



40 YEARS OF RHINO CONSERVATION SOLIO 1970 - 2010

When Courtland Parfet bought Solio Ranch in the far south of Laikipia in 1966, his wife Claude, a committed conservationist, persuaded her husband to allocate a 55 sq km area of the ranch as a wildlife haven.

This was the first fully fenced wildlife sanctuary in Laikipia.

At the time there were no rhinos left on Solio. In Laikipia, as elsewhere in Kenya, poaching had led to many remnant rhinos wandering near villages and threatening the human population. The only safe place for these animals was in a fenced sanctuary and that meant Solio.

The forerunner of the KWS - the Wildlife and Conservation Management Department (WCMD) - asked Solio to house a few remnant black rhinos. In 1970, five individuals were moved in from Kiboko, thereby establishing Solio as Kenya's first fully fenced rhino sanctuary. More rhinos followed, including several from the surrounding region, and by 1980 the Reserve was the new home of 27 individuals from 9 different areas (see table).

In 1980, a founder herd of 16 white rhinos were imported from South Africa.

All the rhinos bred and prospered so, in 1991, the reserve was extended to its current 69 sq km.

In the 1980's as the tourist potential of wildlife, particularly rhinos, was developed and areas in both National Parks and private ranches were made sufficiently secure to house rhinos, Solio became the prime source of many founder populations. Some 30 individuals

helped build populations in Laikipia at Ol Pejeta Conservancy, Lewa Wildlife Conservancy and Ol Jogi Game Reserve. In February 2007, East Africa's largest ever rhino translocation took place with 24 Solio rhinos going to Ol Pejeta and 3 to Ol Jogi.

Laikipia reserves have been the recipient of 56 black rhinos from Solio, without which Laikipia would be unable to claim to have more than 50% of Kenya's black rhinos, a claim that has helped develop and market Laikipia as a tourism destination.

To date, some 93 black and 58 white rhinos have left Solio for new homes with 6 of the whites going to help Uganda re-introduce rhinos. The amazing breeding success of Solio continues and with over 70 black and 150 white rhinos, and in early 2010 more rhino will be translocated as new safe homes are found.

Solio has made an important contribution to the economic success of Laikipia not only providing jobs directly but, by its support of other reserves, it has helped create local employment. Communities around Solio have further benefited from the financing of school buildings and other facilities.

Source of Black Rhinos

Location	Number	Year
Kiboko*	5	1970
Embu	2	1971/1980
Tsavo East*	3	1971/1977
Isiolo	1	1972
Solio Ranch	2	1972/1975
Nyeri Forest	1	1974
Darajani*	1	1974
Lamuria Ranch**	9	1975/1979
Nyeri Forest	2	1980
Rumuruti	1	1980

* located in south east Kenya, others in reasonable proximity to Solio.

** ranch being subdivided up

Black Rhino Translocation History

		Total	M	F
Pre 1990	Nakuru NP	15	7	8
	Ol Pejeta	8	4	4
	Lewa	3	1	2
	Ol Jogi	4	2	2
1993 July	Ol Pejeta	8	4	4
1994 Jan/Feb	Lewa	4	2	2
	Tsavo East	8	4	4
	Ol Jogi	2	1	1
1994 March	Tsavo East	8	4	4
	Lewa	1	1	
2004	Mugie	4	2	2
2007 Feb	Ol Jogi	3	2	1
	Ol Pejeta	23	16	7
TOTAL DEC 2008		93	51	42

White Rhino Translocation History

	Total
Ol Jogi	5
Mt Kenya GR	3
Chem Chem	3
Nakuru NP	8
Lewa	5
Kongoni Ranch	6
Ziwa, Uganda	6
Meru NP	12
Kitale	2
Masai Mara	2
Lewa	6
TOTAL DEC 2008	58

