

ANIMALS NEED HOMES

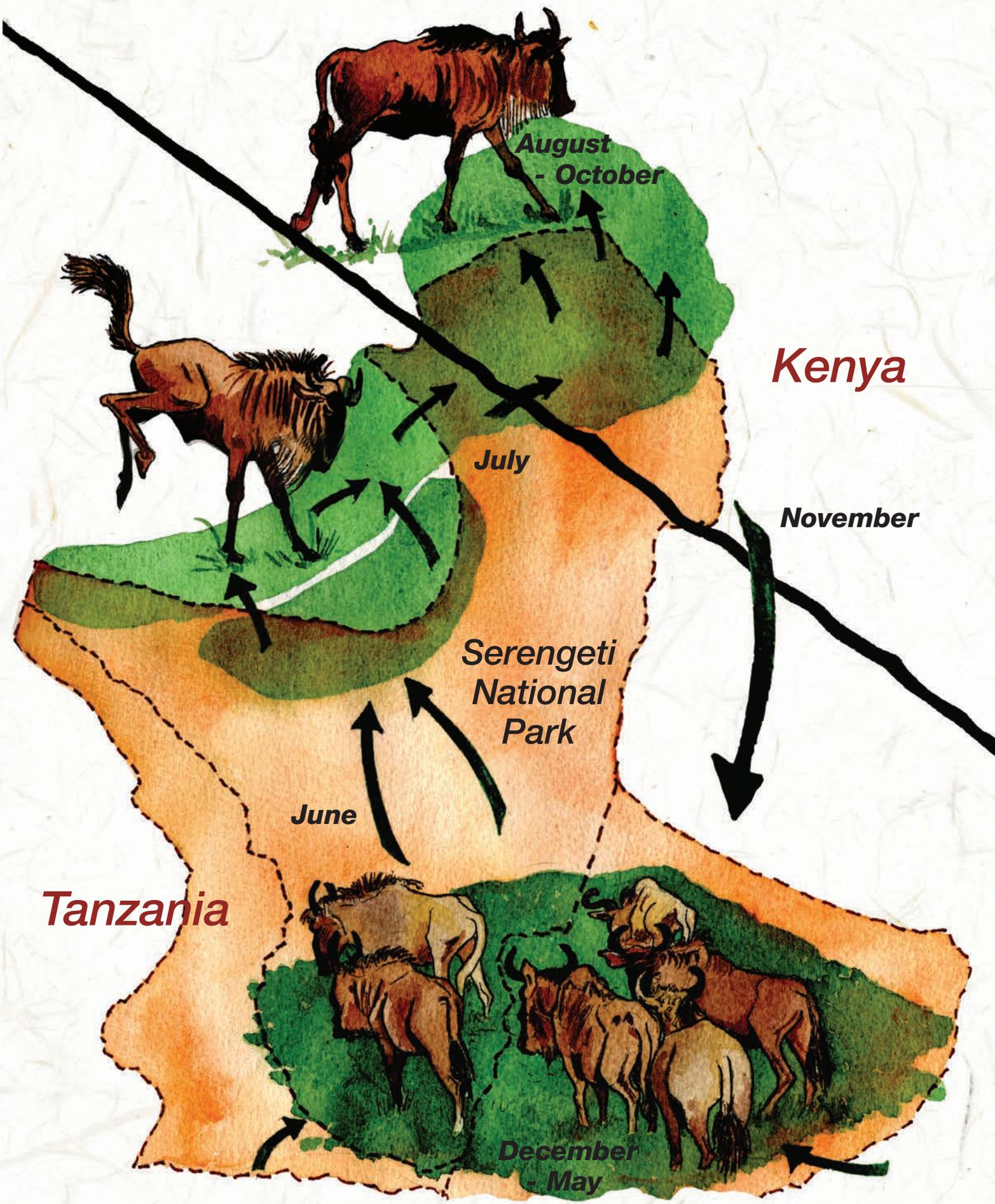
Seeing things from an animal's point of view can be hard when you are struggling day in, day out, to keep your family fed and well. It is worth remembering that animals have similar struggles. Many care for their young the same way we do. African Wild Dogs are tender with their babies. Sisters and brothers nurture each other, babysitting, teaching and feeding their younger sibs. Elephants live in sisterhoods, led by a female elder, traveling great distances following the rains. Each year they follow traditional paths, across countries, borders and forests. Life has become more and more difficult for these animals. As they move they find humans have built a village or chopped down a forest along the route where for millions of years their ancestors have been making their annual passage, the migration.

Elephants do not enter crops because they want to do harm, but simply because they are hungry or curious, or lost in a place that used to be wild land because the space available for them is becoming ever smaller. Your farm or garden once was wilderness. Habitats (homes for animals) become converted to make way for houses, roads, factories, towns, even cities. If too much land is converted, animals will have nowhere to live. In Africa >176 animal species have gone extinct in the last 600 years. The dodo, the quagga, the bluebuck and the Cape Verde giant skink are no more and will never be again. Four thousand and eighty (4080) African animal and plant species are known to be threatened with extinction.

Africa is 30 million square kilometres in size – very big! Only a small proportion +/-12% – is 'protected'. This means that it has been set aside for use in a way which does not destroy the wildlife living there. Although to humans who live on their boundaries, parks and reserves seem enormous, they are not enough space to allow many of Africa's most fascinating species such as lions and elephants to survive.

Not enough space: "The greatest threat to Africa's elephants is loss of range brought about by human population growth and expansion onto elephant range."

Cynthia Moss, Director, Amboseli Elephant Research Project, Kenya.



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