

World Rhino Day > Kenya leads the pack in protection of rhinos

Conservation with benefits; how Lewa is leading the way

Collaboration has increased population of wildlife such as endangered rhinos

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The World Rhino Day was marked yesterday with wildlife-based conservancies being urged to enable people around them to profit from tourism.

Mr Edward Ndiritu, the head of the anti-poaching unit at Lewa Wildlife Conservancy, told the *Nation* that the people neighbouring Lewa have received financial assistance for education, healthcare, agriculture and water.

The official said none of their black and white rhinoceroses had been poached in the past three years.

“We have 14 per cent of Kenya’s rhino population,” said Mr Ndiritu. “This success shows the importance of transforming the livelihoods of local people.”

It was celebrations yesterday at Lewa as reports indicate the number of rhino there has been on the increase.

Lewa is vast, internationally recognised Unesco World Heritage Site that straddles Meru, Laikipia and Isiolo counties. The Lewa-Borana landscape is the biggest rhino sanctuary



PHOEBE OKALL | NATION

Kenya is ahead of the pack in rhino conservation”

Edward Ndiritu, head of anti-poaching, Lewa Wildlife Conservancy

in Africa with 84 black and 72 white rhinos.

The two family-run conservancies merged two years ago to create one conservatory of 93,000 acres with 156 rhinos.

Rhinos are an endangered species. They are among the most poached animals in Kenya, with their population

A black rhino baptised Anna (left) and her calf Zoltan at the Lewa Wildlife Conservancy on the World Rhino Day yesterday.

dwindling in some parts of the country. They are now kept in protected areas.

They are mostly killed for their horns — due to the belief in some Asian countries that they cure diseases, including cancer, and can be used as an aphrodisiac.

Goodwill
In 2015, some 11 rhinos were killed according to the Kenya Wildlife Service, which say there are only about 1,000 left in the country.

Mr Ndiritu said they had improved surveillance technology to monitor the rhinos in the Lewa-Borana landscape.

“Kenya is ahead of the pack in rhino conservation because of the collaboration with the people and the goodwill from several ministries of the national government,” said Mr Ndiritu.

Owing to the success of its conservation, Lewa has been transferring some of the rhinos to neighbouring Laikipia and Samburu sanctuaries.

Exit package talks for polls officials yet to begin, Rotich says

BY ISAAC ONGIRI

Negotiations for the exit package of the nine electoral commissioners is delaying the appointment of a new team to supervise the 2017 elections.

National Treasury CS Henry Rotich yesterday said his ministry had not started talks with the commissioners.

“We are waiting for the attorney-general and other members of a committee who are out of the country,” Mr Rotich said. He regretted that the process, though urgent, was taking a lot of time.

“The committee comprises the Salaries and Remuneration Commission too,” Mr Rotich said.

Treasury is said to have worked out a proposal that would be tabled before the negotiation team.

The commissioners are expected to resign once a deal is struck.

Yesterday, a top electoral commission official said the law that created their exit was flawed. “It can create a very serious crisis but we hope for the best,” the official said.

The commission may adjust a plan launched last year due to the delay in appointing new ones. It was expected that the new commission would be appointed by the end of September but with only a week to go, there is no hope. Prof Mutgai, who is in The Hague, has expressed hope that the new team would be in place “very soon.”

The hiring of commissioners normally takes a long time and it could complicate the election



2017 When the country is expected to go into the general elections

We expect commissioners to make a decision on whether we can carry out nominations on behalf of political parties as the new law says”

Electoral commission chief executive Ezra Chiloba

calendar if it drags.

Electoral commission chief executive Ezra Chiloba said: “We expect commissioners to make a decision on whether we can carry out nominations on behalf of political parties as the new law says,” he said.

Most commissioners have already withdrawn from serious work. Chairman Ahmed Issack Hassan (above) has held farewell parties.

Council faults media law, wants it amended

BY BRIAN MUREITHI

The new media law is a threat to press survival. Media Council of Kenya chairman Charles Kerich (right) has said.

Mr Kerich said that the council was capable of handling defamation and complaints from those aggrieved by media coverage.

He said the fines of Sh500,000 and Sh20 million for practitioners and media houses were too high. He called for an amendment to the law.

“Many media houses cannot afford to pay Sh20 million and asking them to pay such an amount is literally driving them out of business,” he said.

Mr Kerich was speaking in Nairobi yesterday during the inauguration of the new board. It presided over by ICT Cabinet Secretary Joe Mucheru.

He appealed to Mr Mucheru to speed up the gazetting of the council’s complaints commission to handle appeals. More than 100 cases were pending be-



fore the commission, he said. He added that delays were creating a bad perception and undermining public confidence in the council’s ability to handle complaints.

Mr Mucheru said the commission would be up and running soon as he has already signed it and was waiting to gazette it.

The CS said the ministry was disturbed about recent attacks on journalists. The culprits would be brought to book. This comes in the wake of protests over cases of attacks and threats on journalists.

Mr Mucheru also urged the media to be objective, fair and balanced in the light of the coming General Elections.

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