



Africa's potent symbol — the black rhino — is in mortal danger of extinction.

SA now the black rhino's last refuge

POACHERS have slaughtered more than half the black rhino population in Africa in the last two years, leaving southern Africa as the only safe refuge for this critically endangered species.

Fewer than 7 500 now survive. The decimation of the black rhino is due to poaching for its highly valued horn.

"This crash in the rhino populations is a crisis which cannot be overstated", said rhino-trade expert Dr Esmond Bradley-Martin.

Singling out Southern Africa, and particularly South Africa, as the only remaining sanctuary for the rhino, he said the 700 black rhino in SA represented 10 percent of the total black rhino population.

This number is steadily increasing due to the rhino breeding programmes at Pilanesberg, established with the help of the SA Nature Foundation — and the Natal Parks Board.

Dr Bradley-Martin reported that black rhino populations had fallen from 65 000 in 1970 to 15 000 in 1982, with a further collapse to today's figure of 7 500 animals. This represents the slaughter of 90 percent of the population in 15 years.

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