

RHINOS WITHOUT BORDERS AIRLIFTS LATEST BATCH OF RHINO TO SAFE NEW HOME

July 2017

The Rhinos Without Borders project has ensured a bright future for an additional twelve white rhino, which were recently airlifted to their safe new home in Botswana. In a bid to save the endangered species, the initiative removed the animals from a high risk area in South Africa, where rhino are being poached at the rate of one every seven and a half hours. The project, which aims to translocate a total of a hundred rhino, is spearheaded by conservation-minded travel companies &Beyond and Great Plains Conservation.

“Watching the rhino set free in their new home was a very emotional moment,” says &Beyond CEO Joss Kent.

“I know exactly what Joss is talking about,” adds Dereck Joubert, CEO and Chairman of Great Plains Conservation and Great Plains Foundation. “As the helicopter lifted off with a rhino and slung it across the Delta, Joss turned and walked to me. We shook hands and embraced. Neither of us said anything, afraid perhaps that the lumps in our throats would betray exactly how emotional we both felt right then.”

The latest achievement was another milestone towards the project’s goal of bringing a hundred rhinos across the subcontinent, from high risk areas in South Africa to highly protected safe havens in Botswana. It was a top secret mission during which the rhinos were deposited on a dirt airstrip in an undisclosed location by a Botswana Defence Force C130 airplane and under heavy military guard. The animals were then ferried to their ultimate destination suspended upside down beneath a helicopter. This dramatic method is regarded as the safest and easiest way of getting the heavyweight animals to their brand new home in remote and otherwise inaccessible parts of Botswana. This operation was also the first time that the technique had been used to transport rhino into a new habitat, rather than removing them from an unsuitable one.

Rhino are currently being poached at the rate of one every eight hours and it makes good conservation sense to move them away from clustered locations that are easier for poachers to target. With Botswana in need of genetic diversity in its national rhino population, the Rhinos Without Borders project has been getting the nod from all sectors for being innovative and proactive in solving a number of conservation problems.

The twelve animals that recently arrived in Botswana place the project exactly on target and well established to meet its goal of one hundred rhino.

His Excellency Lieutenant-General SKI Khama, the President of Botswana, as well as TK Khama, the Honourable Minister of Tourism, both participated in the release. The minister expressed his conviction that the unique partnership, which combines government involvement with private companies



www.andBeyond.com

such as &Beyond and Great Plains as well as private donors, proves that tourism can make a significant difference in the conservation of Africa.

“The number of rhino lost to poachers in South Africa is now higher than the rate at which the species can breed and there is an urgent need to create a new breeding population of rhino in a different geographic region. I firmly believe that we have taken a big step towards ensuring a safer future for the species and I am excited to do even more,” adds Kent.

“It’s not often that one gets the chance to rewrite the future history of a species. A few years ago the ink on the future of rhinos here was just about dry and it told a story of extinction. We’ve changed that and we’ve done it by collaborating with our friends and with like-minded people around the world,” concludes Joubert.

To find out more or to contribute towards future rhino translocations, visit www.rhinoswithoutborders.com.

ISSUED BY: media@andBeyond.com

www.andBeyond.com / greatplainsconservation.com/



ABOUT &BEYOND

&Beyond is one of the world’s leading luxury experiential travel companies, designing personalised high-end tours in 15 countries in Africa, five in Asia and four in South America. We also own and operate 29 extraordinary lodges and camps in Africa’s iconic safari and island destinations. In addition, &Beyond operates small group, set-departure expeditions throughout Africa and Asia. This enables us to positively impact more than 9 million acres of wildlife land and 2 000 kilometres of coastline.



Established in 1991, &Beyond takes exceptional care of our guests in order to make a difference; our commitment to sustainable responsible travel, conservation and community empowerment has been globally recognised with multiple awards over the years. We offer warm local hospitality and sublime natural luxury that combine with interpretive natural experiences, led by highly-skilled guides and rangers.

Please note: We are legally required to use the font ‘trebuchet’ when printing the ampersand in ‘&Beyond’. If this is not possible, please kindly write it out in full, i.e. ‘andBeyond’.



ABOUT GREAT PLAINS CONSERVATION

Great Plains Conservation uses tourism to support the economics of conservation. Each safari camp provides a meaningful and life-enriching experience, and does so with a strong commitment to the lowest impact and highest value safari operation. Its seven camps in Botswana and three camps Kenya are leaders in environmental sustainability and community partnership. Great Plains Conservation is continually recognised for its role in harmonising the needs of local communities and wildlife to provide havens for Africa’s wildlife and the ultimate in guest experience.