

Everybody needs good neighbours



SAM TAYLOR

A rhino lost is a rhino lost to us all. Whether it be it on Borana, Lewa, Ol Jogi, Ol Pejeta or anywhere else, every rhino poached is a step closer to losing the species altogether. Because of this we must all work together. An isolationist approach to rhino conservation means lost opportunities to share experience and learn from each other.

Sam Taylor | Chief Conservation Officer, Borana Conservancy

The fight to save rhino is constantly evolving; new threats, new ideas and new technology. Borana has been extremely lucky with the support and advice we have received from the KWS and the seasoned sanctuaries, which have helped us to get to similar levels of operational capability in such a short space of time. Now, a year into receiving rhino on our conservancy, the relationship remains the same.

Of course the introduction of rhino was always a collaborative effort with our neighbours Lewa. There is little sense in being an enclosed rhino conservancy next to another conservancy. So by working together we are opening up more space for existing populations to breed more prolifically. On the ground, our men train and operate

together, and a constant flow of information flows back and forth, ensuring we can both operate with maximum efficiency in terms of covering ground and spreading

our resources and assets. In effect, we act as each other's buffer zones on our respective boundaries, providing another line of defence for rhino. Before the year is out, the long-anticipated removal of the fence line between the two properties will be realised, with two established and healthy rhino populations becoming one.

Protecting rhino is cripplingly expensive, and raising funds for the conservation of rhino is surprisingly difficult, even with the global attention the plight of rhino is receiving in the media at present. It makes sense that we all do this together too – raising revenue for universal needs in a wider landscape, rather than competing for the same pot for conflicting needs. If we operate together, we can bring the costs down, buying kit and equipment for rangers in bulk as well as ensuring that standards of welfare are the same across the board.



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The welfare of the rangers is of paramount importance. These are the men who have it in their power keep rhino alive, and as such we need to invest in these men, both financially and personally. Their ownership of the difficult (and often dangerous) task they are performing is directly related to morale, and a level playing field of welfare must be standardised across all conservancies.

Of course, this collaboration means that we must all retain similar operating standards, and this is not always easy, with different conservancies having different resources, capabilities or focuses. This is where communication is essential and a thorough understanding of what we are all trying to achieve collectively is necessary. Ultimately, this means we are one entity in the fight to save rhino, and as such should be more formidable for it.

Grants

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Since 1 April 2014, we have sent two grants to Borana Conservancy: \$29,406 from the Anna Merz Rhino Trust for ranger training; and \$10,000 from the Taliaferro Family Fund. Our very grateful thanks to both donors.

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The removal of the fence line will lead to two established and healthy rhino populations becoming one

STRATTON HAIRFIELD

Rhinos from Lewa and Nakuru seen together on Borana