

WILDLIFE VIEWING

The Rhino Viewing Platform of Tsavo

The Platform offers visitors a rare and exclusive opportunity to view rhino close up with the backdrop of the prehistoric-looking Ngulia cliffs.

BY ALIA HALLER

Iwonder if there is anywhere else on the planet that one can observe as many as 30 different black rhinos' coming into water in just one night? Not to mention the multitude of other wildlife, including the other Big 5 and Small 5 members and so much more.

The newly established "Rhino Viewing Platform", situated in Tsavo West National Park's - Ngulia Rhino Sanctuary is an incredible wildlife experience in every way.

You can now stay and sleep on a raised and secure platform overlooking a waterhole that is active all night long! You will have trouble sleeping -- the drama of jostling rhinos, large buffalo herds and elephants all trying to get a drink is a special experience

Historically, black rhinos were found in Tsavo at densities higher than anywhere else on the planet. In 1940 there were an estimated 20,000 black rhinos in the Tsavo Conservation Area (TCA). By 1989 there were less than 20 individuals as a result of rampant poaching.



PHOTOS BY TSAVO TRUST



BELOW
Female rhino with her calf drinking out of the water hole below the platform .

TOP
Rhino Viewing Platform with the main deck on the left and a separate bathroom unit to the right .

MIDDLE
Adult rhino drinking from the waterhole below the Rhino Viewing Platform in the middle of the day. This is an unusual sighting does happen. At night you can see up to 12 rhinos drinking here at one time.

PHOTO BY WILL BURRARD-LUCAS



Within Tsavo West National Park, an area of 9,000km², the Ngulia Rhino Sanctuary (NRS) was established in 1986 as a fenced stronghold to enable the breeding and recovery of black rhino (*Diceros bicornis michaeli*) in Tsavo starting with just nine individuals. Today NRS is 90km² and is home to over 120 rhino. The Intensive Protection Zone (IPZ) was established in 2008 as an unfenced, highly protected free-ranging area, surrounding the NRS, and 19 founder rhinos were introduced. This population has grown significantly over time, making the Tsavo rhino recovery one of the most successful and positive conservation stories in recent years.

Thanks to the intensive efforts of the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS), with support from Tsavo Trust, the Zoological Society of London (ZSL) and other conservation entities, the future is much brighter. Tsavo West National Park now holds 18 per cent of Kenya's black rhinos, within the highly protected sanctuary.

Surrounding the Ngulia Sanctuary is the 2,000km² IPZ that has been identified as representing the most viable area in Kenya to recover rhino numbers and help support the Kenyan government to achieve its vision of 2,000 individuals in the wild by 2050. Kenya remains one of the key strongholds for Eastern black rhino, making this population globally important. Every effort is required if we are to conserve this critically endangered species for the future.

In an effort to support "rhino activities" in the Tsavo West National Park rhino areas, Tsavo Trust has partnered with the Kenya Wildlife Service to establish a unique "Rhino Viewing Platform" at one of the main waterholes within the Ngulia Rhino Sanctuary. The aim is to offer visitors a rare and exclusive opportunity to view rhino close up with the backdrop of the prehistoric-looking Ngulia cliffs.

The Rhino Viewing Platform is small (6m x 6m), raised 10ft off the ground, private and has basic amenities. It has a toilet, shower and wash basin with running water. The platform offers you the opportunity to stay above one of the few wildlife watering points within the Ngulia Sanctuary, where black rhinos, leopards, elephants, wild dogs, and a huge diversity of bird species frequent both day and night.

The platform provides for total exclusivity and only one group can stay at a time, giving you special and private use of the platform.

The recommended length of stay is 1 to 2 nights, and the maximum capacity is 6 people.

We would highly recommend taking night vision lenses and if you do not have these, regular binoculars will do the trick.

Best time to visit

Optimum times of year to visit are during the dry season (February to March and June to early October) and also the brighter the moon the better for wildlife viewing, with full moon being the best time.

Security

It is very important to note that you will be visiting a highly sensitive rhino sanctuary and safety of the rhino there are paramount. Your personal safety is also of great importance. To this end, the Rhino Platform is located near a KWS security base.

Other details

The platform is booked on a self-catered basis only. So you will need to bring your own food and drink. Be sure to come with your own bedding, including bedrolls/mattresses, eating utensils, toiletries and towels. It can get quite chilly here at night. Remember not to bring plastic bottles into the Park. Guests must check in by 16:00hrs and check out by 09:00hrs on the day of departure.

To book the Rhino Viewing Platform please contact Tsavo Trust on:

[Email: reservations@tsavotrust.org](mailto:reservations@tsavotrust.org)

Tel: +254 (0) 700 604 657

Office opening hours:

Monday – Friday 9:00am to 17:00pm

Saturday and Sunday closed. ●



ALIA HALLER has five years of wildlife conservation experience in the country. She brings an innovative skillset and enthusiasm to the Tsavo Trust team.

BELOW

Adult black rhino in the Ngulia Rhino Sanctuary.

1986

Year Ngulia Rhino Sanctuary (NRS) was established to enable the breeding and recovery of black rhino (*Diceros bicornis michaeli*) in Tsavo starting with just nine individuals.

PHOTO BY WILL BURRARD-LUCAS

