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&BEYOND CARRIES OUT MASSIVE RHINO DEHORNING OPERATION AT PHINDA PRIVATE GAME RESERVE

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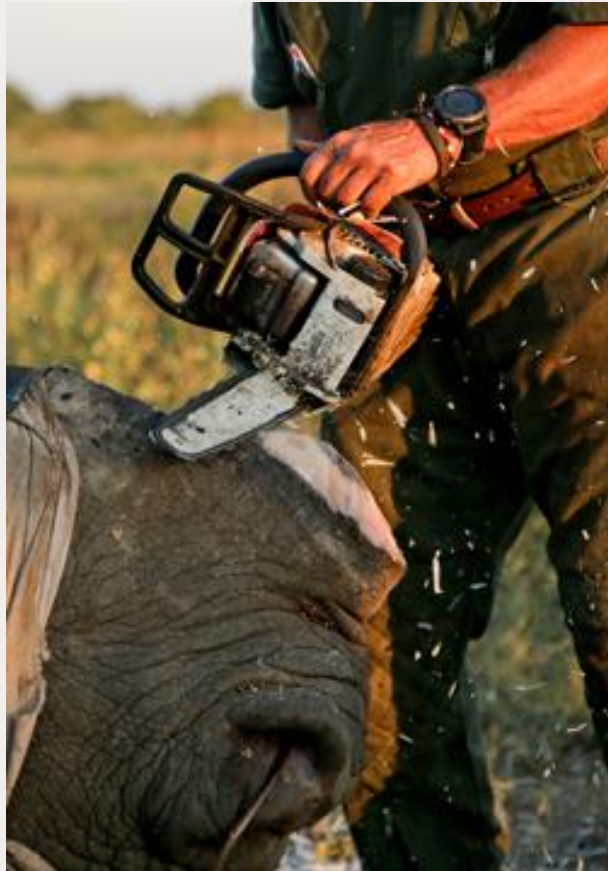
With more than 5 000 rhino illegally poached in South Africa in the past eight years and one rhino brutally killed every seven hours, luxury travel company &Beyond believes that drastic measures have become necessary to protect the country's precious population of the species, which accounts for 74% of Africa's remaining rhino.

While &Beyond has invested heavily in stringent security measures at all of its reserves in South Africa, in response to increased and unrelenting pressure from poachers and as part of its strategy to preserve rhino numbers, the company has carried out the dehorning of all the rhino at Phinda Private Game Reserve in KwaZulu-Natal.

"The rhino population at &Beyond Phinda Private Game Reserve is of great significance in terms of conservation and we need to ensure that it does not diminish," explains Joss Kent, &Beyond CEO. "Private reserves in South Africa are responsible for protecting more rhino than remain in the wild throughout the rest of the African continent collectively. However, private rhino populations across South Africa are diminishing rapidly due to rising security costs and increased losses from poaching. Against this backdrop and as a company dedicated to conservation, we feel that it is crucial for us to take a stand and defend the vital population at &Beyond Phinda."

"We have a detailed and comprehensive rhino conservation strategy that makes use of every method at our disposal to boost the survival of the rhino species. We have partnered with Great Plains Conservation in the Rhinos Without Borders project, which aims to translocate a hundred rhino from high-risk areas in South Africa to the relative safety of Botswana, in this way helping to create new populations of rhino. However, we also have a responsibility to ensure the survival of a genetically viable population of rhino at &Beyond Phinda Private Game Reserve so that we can help boost numbers of the species both now and at a time in the future when we hope the poaching crisis will be brought under control."

The mass dehorning, one of the largest operations of its kind ever undertaken, is intended as a temporary measure to relieve the pressure faced from poaching and safeguard the population on the reserve. The exercise, which was safely carried out by expertly trained veterinarians, has no known side effects, with little change in the behaviour of dehorned rhino. In spite of the low risks associated with the procedure, the &Beyond Phinda team will be monitoring the dehorned animals closely.





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The horn removal process utilised at &Beyond Phinda requires the rhino to be darted from a helicopter. The sleeping animal is then blindfolded and ear plugs are used to minimise external stimuli in order to keep the rhino calm throughout the procedure. The rhino’s horn is then cut off just above the growth point, with a smaller blade then used to clip and shape the horn. This process is similar to cutting one’s nails and the rhino does not experience any pain.

The harvested rhino horn has since been removed from the reserve and will be stored under the tightest security in an undisclosed place of safety.



With rhino horn taking approximately two years to re-grow, &Beyond will re-evaluate the poaching situation and make the decision about whether it is necessary to repeat the dehorning process in 18 to 24 months.

“While we are aware that viewing dehorned rhino on game drives will have an impact on our guests’ game viewing experience, the rhino poaching situation in South Africa has developed into a full-blown crisis over the past few years,” adds Kent. “In order to preserve the species in the long term, it has become necessary to make some decisions that may not be popular in the short term. We hope to use the dehorning as an opportunity to educate our guests on the extreme threats that are facing the rhino.”

&Beyond Phinda Private Game Reserve has played a significant part in rhino conservation over the past twenty-five years, becoming a vital new habitat for white rhino when it was formed in 1991. The reserve was later a pilot property for the Black Rhino Range Expansion Project.

Anyone wishing to contribute towards &Beyond’s rhino conservation efforts can visit www.rhinoswithoutborders.com for more information about the project and its efforts to translocate rhino from high-risk poaching areas in South Africa to the relative safety of Botswana. Donations towards the safety of the rhino at &Beyond Phinda Private Game Reserve can be made to the Mun-ya-wana Conservation Fund through www.StopRhinoPoaching.com.

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ABOUT &BEYOND

&Beyond is one of the world’s leading luxury experiential travel companies, designing personalised luxury tours in 15 African countries, India, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Chile and Argentina. The company also owns and operates 35 extraordinary safari lodges and camps in Africa and India, as well as privately guided expeditions, which include private jet tours in Africa and mobile camping in Botswana. All of these activities allow the company to positively impact more than 9 million acres of wildlife land. Established in 1991, &Beyond takes exceptional care of its guests in order to make a difference; its commitment to sustainable responsible travel, conservation and community empowerment has been globally recognised with multiple awards over the years.



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