



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

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PRESS RELEASE

ANTHRAX OUTBREAK IN THE BWABWATA NATIONAL PARK

Unusual deaths of mainly hippopotami and some buffaloes were detected in the inland waters and flood plains of Bwabwata West at the beginning of October 2017. The cause of death was unknown but anthrax was suspected.

An aerial assessment was done on the 7th October 2017 which revealed 110 hippopotami and 20 buffaloes carcasses.

The Directorate of Veterinary Services confirmed through microscopic analysis on the 11th October 2017 that the hippopotami died from anthrax.

Anthrax is a highly pathogenic disease caused by a bacteria called *Bacillus anthracis*. The disease can be transmitted to humans and domestic animals.

During a high level joint assessment meeting held on the 11th October 2017 comprising of officials from the Ministry of Environment and Tourism, Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry's Directorate of Veterinary Services, Ministry of Health and Social Services, Kavango East Regional Council represented by the Mukwe Constituency Office and Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources. The following action plan to contain the outbreak was agreed to;

1. Clean up operation will be carried out with immediate effect by removing all carcasses. During this operation, certain sections of the park in Bwabwata West will be closed for tourism or public access;
2. Directorate of Veterinary Services will carry out a vaccination campaign against anthrax for cattle that are in close proximity to the park;
3. Livestock movement restrictions has been put in place in the Mukwe Constituency;
4. Ministry of Health and Social Services will provide prophylaxes to people who were exposed to the hippopotami carcasses and who are at risk of been contaminated by the disease;
5. The public is advised to avoid any contact with any animal that has died of unknown causes.

This communique is jointly released by the Ministry of Environment and Tourism, Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry, Ministry of Health and Social Services and Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources.

Issued by:

Romeo Muyunda
Chief Public Relations Officer
Tel: (061) 284 2840
Cell: 081 1407844
E-mail: Romeo.Muyunda@met.gov.na