

NATION

# R100K reward for info on poachers behind killing of four rhinos, one pregnant

STAFF WRITER

FOUR rhinos, one a pregnant female, were found slaughtered at the Inverdoorn Private Game Reserve, just outside Cape Town, on Wednesday night, leaving staff traumatised.

At around 10.30pm, the 24-hour Anti-Poaching Unit raised the alarm after making the horrific discovery while on their routine patrols. The initial scene assessment found that two rhinos had

already succumbed to their injuries, while the remaining two, although still alive, were heavily injured.

"The team acted fast as a fifth rhino was missing and tracking operations were immediately activated on the 10 000-hectare private game reserve while the management, conservation teams, wildlife veterinarians, law enforcement and others were notified and dispatched to the scene," the reserve said. Large-calibre rifle rounds from

silenced weapons were identified on the scene. According to management, one of the killed females was pregnant.

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

A wildlife veterinarian team under the leadership of Johan Marais was dispatched to assess the injuries of the fifth maimed rhino and they are considering facial reconstructive surgery as a matter

of priority. Owner of Aquila Collection, Searl Derman, said that he was "horried 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 in the pursuit to catch and bring justice to these vicious perpetrators who massacred our rhino. We are starting by offering a R100 000 reward for confidential information that will lead to the successful

arrest of the criminals that brought much heartache and loss to the staff and management of this unique Western Cape private game reserve."

Inverdoorn Private Game Reserve has previously gone through the process of dehorning rhino and replacing the horns with synthetic horns.

This groundbreaking technique was implemented to reduce the risk of poaching but, while widely publicised, together with signage on reserve

fencing, this did not deter the poachers in this latest incident. One of the slaughtered rhino had a lifelike fibreglass horn with zero value to the poachers.

The public and any other supporting services can make contact via info@savingprivaterhino.org, 083 441 2826, or send information via the Saving Private Rhino Facebook page message facility.

Information can also be shared anonymously via Crime Stop on 0860010111 or SMS Crime Line on 32211.