

JEWELRY

De Beers relocates 200 elephants in conservation initiative

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De Beers is working to rebalance elephant populations in Africa. Image courtesy of De Beers

By STAFF REPORTS

Diamond company De Beers Group is supporting elephant conservation efforts through a relocation project.

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Working with the nonprofit Peace Parks Foundation, De Beers is translocating 200 elephants from the overcrowded Venetia Limpopo Nature Reserve in South Africa to conservation areas in Mozambique, which have seen dwindling populations of the animals. Elephant conservation has been a shared priority for a number of luxury brands, as they use their resources to help protect the endangered species.

"There is no greater symbol of Africa than the majestic elephant," said Bruce Cleaver, CEO of De Beers Group, in a statement. "For us to be able to help secure their future in Mozambique, while also ensuring other species at our Venetia Limpopo Nature Reserve can flourish, is something every employee of De Beers Group is proud of.

"This translocation is born of a deep sense of responsibility and is part of our wider commitment to continue to invest in new and innovative ways to protect the natural world," he said.

Moving to Mozambique

After a 15-year civil war in Mozambique, the nation's elephant population has been depleted. Currently, the 1,575 square miles of reserves in Zinave National Park hold only 60 elephants, far from their potential capacity.

In contrast, the 123-square-mile VLNR is overpopulated. Through natural growth, the elephants there now total 270, while the space can only accommodate 60 of the animals.

Looking to solve this population density issue, De Beers is teaming with Peace Parks Foundation to move elephants from VLNR to Mozambique. The project aims to keep social groups together and will work to ensure that the elephants thrive in their new home.



Elephants at VLNR. Image courtesy of De Beers

The first phase of this initiative will see 60 elephants moved from South Africa to Zinave National Park, which Peace Parks Foundation co-manages, in July and August. Later stages will see elephants moved to other conservation areas in Mozambique.

This is one of the largest translocation projects on record in South Africa.

De Beers is also giving Peace Parks Foundation \$500,000 over five years to aid its anti-poaching efforts. These funds will go to hiring and training new rangers and building roads for easier patrolling.

"Ecosystems require a range of fauna and flora to stay balanced," said Werner Myburgh, CEO of Peace Parks Foundation, in a statement. "If you remove one species, such as elephant, it has a ripple effect on the whole system.

"The reintroduction of elephants to Mozambique will bring us one step closer to achieving our dream of restoring the landscape and establishing uninterrupted connectivity with seamless migration of wildlife across the parks within the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Conservation Area," he said.

Spanish fashion house Loewe is similarly joining the fight against the ivory trade with a collection of handbags in support of the Elephant Crisis Fund. As part of the Knot On My Planet campaign, Loewe worked with Samburu artisans to create special editions of its Elephant bags for the ECF ([see story](#)).