



The Wildebeest Migration Update

The annual wildebeest migration is arguably the most spectacular wildlife migration. It *is* known as the greatest show on earth – with good reason! What could be more spectacular than thousands upon thousands of wildebeest and zebra thundering their way across the plains of the Serengeti and Masai Mara in an annual cycle of life and death?

The various stages of the migration provide distinctly different experiences – from the vast herds grazing sedately in the Serengeti, to the calving season which invariably attracts an array of predators lurking on the fringe waiting to prey on the vulnerable newborns, to the thrilling river-crossing where toothy crocodiles lie in wait for the herds.

The herds generally move in a clockwise direction throughout the Serengeti / Mara ecosystem. The herds do split into smaller groups when they are on the move and the bulk of the herds would move north through the western part of the Serengeti into the Masai Mara and a much smaller group would move up through the east.

The following times of the year would be ideal for viewing the migration, although it is important to note that the migration is dependent on seasonal factors such as rainfall, so this serves merely as a guide.

January to March

The herds should be on the southern Serengeti plains and greater Ngorongoro Crater Conservation area and would be dropping their calves at the Ndutu area.

Lake Ndutu is on the Ngorongoro Crater side of the Serengeti plains and you will have to pay park fees to enter the NCA from the Serengeti if you would want to see them. It is advisable to ask your consultant to make sure that you could access both the Serengeti and NCA during the months of January – March because the herds could be on either side of the invisible border.



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April – June

The herds would be in the central Serengeti getting the new born calves strong enough to start the journey to the Masai Mara. They will slowly head up to the central / western Serengeti taking in as much short new grass as possible.

July

This is a tricky month – the herds are on the move and could be as far as the Masai Mara already or during wetter years could be as far south as the Grumeti River and Singita Grumeti Reserves.



August – November

The herds will start crossing into the Mara and you would want to be in either the northern Serengeti or the Masai Mara. Please note that not all the wildebeest would cross into the Mara so you would be ok on either side from August – November. Your best possible experience would be to visit both sides of the Mara River during this time; this will not only guarantee you the migration but will increase your chances of seeing the crossings of the Mara River.

December

Also a tricky month, if the rains come early and if there has been rain in the south then the herds would move down to the Serengeti quickly and there could be nothing left in the Mara. If there has been a lack of rain then the herds would opt for permanent water in the central Serengeti / Lobo areas.

When should you start planning your migration specific safari?

The best time to book your migration safari would be more or less 10 - 6 months prior to your intended date of travel, this will allow us to provide you with an accurate prediction of where the herds would be and also give us enough time to still find you space in camps or lodges that would be the closest to where you should be.

Game viewing outside of the migration

It is important to note that the greater Masai Mara and Serengeti ecosystems are year-round game-viewing destinations. Whilst viewing the actual migration is the highlight of any safari, game viewing in other areas remains superb all year round and should not be overlooked to combine into your safari experience.

Migration Update: 25 May 2012

The migration is currently hovering around the central Serengeti Area – Seronera Valley and Western corridor, there are still herds that can be seen on the southern plains but that have defiantly started moving. Good rains in the central and northern area have been reported and hence they are expected to be on the move – East Africa Operations Manager

(Please note that this information is provided as a prediction and we cannot be held liable for its accuracy)

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Map of the General Migration Movements



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