

## Sad Loss for the Ol Pejeta Conservancy - Morani the Tame Black Rhino Dies of Old Age



Morani with some of his security officers, from left, Jeremy, Patrick and Solomon.

Ol Pejeta Conservancy is sad to announce the death of its tame black rhino, **Morani**, which occurred on Saturday August 9<sup>th</sup> 2008 due to old age. This is a devastating loss to the Ol Pejeta Conservancy and all visitors that come to Ol Pejeta. In just 19 years, Morani has become a must-see on the Conservancy. His presence here helped create enormous awareness for black rhino conservation not only within Kenya but around the world.

Morani's story is one of survival and strength. Born in Amboseli National Park, Morani was orphaned at the age of six months after his mother was poached. He was rescued by the Kenya Wildlife Service and moved to the Nairobi Animal Orphanage. It was at the orphanage that he was named Morani, meaning "young warrior" in Maa. Once he was weaned and able to fend for himself he was moved back to Amboseli National Park. However, the dominant male rhinos constantly harassed Morani, forcing him to seek refuge in one of the lodges. It was decided to move him back to the Nairobi Orphanage where he stayed until the Lewa Wildlife Conservancy offered him a home in its newly created Black Rhino Sanctuary. On Lewa, Morani mated with a female black rhino named Shaba. While trying to establish his territory and fighting against another male, Morani was seriously injured. It was decided to take him back to Nairobi for treatment. He stayed at the Nairobi Orphanage until he fully recovered. In 1989, when the Sweetwaters Game Reserve (now Ol Pejeta Conservancy) was opened as a Black Rhino Sanctuary, Morani was relocated and became the sanctuary's first black rhino. Ol Pejeta Conservancy provided Morani with a 140-acres enclosure of ideal habitat and round-the-clock security. Sadly, Morani was never released in the wild again due to his injuries which prevented him to defend himself against predators or other rhinos.

All true characters must come to an end. Morani was a fantastic draw for Ol Pejeta visitors, through his good nature and willingness to allow them to get a hands-on experience and

an insight into the day-to-day life of a black rhino. During their visits, young and old were educated about the plight of black rhinos in Africa, and what must be done to ensure their survival. “Morani was the best Ambassador for all black rhinos in Africa for many years” says Batian Craig, Wildlife and Security Manager on Ol Pejeta. “We at Ol Pejeta feel an immense sense of loss, not only for ourselves, but also for the species in general. Morani will be impossible to replace.”

If you would like to get involved in Ol Pejeta’s wildlife success by supporting us, please contact [info@olpejetaconservancy.org](mailto:info@olpejetaconservancy.org) or visit [www.olpejetaconservancy.org](http://www.olpejetaconservancy.org).