensure both the method and the final estimates are sound. It must be stated again that accounting for rhino in a large complex protected area like KNP is different compared to small reserves or national parks, where a total count is possible and typically each individual rhino is known.

Regards



**MS B D CREECY, MP
MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT**

DATE: 24/2/2002