

Eco Trip



Eco-tourism boost as black rhinos return after 50 years

By Emma Dooney

Eastern black rhinos have been returned to the Loisaba Conservancy in northern Kenya after a 50-year absence, making the region a must-see for eco-tourists and marking its "Big Five" status.

The translocation of 21 of the critically endangered creatures took place in January, in response to concerns over lack of space to reproduce in the rhinos' previous sanctuaries.

Led by the vets of Kenya Wildlife Service in partnership with Elewana Collection, the large-scale project required transferring the rhinos from Nairobi National Park, Ol Pejeta Conservancy, and Lewa Wildlife Conservancy to their new home in Loisaba. The rhinos were then released into a fenced sanctuary, where they are being monitored 24/7 by rangers to ensure their wellbeing.

"It's incredibly exciting to be part of the reintroduction of these rhinos into a landscape where they've been absent for 50 years," said Tom Silvester, CEO of Loisaba Conservancy. "It means so much to us on Loisaba to see this iconic species come home again and it is a mark of Kenya's conservation success."

Loisaba, a 23,500-hectare wildlife conservancy in Laikipia in the highlands of Kenya, was once famous for its healthy population of black rhinos, but rampant poaching in the area since 1976 had devastated their numbers, driving the rhinos to become locally extinct.

As of 2023, there were only 6,458 of the creatures left in Africa – a drastic drop from the estimated 70,000 that roamed the continent in 1970. Of those that remain, just over 1,000 can be found in Kenya – once home to 20,000 of these iconic animals. It's hoped the return of the 21 black rhinos to Loisaba Conservancy, which can host up to 50, will encourage breeding and help towards the Kenyan government's goal of reaching a population of 2,000 by 2037.

The restoration of the rhinos will also bring economic benefits, such as tourism employment for the remote region and revenue flow to nearby communities. There are just 24 rooms across all three properties in the conservancy, which include Loisaba Lodo Springs, Loisaba Tented Camp and the iconic Loisaba Star Beds.

First sustainability report for Active Travel Group

Active Travel Group (ATG) has unveiled its first annual sustainability report, outlining plans to halve its total carbon emissions by 2030.

Best known for managing adventure travel brands such as Wilderness Group, Ski Solutions and Cycling for Softies, the company said it prides itself on an "ongoing commitment to providing greater insight and transparency on our sustainability performance".

The results of its report reveal significant progress from Wilderness in particular, which has achieved a 16% reduction in carbon emissions in the last two years following the introduction of electric vehicles to tours at Aviemore, Scotland.



ATG's sustainability report also details efforts to support conservation and community projects aligned with each of the group's brands. This commitment is exemplified in its Wilderness Conservation and Community Fund, founded in 2010 to empower clients to give back to the environments and communities they travel in.

ATG also championed the work of Cycling for Softies, a luxury cycling tour operator that has been promoting low-impact travel for 35 years and currently offers one of the lowest-carbon holiday options for exploring Europe.

Green Notes

Whatley Manor has become the UK's first Climate Positive Hotel and Spa, after removing more carbon from the atmosphere than it emits. It comes four years after the Cotswolds hotel launched its sustainability strategy, [whatleymanor.com](https://www.whatleymanor.com)



Ecoventura has added a new excursion, The Galapagos Coffee & Conservation Experience, to its Volcanic Wonders cruise. Guests can learn about the drink Arabica on the tour, which also aids the conservation of the Santa Cruz giant tortoise, [ecoventura.com](https://www.ecoventura.com)

Cox & Kings is to offer flight-free European tours for the first time, in response to demand for continental rail trips. Most of the operator's journeys will now depart via train from the UK, with options including the Balkans, Naples and Kosovo, [coxandkings.co.uk](https://www.coxandkings.co.uk)

Aurora Expeditions is now officially B Corp Certified after achieving a 100% Climate Neutral status. The Australian polar cruise company has also demonstrated its emissions reduction strategies as well as its conservation and climate change education initiatives, [auroraexpeditions.com.au](https://www.auroraexpeditions.com.au)

Terre Blanche Hotel Spa Golf Resort has been awarded the Green Key Certificate for its ongoing commitment to environmental preservation. The French hotel has banned pesticides in green spaces and installed high-performance energy management devices, [terre-blanche.com](https://www.terre-blanche.com)

