



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND TOURISM

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PRESS RELEASE

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HIPPOS SUSPECTED TO HAVE DIED FROM ANTHRAX UPDATE

The Ministry is aware of the current situation where hippos and buffalos are dying in the Kavango West region, in the Bwabwata National Park.

To date, we have recorded 110 hippo carcasses and 20 buffalo carcasses. We suspect that the mortalities are caused by anthrax. In this regard, the Ministry together with the Veterinary Services of the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry are conducting an assessment to establish the exact cause of death.

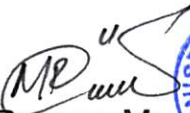
Senior officials from the Directorate of Veterinary Services of the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry and senior officials from the Directorate of Parks and Wildlife in the Ministry of Environment and Tourism are expected to visit the area to ascertain themselves of the situation and confirm the cause of death.

Once the cause of death has been established, an appropriate action will be taken to avoid further mortalities.

While the authorities work around the clock to establish the exact cause of these mortalities, we urge the public to refrain from touching and using the meat for consumption as this might be catastrophic.

The Ministry is also aware of concerns regarding the safety of tourists intending to visit the park, in this regard we would like to assure our tourists that there is no health hazard to people as a result of the situation. It is important to note that the area in which these mortalities are taking place is not open for tourists but an exclusive area for wildlife management only. However, as a precaution, we urge that tourists do not go close to the affected area by any means.

We are also aware of concerns regarding the species survival as these animals continue to die in big numbers. The Ministry takes this issue seriously and will be able to respond to such concerns when the assessment is completed. To this end we do not foresee this situation threatening the existence of the affected species.


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