



# FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

## Finally, More Space for Lewa's Rhino!

by Mike Watson | Chief Executive Officer



Many may recall that last year, Lewa had reached its black rhino carrying capacity, with some rhino bulls already fighting for space and others being pushed into previously uninhabited territories by younger males. Basing our facts on the annual growth rate of approximately 6% per annum, this hardly came as a surprise! As a result, over the years it has become increasingly apparent that the future of Lewa's rhino relies heavily on our ability to afford them more space by removing the fence separating the Conservancy and our western neighbour Borana. Borana is prime black rhino habitat consisting of thick shrubbery, rugged terrain and plenty of natural resources.

After much deliberation and preparation, I'm extremely proud to announce that we shall now commence the removal of the six kilometre fence separating the two properties to form a 93,000 acre landscape and the largest rhino sanctuary in the country. This will ready the area to become a 'Key 1 population', as defined by the African Rhino Specialist Group, an advisory body of the IUCN, once it tops the 100 black rhino mark. This is projected to occur in the next two years - the two areas currently have a combined black rhino population of 87.

Lewa is also home to 63 white rhino and these will also benefit from the expanded habitat.

This partnership between Lewa and Borana is the first of its kind in Kenya. In readiness for this bold move, the two Conservancies have already initiated mechanisms to operate on similar platforms including coordinated deployment of the anti-poaching units, sharing of a secure digital radio communication network and maintenance of a single black rhino database known as Kifarū.

While the greatest benefit of the move will be the support offered to the enhancement of the ecological carrying capacity of black rhino on Lewa, we hope it will also ease the pressure exerted on the ecosystem by mega herbivores, notably the elephant and giraffe. Other wildlife from both areas will also gain from a greater pool of available natural resources including water and pasture.

The two organisations would like to thank all the supporters and partners, notably the Kenya Wildlife Service, who have been involved in making this landmark event possible.