

Homecoming for Tanzania rhino species kept alive in S.Africa

May 21 2010



A Black Rhino is seen at a Rhino conservation program in Nanyuki, approximately 300 kilometres north of Nairobi on March 2010. A group of Tanzanian rhinos, now extinct in their natural habitat, was airlifted home Friday more than two decades after some of the species were brought to South Africa, officials said.

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The Tanzanian government asked South Africa to return some of the black rhinos, of the east African *Diceros bicornis michaeli* species, after they went extinct in their original home range, South Africa's government news agency said.

South Africa had imported five of the michaeli rhinos more than 20 years ago, BuaNews agency said. While the species is not native to [South Africa](#), the rhinos thrived there, multiplying to 61.

South Africa's environment minister, Buyelwa Sonjica, handed five of the rhinos back to Tanzania on Friday, the first of 32 that will eventually be sent.

The [rhinos](#) were transported in a Lockheed Hercules C-130 cargo plane.

"This initiative is in line with the African Renaissance, as these animals contribute to economic development through [tourism](#) and protection of our national capital," Sonjica said at the hand-over.

David Mabunda, the head of South Africa's national parks, called the relocation of the animals a "fairy tale" ending.

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