



A COMPLETE GUIDE OF WILDEBEEST MIGRATION SAFARI



Here's Everything You Need To Know About The Migration



5 Interesting Facts About The Wildebeest

1. Wildebeest are also commonly referred to as gnus.
2. Both males and females have horns, but those of a mature male are larger and thicker.
3. Wildebeest calves are able to walk as soon as they are born, and can run with the herd when they are just a few days old.
4. Wildebeest can live up to 20 years in the wild.
5. There are two species of the wildebeest blue wildebeest found in Southern and East Africa, and the endangered black wildebeest, found only in South Africa.





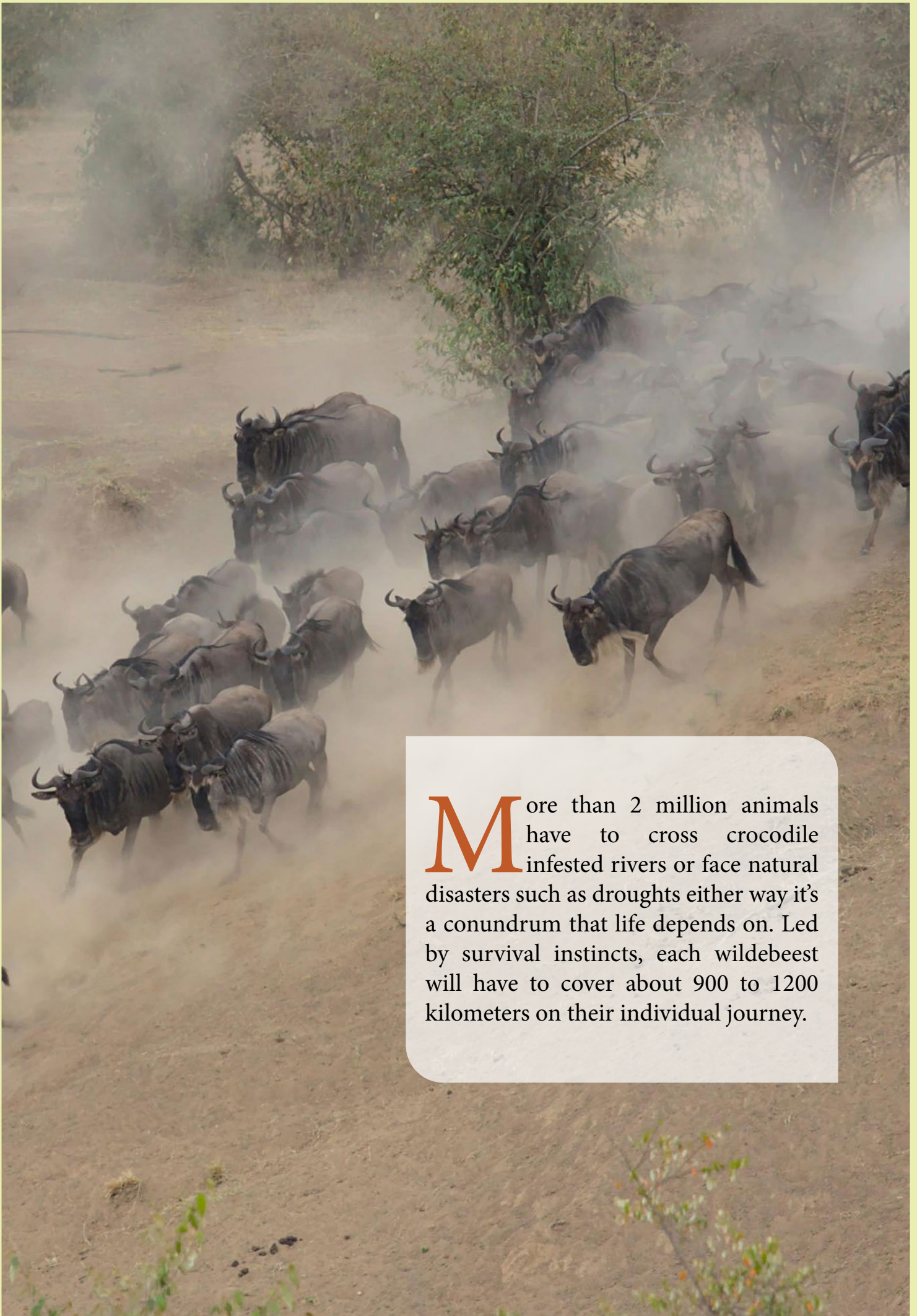
What's all the Fuss about Wildebeest Migration?

By definition if there is any, The Wildebeest migration is the greatest and largest animal movement/ migration in the world with none of its kind. With more than 2 million wildebeest also known as gnus along other animals such as zebras and gazelles move in a constant 800km to 600 miles cycle.

THE UNFOLDING

The wildebeest tends to follow the age-old routes annually in search of greener pastures from Serengeti to Mara and back. This being the largest herd movement of animals on the planet, it offers an action-packed experience to travelers from all across the world and that makes it the most sought-after experience by nature enthusiasts. Along the journey thousands of animals die from predation and stampede from the dangers that lurk along their mig routes, thousands are also born hence replenishing the numbers and sustaining the circle of life.






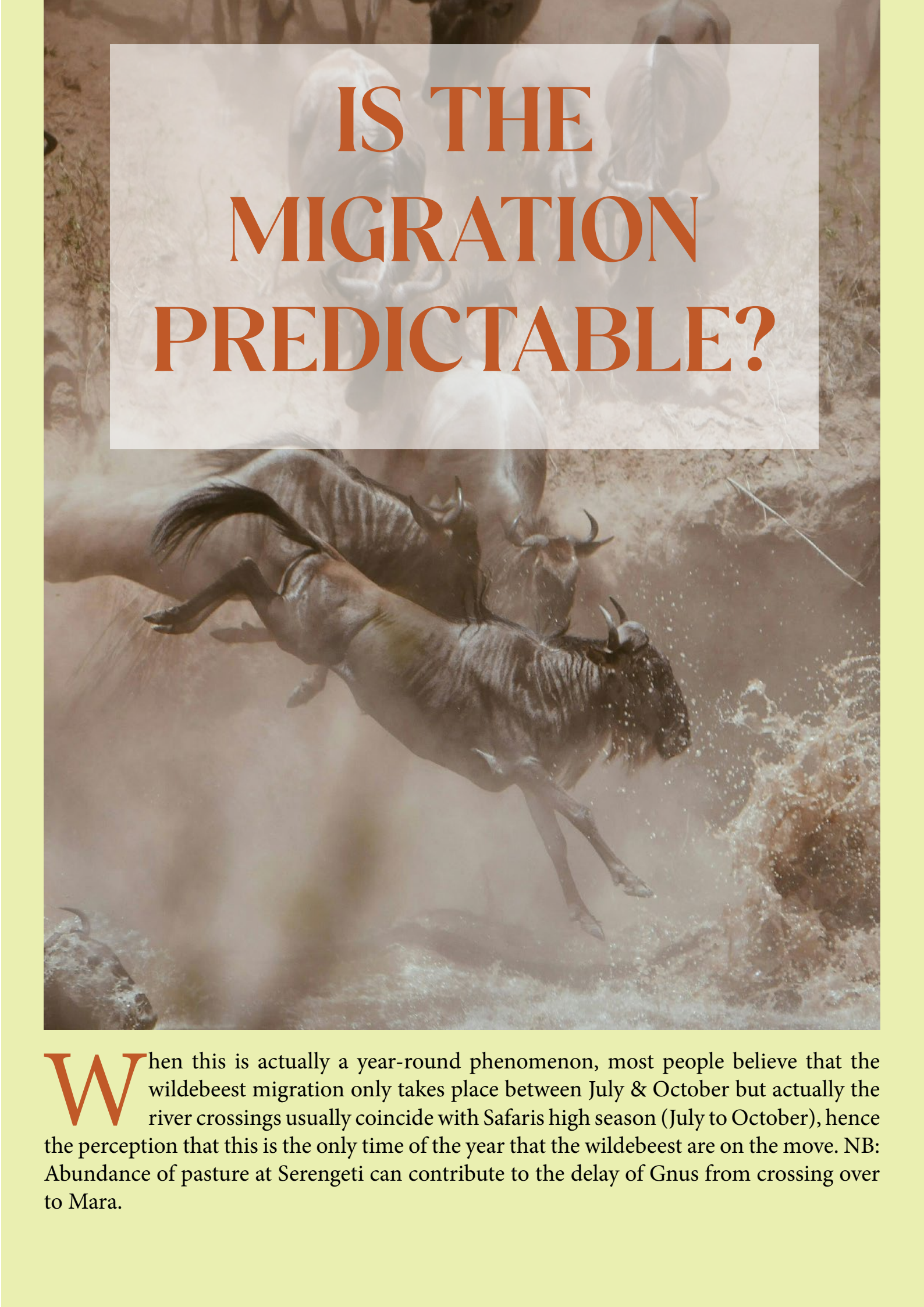
More than 2 million animals have to cross crocodile infested rivers or face natural disasters such as droughts either way it's a conundrum that life depends on. Led by survival instincts, each wildebeest will have to cover about 900 to 1200 kilometers on their individual journey.

The migration is beset with danger, with lions preying on slow animals, the brave ones will either break their legs during the stampede and Crocodiles prey on the weaklings. Amid all this chaos only the strong and aggressive survive.



A close-up photograph of a leopard sitting in a field of tall, dry grass. The leopard is looking directly at the camera with a calm expression. The lighting is warm and golden, suggesting late afternoon or early morning. The background is a soft, out-of-focus expanse of grass.

No other time in Masai Mara that there is a mouthwatering offer present on a menu like during the migration season, the habitual event sets new record and the menu on offer ranges from bazillion of wildebeest to zebras whilst their predators ranges from crocs by the river edge, lions among other predators lurking in wait for the sumptuous yet seasonal meal and you will be lucky to find out that in this wild phenomenon there is no shortage of mouths to feed.

A photograph of a herd of wildebeest crossing a river. In the foreground, a wildebeest is captured mid-air, splashing water as it jumps across the river. Other wildebeest are visible in the background, some already in the water and others on the bank. The scene is set in a natural, outdoor environment with a river and some vegetation.

IS THE MIGRATION PREDICTABLE?

When this is actually a year-round phenomenon, most people believe that the wildebeest migration only takes place between July & October but actually the river crossings usually coincide with Safaris high season (July to October), hence the perception that this is the only time of the year that the wildebeest are on the move. NB: Abundance of pasture at Serengeti can contribute to the delay of Gnus from crossing over to Mara.

The background image shows a vast savanna landscape. In the foreground, a large herd of wildebeest is scattered across a field of dry, golden-brown grass. Some zebras are also visible, interspersed among the wildebeest. The middle ground features rolling hills covered in dense, green and brown vegetation. The sky is filled with heavy, grey clouds, suggesting an overcast day. The overall scene captures the natural habitat of these animals during their migration.

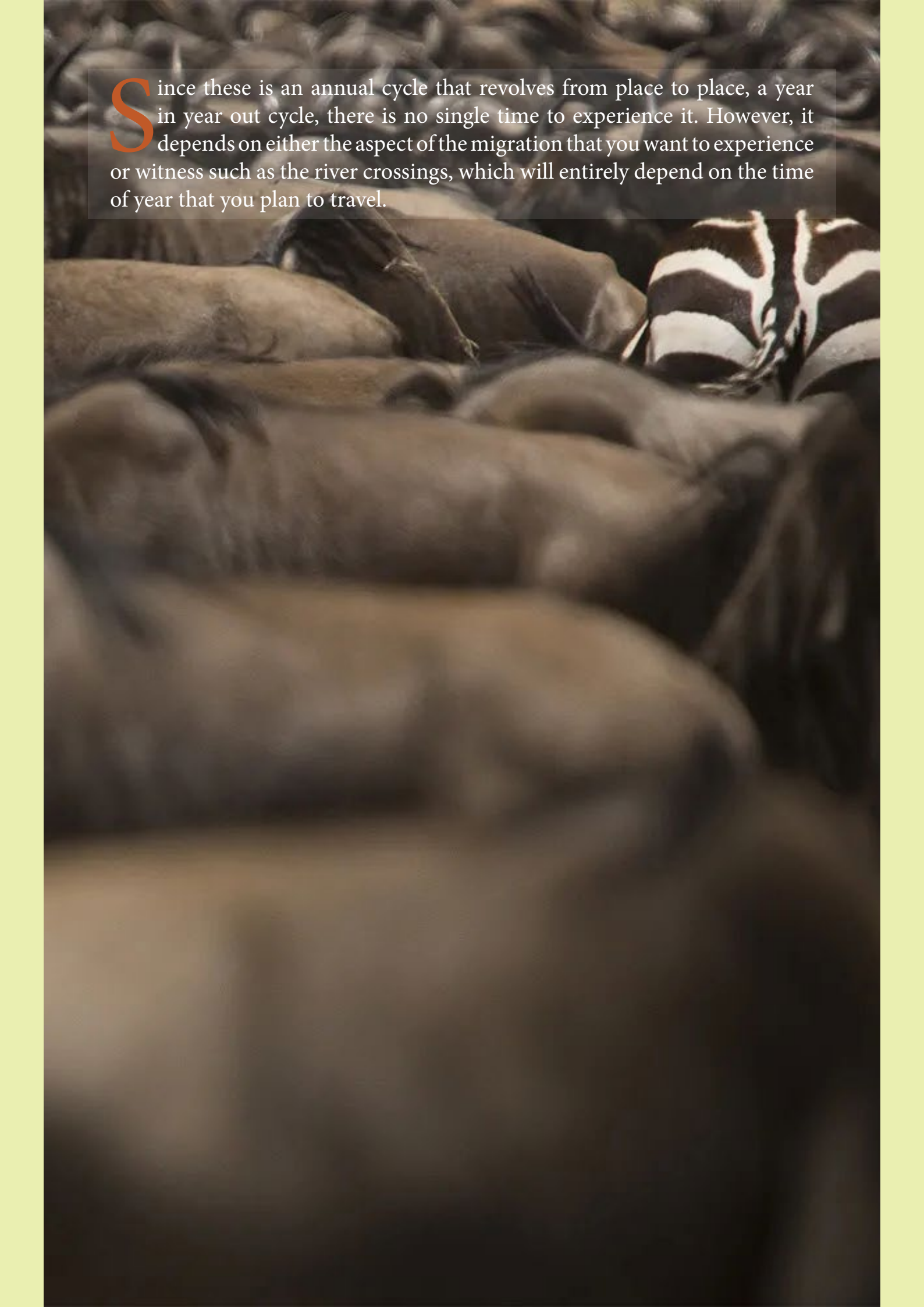
The Journey Dictate by Nature

Not even the wildebeest know when they're going to cross! Some arrive at the water and swim over immediately; some arrive and spend days hanging around grazing while some arrive and turn back to where they came from. This draws the conclusion that no one can predict the event's occurrence. This is why there is need to have as much time on safari with us as possible if you wish to witness the spectacle. It's unclear how the wildebeest know

which route to use, but it is generally a belief that their journey is entirely dictated primarily by their response to the weather patterns. They follow the rains and the growth of greener pastures. With no legitimate proof we still cannot refute what the nature experts believe about animals reacting to lightning and thunderstorms from a distance. It has been suggested that wildebeest can locate rain more than 50 Kms away

THE BEST TIME TO WITNESS THE GREAT MIGRATION BY A MONTHLY BREAKDOWN



A large herd of wildebeest is shown in a savanna landscape. The animals are densely packed, with many in the foreground and background. A zebra is visible in the background, partially obscured by the wildebeest. The scene is set in a natural, open environment.

Since this is an annual cycle that revolves from place to place, a year in year out cycle, there is no single time to experience it. However, it depends on either the aspect of the migration that you want to experience or witness such as the river crossings, which will entirely depend on the time of year that you plan to travel.

JANUARY

The herds are in Tanzania's Serengeti National Park, moving south from the north-east region and into the area near Lake Ndutu. The Serengeti is not fenced, so the herds are free to move where they can find grazing. Remember that although up to two million wildebeest, zebra and antelope form the Serengeti Migration, they are not all in a single herd. The animals break up into mega-herds of thousands or hundreds of individuals at time.

SERENGETI
NATIONAL PARK

Serengeti Shall Never Die



FEBRUARY TO MARCH

It is calving season (over 8 000 wildebeest babies are born each day and about 400,000 calves are born within a period of 2 to 3 weeks!) so prepare yourself for lots of wobbly calves... and lots of heartbreak as fearsome predators swoop in with the abundance of vulnerable young calves means the surrounding Predators also spring into action, hunting with ease due to the Sheer numbers of

wildebeest. The Serengeti's big cats take the lion's share, but hit-and-run jackals, packs of wild dog, and hyena clans add to the spectacle. It's a bittersweet ballad; the circle of life played out as a live action drama. If the short rainy season (Nov-Dec) produced good grazing, the herds feed frenziedly and remain in the Serengeti's southern plains until they slowly start moving west in March.





APRIL

It's the start of the long rains (Apr–May) and the herds generally move in a north-westerly direction towards the Moru and Simba Kopjes. The action-packed rutting (breeding) season is in full swing, featuring testosterone-fueled jousts between males competing for the right to with receptive females.

MAY

Wagons roll! The massed herds are on the go, huge columns of up to 40 kilometers (25 miles) in length can sometimes be seen as the wildebeest funnel up into the central Serengeti. Everyone's moving a little quicker now that the calves are stronger.





JUNE

Gradually, the movement gathers momentum and the wildebeest start to mass in the Serengeti's Western Corridor. At this time of year, the wildebeest face their first challenge of crossing the crocodile-infested Grumeti River.

JULY

The Great Migration have reached the Grumeti region and northern parts of the Serengeti and are peering closely at the treacherous waters of the Mara River they have to cross into Kenya. As mentioned, it is impossible to accurately predict river crossings – they depend entirely on the rains and the often-unpredictable wildebeest themselves. It's vital to book your Wildebeest Migration safari in

Africa up to a year in advance to get a lodge on or as close to the river as possible – this cut down on travel time to lookout points. The wildebeest do have historical crossing areas and you may spend days staked out in the hope of seeing the action. We recommend safari camp/lodge that are situated near the Migration route to ensure you're in the right place at the right time.



AUGUST

By August, the herds have faced the challenge of crossing the Mara River and are spread throughout the Masai Mara's northern region, with many remaining in the northern Serengeti. In years when the river is in full flow, the panic and confusion at the crossings — combined with waiting predators and surging currents — can cause massive loss of life. Many will perish but the thousands

of calves that are born more than make up the numbers. Nevertheless, in years of relatively gently flowing water, the crocodile takes their toll, not to mention the lion and other large predators that patrol the banks, ready to ambush any wildebeest that make it to the other side. There is no single crossing: at some spots, there are just a few individuals, while others see a mass of animals moving without break for hours





SEPTEMBER

By September/October, the main chaos has ended and the migrating columns have gradually moved eastward. The herds are mostly concentrated in the Maasai Mara in Kenya, the northernmost range of the trek, but many still remain in the Serengeti.



OCTOBER

Your best bet is still the Masai Mara, but bear in mind it is a far smaller reserve than the Serengeti and there may be a lot of other visitors. The neighboring private conservancies are much less crowded and, not only will you still be able to witness the Migration,

you will also directly contribute to the Maasai communities who have lived there for thousands of years. Plus, you can enjoy off-road game viewing, night drives and walking safaris – activities not permitted in the national reserve.

A photograph of a herd of wildebeest in a savanna landscape. The animals are dark brown with prominent, curved horns. They are standing in a field of tall, yellow-green grass. In the background, there are trees with sparse, yellowish leaves, suggesting a dry or late-rain season. The lighting is bright, creating a warm atmosphere.

NOVEMBER

In a 'normal year' the short rains have begun, propelling the wildebeest to leave the now denuded grasslands of the Masai Mara and head back into the rejuvenated Serengeti. Bear in mind that the rain can be late or early, which is also unpredictable. The herds are generally on the move, but can be seen around the north-eastern parts of the a Serengeti where they may split into smaller groups for their journey southward.

DECEMBER

Fresh grazing sees the wildebeest move south, covering the northern and eastern Serengeti to feast and prepare for yet another death-defying, 3 000-km (1 900-mi) odyssey.



The Best Time To Go On Migration Safari

EVENT	TIME APPROXIMATION	PLACE
Calving (Birthing) Season	February to March	Southern Serengeti
Rutting (Breeding) Season	April to May	Western & Central Serengeti
Grumeti River Crossings	May to June	Central Serengeti
Mara River Crossings	July to August	Northern Serengeti & Masai a single space Mara
On the Move	November to January	Masai Mara & Northern a single space Serengeti to Southern a single space Serengeti

Note: the above are approximate dates only. The Wildebeest Migration is a year-round, circular journey and the river crossings cannot be predicted. Sometimes the herds stay put for two weeks, other times they could cross four times in one day!

Key Highlights



- The bulk of the Migration takes place in the Serengeti.
- It's a year-round, circular journey.
- River crossings cannot be predicted, but generally occur between May and August.
- The animals are strung out across a large area – there are always fore-runners and stragglers.
- Your best chance of seeing river crossing may involve spending all day at a site where the wildebeest have massed. If you are a keen photographer, your best opportunities may occur around midday when the sun and glare are at their harshest, so make preparations to accommodate this