



East Safari Tours,
P.O.Box 12063, Arusha , Tanzania
E-mail: travel@eastsafaris.com
Whatsapp chat/call: +255 752 544 582
Web: www.eastsafaris.com

The Great Wildebeest Migration

Overview

The Great Wildebeest Migration in the Serengeti is the largest single movement of wild animals in the world, deservedly listed as one of its eight Natural Wonders and an exceptional inspiration for a dream nature tour of northern Tanzania with East Safaris.

Around 1.5 million wildebeests, with hundreds of thousands of zebras, elands, gazelles along with a



trailing retinue of predators, leave their calving grounds in southern Serengeti, around March and April, heading for the next water source. Trekking via the south-central Seronera outskirts into the Western Corridor and Grumeti River arriving during the month of April to May and residing till June, and then finally towards the Masai Mara National Reserve in Kenya crossing the perilous Mara River around July or August onwards with a return via the same death-defying river, this time heading to the bearing of Lobo and Loliondo in eastern Serengeti around October to November. The white bearded wildebeest journey continues back to the southern Nduu calving grounds with arrivals starting around December with temporary residence till March.

Month by Month Migration Safari

December to March

The Southern Serengeti's huge grass plains extend into the Ngorongoro Conservation Area.

From December to March the Serengeti Migration congregates around Lake Ndutu in the Ngorongoro Conservation Area. When it reaches the area the herd splits up and spreads out leaving wildebeest herds as far as the eye can see.

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April to May

The Wildebeest migration moves north into the plains of the southern Serengeti with front runners stretching out to the Western Corridor and center of the park at Seronera.

June to July

By June there are wildebeest herds spread from the Western corridor through the heart of the park. One group tends to head west into the Western Corridor and crosses the Grumeti River before leaving the park and entering the exclusive Singita Grumeti Reserves. This herd will then head up through the Ikorongo game reserve on the Serengeti's Western corridor before the front runners arrive into the Kogatende area in July. The other herds head directly to the north of the Serengeti, passing straight up the middle through Seronera, Lobo and up to the Bologonja river area near the Eastern border with the Loliondo reserve at Kleins. It is true to say that at this time herds can be anywhere from the Western corridor through to the Eastern side of the park. Splinter herds will break from the main herds, covering huge areas in their search for fresh grasses.



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August through to October

From August through to October the herds are in the Northern Serengeti at Kogatende as well as in Kenya's Masai Mara. River crossings often happen daily here. With only a fraction of the visitor numbers that flock to the Mara, Kogatende is an exceptional destination. Given that the herds are simply following local rainfall, some move north, some move south, and many moves in both directions in the same day. The sprawling mass moves in a circular fashion throughout these months and as a result this is a fantastic time of year to see the herds.



November

In late October and November the herds start their second Great Migration south towards the fertile lands of the Ndotu plains where the rains will have rejuvenated the grasses since the herds were last there earlier in the year. This can be a tricky time to catch the mega herd, as it covers vast distances every day.

By the beginning of December, the herds are returning to Ndotu to calve, and the whole process is ready to start all over again. However, we must reiterate, wildebeest are not the most predictable of animals! The Migration is also entirely dependent upon rain, with the herds constantly searching for fresh grasses. As a result, it is a challenge to predict with any confidence where the herds will be during any

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particular week and therefore to decide where best to stay.



Key Points to Remember

- ✚ **Fixed camps or Mobile Camps:** Choosing a permanent camp for your Tanzania safari that is located in the 'right' area for the time of year will clearly increase your chances, but there are no guarantees. Once again, the very best way to catch the herds is to stay in one of the Serengeti's famous mobile camps, which move with the herds. Don't worry we will help you with that.
- ✚ **Best time:** Joining the Great Migration and its circuitous survival dance is a spectacle unrivaled anywhere on Earth. Your best chances to experience big populations and big drama are during the northern migrations, anywhere between **August and October**. But **calving season** is a sight to behold too, between **January and February**.
- ✚ **Rainfall varies:** No one can predict exactly when, where or how much rain will fall. The migration is a complex natural phenomenon and its timing varies from year to year.
- ✚ **Wildlife movements:** Not all plains game participate in the migration so don't believe that if you visit these areas outside of the migration season you won't see any wildlife. You may not see the hundreds of thousands of grazing animals but you will see plenty, as well as the more territorial species.
- ✚ **Tanzania or Kenya for the Migration?:** Most of the year the migrating wildlife are in Tanzania with only 2-3 months in Kenya's Masai Mara. So if you are going on safari specifically to see the migration, your **best bet is Tanzania**. Unless you are choosing Kenya for scenic variety. It offers the Laikipia, the Great Rift Valley and Lamu as well as the migration. If so, visiting the Masai Mara in August to September is a fair plan.

Prepared by East Safari Team | #Migrationupdate2019_2020

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