

*By Jeje Muhinde;*

Akagera National Park has received 30 white rhinos as part of efforts to restock its wildlife that formerly inhabited in the region.

The announcement was made by Rwanda Development Board (RDB), department of Tourism and Park Conservation on Monday, November 29.

The translocation was carried out through collaboration between the RDB, African Parks and Beyond, with funding provided by the Howard G. Buffett Foundation and Beyond Phinda Private Game Reserve in South Africa.

Ariella Kageruka, RDB acting chief tourism Officer said that, this is an opportunity for Rwanda to substantially advance its contribution to rhino conservation, with Akagera poised to become a globally important sanctuary for black and now white rhinoceros,”

“This is timely for the conservation of these incredibly threatened species. We’re extremely proud of our conservation partnerships and our national parks, which are playing a pivotal role in meeting biodiversity targets and in driving sustainable, transformative, equitable socio-economic growth,” She said.

“Today, we are not only happy that these animals have found a safe place to live, but they also add value to our tourism, wildlife conservation in this Park and our country and to the benefit of the people as it has been in recent years,” Kageruka said.

In 2010, the Rwanda Development Board and African Parks partnered to manage Akagera, transforming the park into one of the most coveted wildlife destinations in Africa and a sustainable revenue source for the region’s communities.

Law enforcement was overhauled and robust community programs put in place, allowing for wildlife to increase and for key reintroductions to occur, such as lions in 2015 and black rhinos in 2017 and 2019.

“We hope to reach a better level of conservation and care through growth by increasing their numbers and bringing in other species.” She pointed out.

Adding that having a large number of grants would help Rwanda to increase its tourism boom in the outbreak of COVID-19. For the first time in Rwanda there will

be white rhinos as they usually live in Kenya, Uganda and Zambia.

In 2019, five more eastern black rhinos were brought from Europe and 18 more were found in Akagera Park. At present, the total population in Rwanda is 56.

“Introductions to safe, intact wild landscapes are vital for the future of vulnerable species like white rhino, which are under considerable human-induced pressures,” said African Parks’ CEO Peter Fearnhead.

“We’re grateful to our partners for making this historic translocation possible – the Rwandan Government for their forward-thinking conservation leadership, and the Howard G. Buffett Foundation and Beyond for their integral support,”