

Giraffes for Uganda

Three Rothschild giraffes were recently translocated to Kidepo National Park in northeast Uganda from Lake Nakuru National Park in Kenya's Rift Valley. The animals, one male and two females were part of a consignment of six originally requested by wildlife authorities in Uganda as part of their desire to reintroduce Rothschild's giraffes to northern Uganda where they had been obliterated during the political upheavals of the 1970s and 1980s. Wildlife authorities in Kenya and Uganda believe the gesture by Kenya is clearly a boost to East African cooperation.

After months of searching in the Soy and Nakuru areas of the Rift Valley for six young female giraffes as requested, only three could be found. Initially, the animals were to be flown via Jomo Kenyatta International Airport, Nairobi, but after consultations, the animals were moved by road to Eldoret International Airport where they were airlifted to Uganda on a C-130 Hercules transport plane which usually handles relief supplies to northern Uganda.

Dr. John Wambua, KWS chief veterinary officer, Mr. Daniel Kilonzo, Lake Nakuru area warden and Mr. Titus Mutiso, KWS corporate communications manager, handed over the giraffes at the airport to Dr. Gladys Kalema, Uganda Wildlife Authority's veterinary officer. Later, Dr. Eric Edroma, UWA executive director wrote to KWS to confirm that the animals had arrived safely in Kidepo. Funding for the operation was provided by Frankfurt Zoological Society of Germany and the Giraffe Centre in Nairobi, Kenya.

Titus Mutiso

....and rhinos too?

Two East African Wild Life Society Uganda branch members—Dr. Eve Abe and Ray Victorine—have recently established a new NGO, Rhino Fund Uganda, to reintroduce rhinos to Uganda. Rhino Fund Uganda aims to establish breeding populations which will ultimately repopulate Uganda's protected areas with rhinoceroses.

There are no rhinos in Uganda to-



Young female Rothschild's giraffes in a holding pen in Lake Nakuru National Park, Kenya, before being flown to Kidepo National Park, Uganda.

day. As recently as the late 1970s both black rhinos and the endangered northern white rhino were found in Uganda. However, political instability, civil war and harsh economic conditions led to their extermination. Black rhinos were last reported in Uganda in 1980 while northern whites disappeared during the 1970s.

With the help of local NGOs like the Wildlife Clubs of Uganda—whose emblem is the rhinoceros—and EAWLS, Rhino Fund Uganda expects to gain both national and international support for its efforts to reintroduce rhinos. Already local supporters have provided sufficient start-up capital to allow Rhino Fund Uganda to begin its operations. The Sheraton Hotel, Kampala, provided a grant of US \$10,000 at the official launch of Rhino Fund Uganda on May 29, 1997, leading the way for other local pledges of support.

In September, London Zoo will provide Rhino Fund Uganda with technical assistance to complete a feasibility study to determine where, and how best, to establish the reintroduction programme and to discuss

which species of rhino should be introduced. In this process, Rhino Fund Uganda will work closely with the Rhino Specialist Group and with Uganda's wildlife authorities.

Rhino Fund Uganda's next fund raising event will be in September—a Raft Race for Rhinos down the Nile from Jinja. The rafting company Adrift will provide the rafts and equipment. The race will feature five rafts and corporate sponsors are being sought to sponsor a team of rafters for the race. Each raft costs \$1,200 to sponsor; four rafts remain.

For further information contact Rhino Fund Uganda at P.O. Box 20128, Kampala, Uganda; Dr. Eve Abe (Tel: 256-41-233-562; email: abe@imul.com); or Ray Victorine (Tel: 256-41-257-803; email: rayvic@imul.com).

