



# Land Animals on the Move

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*Discover how and why amazing animals migrate.*



Think about how much you move from place to place throughout the day. Do you travel to and from school? Or maybe you take walks around your block? Animals move, too. But for many animals, it's a little different: they migrate. Migration is the repeated movement of a group of animals, or an animal population, from one place to another. Animals migrate for many different reasons. Some migrate to find food. Others migrate to find safe places to raise their young. Migration happens on the land, in the sea, and even in the sky! Read on to discover the amazing migrations of some land animals.

## *Cool Caribou*

Meet the caribou! These animals are a type of deer that migrate over very long distances. In fact, caribou (also sometimes known as reindeer) migrate some of the farthest distances of all land animals: up to 400 miles each spring and winter.

So, why the long move? Caribou live in large groups known as herds in a region of the Earth called the Arctic in the most northern part of the planet. There, caribou feed on plants. During the summer, there are many fresh plants and grasses in many parts of the Arctic. But during the winters, the Arctic gets very cold. Snow falls, and grasses and leaves die. In order to find enough food, the caribou must travel to places where it is warmer, or where winter plants are growing.



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Herd of elephants migrating.

### Excellent Elephants

You might expect big, heavy animals to avoid long journeys, but, in fact, the largest animal on land migrates, too! That's right—African elephants walk great distances from place to place. Like caribou, African elephants live in groups called herds. Unlike caribou, African elephants live in places that are pretty warm for most of the year. These gentle giants mostly live in the savannas, or wooded and grassy plains, across much of the continent of Africa.

However, elephants still need to travel from one place to another to make sure there is enough food for the herd. If the elephants eat all the plants in one area, they must move on for a time until those plants grow back. African elephants also migrate in search of something else just as important: water. Savannas are usually very warm and dry. So, elephants migrate to different water sources like rivers or watering holes.

#### DID YOU KNOW?

**In prehistoric times, people usually migrated, too. Groups of humans often traveled to follow migrating herds of animals, which they relied on for food. Some people still follow this lifestyle today.**

### Wandering Wildebeests

Caribou migrations are long. Migrating elephants are huge. Now get ready to learn about a migration that's enormous in a very different



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way! Wildebeests, also known as gnus, are a kind of antelope that live on the savannas of Africa. Like elephants, wildebeests travel in herds to follow the seasonal rains. These rains bring fresh grasses, which the wildebeests eat.

### FUN FACT

**Some wildebeests weigh almost as much as an adult tiger!**

But wildebeest migrations are different, because the herds are humongous. In fact, each year, more than 1.5 million wildebeests migrate. What a crowd! These mass migrations are so

large and incredible that people even travel across the world, too—just to watch them.

No matter what the reason, it's amazing to see animals on the move!