



*FINAL News release
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Translocation of five black rhinos to Zambia

On Wednesday 26 May 2010, five endangered black rhinos are to be translocated to North Luangwa National Park (NLNP) in Zambia from South Africa. This will complete a founder population of 25 black rhinos. This is the first successful return of black rhinos to a country from where they were previously poached to extinction.

This groundbreaking event, facilitated by South African National Parks (SANParks) and Frankfurt Zoological Society (FZS) is the culmination of years of complex planning and movement between SANParks, Namibian Parks, Zambia Wildlife Authority, Eastern Cape Parks Board and Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN), South Africa. These rhino were initially destined to come from the Eastern Cape Parks Board however due to fears that these animals would not adapt well to Zambian conditions, negotiations were entered into with Ezemvelo to source the animals from Zululand in exchange for the animals from the Eastern Cape. This initiative was aimed at ensuring that the animals have the best chance of successfully adapting to the conditions in North Luangwa

The five animals destined for Zambia are from the Hluhluwe-iMfolozi Park and Ithala Game Reserve in South Africa. They will be leaving Durban International Airport on a specially-chartered SAFAIR Hercules C-130 flight to the NLNP in Zambia's Northern Province.

Zambia was once home to the continent's third largest black rhino population numbering almost 12,000. Heavy poaching during the 1970-80s decimated the species and they were declared nationally extinct in 1998.

Since then, Frankfurt Zoological Society through their North Luangwa Conservation Programme and the Zambia Wildlife Authority (ZAWA) have worked closely together to improve law enforcement and conservation management in North Luangwa National Park (NLNP). The greatest success of this partnership has been the black rhino reintroduction programme, begun in 2003. Five separate translocations have taken place and, with this year's arrivals, a total of 25 animals will have been moved to the NLNP.

The reintroduction has been approved by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) and the South African and Zambian Ministries of Livestock and Veterinary Services, and Environmental Affairs.

The Four females and one male were captured in KZN, South Africa, towards the end of March and have been held in quarantine 'bomas' (or pens). This gets the animals used to the sounds and scents of human activity in unfamiliar surroundings and facilitates a less stressful relocation. On arrival in Zambia, the rhinos will be offloaded into holding pens for a period of 2-4 weeks to acclimatise them and to enable them to be monitored before being released into the NLNP.

- ends -

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Notes to Editors

1. The Frankfurt Zoological Society is a Germany-based NGO supporting over 80 conservation and wildlife projects throughout the world. The Africa programme is the biggest beneficiary of this support and North Luangwa Conservation Programme is the biggest project on the continent. FZS-NLCP works in partnership with the Zambia Wildlife Authority in protected area management of North Luangwa NP and surrounding Game Management Areas. They have been active in NLNP since 1986. As a result of law enforcement successes, the black rhino reintroduction programme was first tabled in 2001 with the IUCN African Rhino Specialist Group.