

Five rhinos resettled in Rwanda from Czech ZOO

June 24 2019



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Five critically endangered eastern black rhinos were on Monday

successfully relocated to Rwanda's Akagera National Park after a long journey from the Czech Republic, park officials said.

The arrival of the rhinos marks the second translocation to Rwanda after South Africa donated 17 rhinos in 2017, reintroducing the species after it had disappeared for over a decade due to intense poaching.

That initial population has now grown to 20 in the park, which is considered an excellent habitat for the rhinos.

"This unique achievement represents the culmination of an unprecedented international effort to improve the survival prospects of a critically endangered rhino subspecies in the wild," said Jes Gruner, manager of Akagera National Park.

"Their arrival also marks an important step in Akagera's ongoing revitalization and one that underscores the country's commitment to conservation."

The rhinos began their journey on Sunday after months of preparation at Safari Park Dvůr Králové in the Czech Republic, according to the Rwanda Development Board.

The two male and three female rhinos—needed to widen the [gene pool](#) in the park—will live in enclosed spaces with the aim of increasing their adaptability and survival rate.

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Rwanda also reintroduced lions—from South Africa in 2015—after they had disappeared from the country for about 15 years.

"Just under a decade of management with improved law enforcement and strong community and economic development initiatives has seen poaching practically eliminated, key species including lion and rhino returned, significant support fostered for conservation, and vibrant tourism leading to Akagera being 80 percent self-financing," read a statement from African Parks which assisted the translocation.

Rwanda, which has experienced a dramatic turnaround since a 1994 genocide left 800,000 dead, is billing itself as a Big Five safari destination to attract more tourists, with many coming to see the rare mountain gorillas.

Rwanda received 1.3 million visitor arrivals in 2017 and tourism is Rwanda's largest foreign exchange earner, government statistics show.

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