

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**STATEMENT ON CLAIMS OF WILDEBEEST MIGRATION BLOCKAGE IN
THE MAASAI MARA NATIONAL RESERVE**

Nairobi, Kenya – Thursday 27th November 2025. The Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) has noted with concerns the information circulating on social media alleging that the Ritz-Carlton Safari Camp is obstructing wildebeest migration routes and river crossings within the Maasai Mara National Reserve.

The wildebeest migration is a globally celebrated natural spectacle, recently recognized by the World Book of Records (*UK*) and World Tourism Market (*London*) as the world's greatest annual terrestrial wildlife migration and Africa leading tourism destination respectively. This distinction reaffirms Kenya's exceptional natural heritage and our enduring leadership in sustainable tourism and wildlife conservation.

The Government of Kenya accords the highest priority to the protection of wildlife corridors and dispersal areas, which are essential for the survival of migratory and resident species. Our commitment is demonstrated through ongoing national initiatives, including the recent Cabinet approval to secure the Nairobi National Park - Athi-Kapiti wildlife corridor, among others. This policy direction highlights our firm resolve to safeguard all existing wildlife corridors, including those within the wider Masai Mara ecosystem.

In light of the current concerns, Kenya Wildlife Service wishes to provide the following clarifications:

- 1. That the Ritz-Carlton safari camp is situated within a designated tourism investment low use zone, as provided for in the Maasai Mara National Reserve Management Plan, 2023 - 2032.** The zonation

in the reserve were established based on comprehensive scientific assessments, ecological sensitivity analyses, and spatial planning frameworks jointly developed by National and County governments.

2. The integrity of the wildebeest migration corridors has been scientifically verified.

The movements of migrating wildebeest in Maasai Mara have been mapped using more than two decades of GPS collar data collected from migratory wildebeest between 1999 and 2022.

- i. The dataset includes GPS tracks from over 60 collared migratory wildebeest.
- ii. Each GPS fix typically represents herds ranging from 2,000 to 100,000 animals.
- iii. The long-term wildebeest collar data indicate that the entire Maasai Mara National Reserve is a general dispersal area for the wildebeest.
- iv. The long-term wildebeest collar data clearly points to the fact that migrating wildebeest are utilizing the entire breadth of the Kenya-Tanzania border within the Reserve (approximately 68 km wide), without a specific preferred route or corridor.
- v. The Masai Mara National Reserve is served by the Mara River, Sand River and Talek River, along which lodges and campsites are established and wildlife including wildebeest and zebra have historically moved across these rivers without any serious incidences.
- vi. Along the Sand River alone, there are five (5) permanent safari camps and over two (2) seasonal camps and none has received such negative publicity like Ritz Carlton Safari Camp is receiving now.
- vii. Therefore, the long-term monitoring data conclusively indicates that the location of the Ritz-Carlton Safari Camp and the other five safari camps along the Sand River camps do not fall within, obstruct, or interfere with any wildebeest migration corridors.

Several of the images, pictures and narratives circulating online relate to historical events that were addressed in previous years around 2018 and 2020. These

materials are outdated, misleading, or presented without proper context, and may also reflect opposing and competing commercial interests surrounding tourism investments in Mara. Therefore, we encourage the public to rely on verified and official information to ensure that the general public is not misguided.

The Kenya Wildlife Service assures the public that all ecological, environmental, and regulatory requirements were thoroughly met and validated prior to approval of the Ritz-Carlton Safari Camp. In addition, every tourism investment within parks, reserves and sanctuaries is subjected to stringent environmental assessment to ensure alignment with conservation priorities and the integrity of Kenya's protected areas and ecosystems.

Kenya Wildlife Service as the lead Agency on wildlife protection, conservation and management in Kenya, remains committed to striking the right balance between responsible tourism investment, ecological protection, and community socio-economic advancement. We reaffirm our dedication to preserving the wildebeest migration for current and future generations, and call upon Kenyans to remain patriotic and always provide correct and accurate information about our beloved country, Kenya.

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