

The Kenya Wildlife Service celebrates their first successful relocation of four sedated hippos

Posted for American news websites

The Kenya Wildlife Service is celebrating their first successful relocation of four sedated hippos.

Over the past couple of weeks the Kenya Wildlife Service has been gradually moving 18 hippos from Nairobi's Ruia Sewer Treatment Plant to the wetlands in Nairobi National Park, but in the midst of the transfer four hippos had to be tranquilized.

Hippos, known as *Kiboko* in Swahili, are usually found wallowing in places like Tsavo National Park's Mzima Springs or basking on the banks of the Mara River, not in a suburban sewage pond where their presence created havoc when they started attacking their human neighbors and destroying crops.

So the KWS decided it was time to move the hippos. An expert at relocation from moving wild animals from one park to the next, the KWS is using the boma system to capture the hippos. The system is similar to a cattle drive where animals are herded into a fenced enclosure then driven into trucks.

Per the KWS press release - on the night they had corralled three hippos into the boma for transport, mud from torrential rains prevented transportation trucks from parking next to the boma, so sedation became the only option enabling the rangers to hoist the beasts into trucks waiting on higher ground. A fourth hippo also had to be sedated and re-captured after he wandered out of the park.

Tranquilizing then hoisting an amphibious hippo is not an easy feat considering it can weigh almost four tons and is one of the three largest land mammals on earth. Sedation is normally avoided because of the hippo's aggressive and unpredictable behavior, plus it could break free from anyone trying to subdue it, then lumber back into the water and drown.

The hippos that were sedated have been monitored for any residual effects and are now happily wallowing in the park's wetlands and waiting for the rest of the herd to join them.

According to the press release, this is the first time in Kenya that hippos have been successfully tranquilized – a reason to celebrate!