Wildebeest (*Connochaetes taurinus*)

**Conservation Status:** Least Concern

The wildebeest is an unusual-looking antelope with high shoulders and a large, boxlike head with curving horns. The front end of the body is heavily built, while the hindquarters are slender with skinny legs. They have a blue-gray or brown coat that is lighter above and darker below, with black vertical stripes on their forequarters. They have a black mane and longer hair on their forequarters as well as a beard that can be white or black.

**Fun Facts**

1. The common name wildebeest means “wild beast.”
2. Wildebeests can run up to 40 miles per hour

**Habitat**

The blue wildebeest is found in short-grass plains and bordering acacia savannas. They are also found in open bushlands and in woodlands within drier areas.

**Diet**

Short grass

**Predators**

Lions, wild dogs, crocodiles, and hyenas

**Behavior**

The blue wildebeest is a grazer, and their need to follow seasonal grazing and water supplies leads them to form some of the largest migratory herds of any antelopes, with those in the Serengeti and Maasai Mara ecosystem of Tanzania and Kenya forming part of the world’s largest remaining aggregations of large land mammals. They are extremely noisy, especially in large numbers, as they make a variety of loud vocalizations that take the form of moans and explosive snorts.

**Breeding**

The blue wildebeest has a restricted breeding season with around 80 to 90 percent of calves being born within a two- to three-week period, usually at the start of the rainy season. After a gestation period of 8-8.5 months, a single calf is born. Calves will follow their mother from the moment they can stand until they are weaned by nine months.

**Size**

Length: 1.9-2.1 m

Height: 1.15-1.45 m

**Weight**

160-272 kg

**Life Span:** 20 years

**Gestation Period:** 8 to 8.5 months

**Average number of offspring:** 1