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IDL helps formulate vaccine to protect mountain bongos destined for home

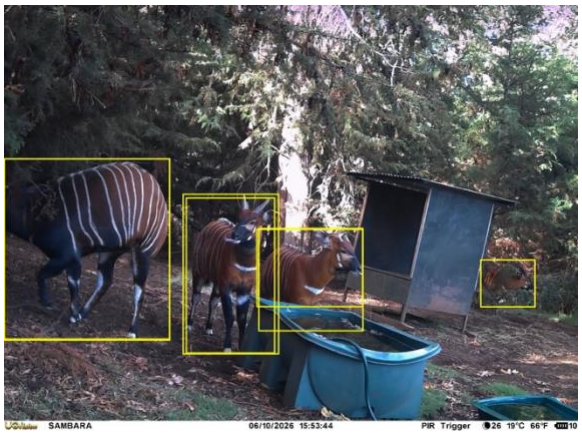
March 26, 2025

Seventeen mountain bongo antelopes (*Tragelaphus eurycerus isaaci*) were repatriated to their Kenyan homeland recently, thanks to our friends and colleagues at the Rare Species Conservatory Foundation (RSCF) in Palm Beach County, Florida, who asked the Infectious Diseases Laboratory to assist by working with African livestock researchers to formulate a vaccine. As part of their preparation for their journey from Florida to Kenya, the bongos were vaccinated for pathogens and given a pioneering, recombinant-DNA vaccine to help protect against a tick-borne disease. The vaccine was formulated for the project by the Infectious Diseases Laboratory in collaboration with colleagues at the Institute of Infectious Disease and Molecular Medicine at the University of Cape Town and at the International Livestock Research Institute in Nairobi.

The mountain bongo is an antelope and considered one of Kenya's flagship species. Less than 100 remain in the wild. The repatriation of 17 from Florida to a specially designated sanctuary on the northeastern slope of Mt. Kenya marks approximately 20 generations since their ancestors were exported from Kenya to

Below are mountain bongo antelopes photographed at their new home in the Mt. Kenya Wildlife Conservancy, at the foot of the Mount Kenya Forest ecosystem, a UNESCO World Heritage site. *All photos provided by RSCF/MBRCT.*





Europe and the U.S. in the early 1970s for help with conservation of the species. RSCF has been breeding bongos and managing the species for recovery since 1991, and in 2004 repatriated the first group of 18 bongos to the Mt. Kenya Wildlife Conservancy as a United Nations World Heritage Site project.



The bongos were transported to their new sanctuary on the northeast slope of Mt. Kenya, which is managed by the Meru Bongo and Rhino Conservation Trust, in late February in custom-built crates aboard a Mountain-Bongo-branded DHL Boeing 767. They were accompanied by expert animal-care and veterinary staff working with RSCF in Florida.

IDL was thrilled to help the RSCF with this important project!

For their full press release, visit the RSCF website at https://tinyurl.com/56n65h4k.



Above are mountain bongo antelopes photographed at their new home in the Mt. Kenya Wildlife Conservancy, at the foot of the Mount Kenya Forest ecosystem, a UNESCO World Heritage site. *All photos provided by RSCF/MBRCT.*