

■ ■ ■ **KENYA'S MAASAI MARA NAMED 7TH WONDER OF THE WORLD**

Kenya's Maasai Mara Game Reserve has been named the 7th Wonder of the World in a poll of experts conducted by ABC Television's Good Morning America. The incredible annual migration of over a million Wildebeest from the Serengeti plains to the Mara has been described as being one of the most awe inspiring sights on earth, and a broadcast on US morning television took this spectacle into millions of American homes.

The sheer spectacle of this event draws visitors keen to witness one of the planet's largest and most fascinating natural cycles to Kenya each year, and is regarded as the planet's greatest natural spectacle- and it is this remarkable event that saw the Mara ranked as one of the new Seven Wonders.

The central migratory herds of over 1.3 million wildebeest spend much of the year grazing throughout the plains of the Serengeti. The herds calve in January to March, the young born ready to make their first, epic journey. In June, as the dry season withers the grasslands and a distant scent of moisture brings promise of rain in the north, they begin to gather, massing together to form a single vast herd.

They pour northwards, a pulsing, surging column of life. The sound of the approaching herd is a deep, primal rumbling of thundering hooves and low grunts. This endless grey river of life is mottled with black and white as zebras join the throng, drawn onwards in the search for the rains and fresh life giving grass.



By July the herds begin crossing from Tanzania to Kenya, bringing the plains to life as predators are drawn to this perfect opportunity for easy hunting.

At the edge of the Maasai Mara the herds face their greatest obstacle, a series of rivers that must be crossed. At the Mara River the herds gather at the banks, piling together in front of the broad fast flowing waters. As the pressure built the herds finally surge into the river, many animals hurling themselves off high banks.



As they struggle across the rivers many are drowned or swept away by strong currents. The crossing attracts massive crocodiles who each year await this season of bounty. There is always great frenzy in the waters as the crocodiles plunge into the herds and pull down the prey, as the mounting pressure on the shore pushes more and more animals into the water.

As they reach their goal, the herds spread out to graze across the expanse of the Mara. October sees the herds turn southward and repeat the same journey back to the Serengeti, where the renewed grasslands await.

This is truly a Wonder of the World- an incredible display of nature at work. Of all the calves born in the Serengeti, two out of three will never return from their first and most demanding migration. It is the inextricable binding of renewal and sustenance, feast and famine, life and death that saw this latest honor bestowed upon Kenya.

A safari to witness this event is an unforgettable experience. You will see the forces of nature at work in a massive complex system that has always existed, and continues oblivious to the influence of our modern world. This is life at its most elemental and enigmatic- without doubt the world's greatest wildlife spectacle.

For full information on visiting the Maasai Mara, and listings of tour operators and accommodation, please visit www.magicalkenya.com.

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