

On safari with Bloo

We are going on safari (safari is Swahili for journey) with Bloo the Gnu.

Gnus (also called Wildebeest) take an annual journey called a migration around the plains of East Africa.

This journey usually takes a year as the gnus follow the rain in a constant search for grass.

Their journey covers a total distance of around 2000 miles (3200 kilometres).

We are going to be following in the gnu footprints to try and travel the same distance.

Children will be awarded points for the journey mode they use to travel to school.

Walking - 2 points = 2km





Car share - 1 point = 1km

Park and stride - 1 point = 1km

Bus - 1 point = 1km

Car - 0 points = 0km (children can gain a point by walking round the playground 10 times)



Distances (km/miles) Time of year migration takes place	Description of part of migration
0 km (0 miles) October 	<p>Our safari starts in the Maasai Mara at the Maasai Boma. This is a protective enclosure used by the Maasai tribes people to protect their village from wild animals.</p> <p>During the migration the gnu are usually at this point at end of the dry season (which is in October).</p>
400km (250 miles) November 	<p>The migration heads south to get ready for the start of the new rainy season.</p> <p>The gnus do not travel alone. They travel with other grazing animals such as zebras and Thomson's gazelles.</p>
800km (500 miles) December 	<p>The rainy season has started and the Serengeti Plains are covered with fresh grass. Here we pass the elephant graveyard. This is a place where elephants go to die when they get old.</p>
1200km (750 miles) January 	<p>The gnu migration stops for a while to eat the short grass on the southern plains near Twiga Grove. (Twiga is Swahili for Giraffe) Giraffes grow up to 5.5 metres tall, they use their height to eat twigs from the highest trees.</p>

1600km
(1000 miles)
February



At this point there are around 2 million gnus, zebras, and gazelles, as well as many predators on the plains. Gnus start to have their young which are called calves.

We travel close to the Ngorongoro Crater, which is the world's largest unbroken, unflooded volcanic caldera (a crater formed when a volcano exploded and fell in on itself) (The crater is 260km² or 102 square miles in size) Black rhino can sometimes be seen in this area. They are very rare animals; there are only about 3000 left in the wild.

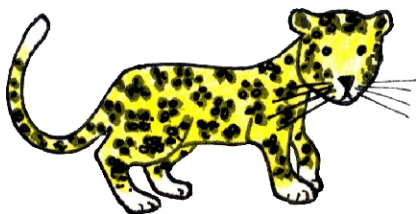
2000 km
(1250 miles)
April- May



The migration starts moving slowly passed Fig Tree woodlands. As heavy rain sets in, wild flowers come out in full bloom. The gnus have to make their way carefully past Lion Rock.

The lion is the largest big cat found in Africa and can reach speeds of up to 40mph. They live in groups called prides. Other African cats include cheetah and leopard.

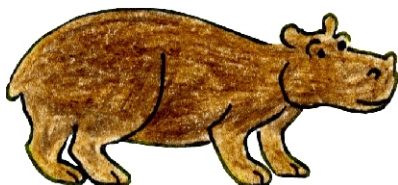
2400km
(1500 miles)
June



The rains are stopping and the dry season is approaching. The migration has to cross the Grumeti river, where many gnus are eaten by crocodiles.

The migration also passes Leopard Gorge. Luckily for adult gnus, leopards do not prey on such large mammals, as the diet of a leopard consists of birds, fish, and monkeys, but young gnus can make a good meal!

2800km
(1750 miles)
July- August



The migration heads back towards the Maasai Mara area to eat the grass here. The migration passes Hippo Ponds.

Hippos can weigh as much as 3000kg (3 small cars). Hippos are very dangerous; they don't like strangers and will attack anyone who gets too close.

3200km
(2000 miles)
September



The gnus have to cross the Mara River to reach the Maasai Mara. Here again many are eaten by crocodiles. The crocodiles in the Mara River are some of the largest in the world and can be 5-6 metres long and weigh over a tonne.