

Meet the rhinos needing RANGERS' HELPING HANDS

With as few as 5,000 black rhinos left in the wild, every single animal is of critical importance for the species to survive. Preserving the population not only means protecting rhinos from poaching, but also looking after each rhino that needs care, whether that's providing veterinary care for rhinos injured in a poaching attempt, translocating an overly aggressive bull, or helping a rhino attacked by other predators, such as lions or hyenas.

Michaela Butorova | Partnerships Manager



Through an initiative called the 'Emergency Fund for Black Rhino', we have been supporting those rhinos that need an extra helping hand from rangers in Kenya. The Fund repays 50% of the costs incurred by members of the Association of Private Land Rhino Sanctuaries each time they care for black rhinos needing veterinary attention.



Meimei, Ol Jogi Conservancy

Meimei was born on 14 March 2016. Four days later she was found stumbling around, blind in both eyes. Her mother, Manuela, would have been unable to protect her from predators, but fortunately, the rangers found her.

Meimei was brought into a special enclosure, known as a 'boma', for treatment, requiring extensive veterinary care, with plenty of milk, antibiotics and supplements to aid her growth and recovery. Thanks to the excellent care from the staff at Ol Jogi, the infection causing blindness subsided within two months of treatment and Meimei fully regained her eyesight after four months.

Meimei is the most adorable, affectionate little black rhino, who loves to follow around her keeper; ranger Laivet Lazaikong (shown above). He is a natural for the job and his bond with Meimei is like no other.

Last year, Meimei started to outgrow her night-time container. With the help of Save the Rhino's donors, new bomas were constructed to accommodate Meimei and the other rhinos being hand-reared at Ol Jogi.

As Meimei grows bigger and stronger, there is every hope that she will be successfully reintroduced to the wild, where she can live independently and, in due course, have her own calves.

Black rhino calf, Borana Conservancy

The tough terrain at Borana Conservancy means that black rhino calves not only face threats from poaching and attacks from predators, but also injuries from falling down steep cliffs.

On one of their regular foot patrols, scouts found a young calf that had fallen down a steep cliff while browsing with its mother (pictured above). Rangers were able to lift the calf and carry him to a location accessible by helicopter, so that he could be examined by a veterinarian.

In this instance, despite every effort being made, the calf sadly died due to a severely fractured spine.

Every emergency operation has variables depending on the state of the emergency: the most extreme needing a helicopter and/or fixed-wing aircraft, a capture truck, medical equipment, vehicles and support staff, including the vets.

Not all rhinos can be saved from their injuries. But, with the support of the Emergency Fund, rangers can provide the best chance of survival for all black rhinos in Laikipia's rhino conservancies that need a helping hand.