

Shock as five rhinos shot

GAME RESERVE: 'NIGHTMARE RELIVED' AS POACHERS KILL FOUR, INCLUDING PREGNANT FEMALE

➔ **Last missing one found shot in the face, painfully injured but still alive.**

Citizen reporter

Searl Derman, owner of Inverdoorn Private Game Reserve, just outside Cape Town, and his staff were left traumatised after five rhinos were shot on Wednesday night – four, including a pregnant female, were found massacred and a fifth badly injured.

At about 10.30pm the 24-hour Anti-Poaching Unit raised the alarm as they found the horrific scene of four shot rhino while on their regular patrols.

The initial scene assessment found that two rhinos had already died due to their injuries, while the remaining two, although still alive, were heavily injured. But they also died later on.

The team acted fast as a fifth



HORRIFIC SCENE. Three of four rhinos found killed at Inverdoorn Private Game Reserve in the Western Cape on Wednesday. Picture: Inverdoorn Private Game Reserve

rhino was missing and tracking operations were immediately activated on the 10 000ha private game reserve.

Apparently large calibre rifle rounds from silenced weapons were identified at the scene and patrols were intensified.

At about 2am the team got eyes on the fifth injured female rhino. She was shot in the face, painfully injured but still alive.

Derman said that he is "horrificed to relive this nightmare".

"As with our previous poaching incident at Aquila Private Game Reserve in 2011, we will again commit to sparing no expense or effort to catch and bring justice to these vicious perpetrators who massacred our rhino," he said.

"We are starting by offering a R100 000 reward for information that will lead to the successful ar-

rest of the criminals."

This nightmare comes at a time when the tourism industry and the private game lodges in the country are already throttled by continued international travel bans.

The industry is obliterated and many private game reserves have gone insolvent, culled wildlife, reduced staff and other resources to extend their lifeline as the pan-

demia continues to create havoc.

There is not only a social cost to this pandemic, but wildlife are unwitting participants and victims of the pandemic.

In response to the 2011 rhino poaching incident at Aquila Private Game Reserve, the company initiated the Saving Private Rhino NGO and acquired the oldest gun shop in Cape Town.

The City Guns business is instrumental in supporting the Anti-Poaching and Rhino Response teams of not only the Aquila Collection, but also other private game reserves in the country.

Over the years, Saving Private Rhino have also been instrumental in several other rhino poaching investigations and the arrest of poachers, including the syndicate that attacked and killed the Aquila rhinos in 2011.

At that particular time, the South African National Defence Force was active in the Kruger National Park and other state-owned reserves while organised crime, as opposed to opportunistic poachers, were branching off to attack private game reserves. – news@citizen.co.za