

Mokora – The Sole Survivor

Mokora (Swahili for “naughty”) is an adult male white rhino who was born in Meru National Park in 1973. His mother, Matama, came to Meru Park in 1966 from South Africa along with another five rhino as a gift to Kenya from Natal Parks Board, as an initial trial to introduce white rhino to Kenya.

In 1984 a male captive white rhino was flown into Kenya from California, to star in the film “Sheena Queen of the Jungle” being filmed at the time. The animal was released in Meru Park and Mokora moved out to Lewa in exchange. Breeding in Meru had been slow over the years and it was thought that the Californian male would do better than Mokora! Unfortunately

he did not get a chance as he died not long after from Trypanosomiasis (Sleeping Sickness from Tsetse Fly), by not having any immunity to this sickness.



Mokora can count himself a very, very lucky rhino to have been moved, in the “nick of time”, to Lewa. In 1987, his mother along with all the remaining white rhino in Meru Park were wiped out by armed bandits. If he had still been there it is a certainty that he would have fallen the same way. He is the sole survivor of the original Meru Park white rhino population.

He was the first white rhino to step foot onto Lewa soil and remained a resident here for 17 years. He established his home range

as the territorial male around the Lewa Safari Camp and was a regular visitor to the camp lawns where he won the hearts of many Lewa visitors. During this time he also won the hearts of several female white rhino in the vicinity and sired over ten calves. Over time, the male calves he fathered reached maturity and started to dominate him in a number of severe fights and it was only a matter of time before serious injury occurred. At the same time as Meru Park was paving the way to re-introduce both black and white rhino back into the Park Mokora became the ideal candidate to set a precedent to re-stock Meru Park.

In March 2001, Mokora achieved yet another “first” by being the first white rhino to be moved back to Meru Park, his former home, following 17 years at Lewa. He went on to win several more female white rhino hearts in Meru and is now father to another three calves. In just five years and following introductions and births within the park starting with Mokora, Meru National Park can boast a population of 38 white rhino and 21 black rhino. If there ever was a white rhino Ambassador from Lewa, it was Mokora!

Ironically, the first black rhino to be moved back into Meru Park also came from Lewa. Kelele, a male, was moved on 22nd March 2003 and he too, like Mokora, paved the way for a further introduction of 20 black rhino in February 2006.

Richard Moller – Director of Operations

