

A photograph of a leopard and its three cubs in a savanna setting. The adult leopard is standing on the right, looking towards the left. Three cubs are positioned in front of it: one is sitting on the left, and two are standing in the center and right foreground. The background is a dry, grassy field with some trees in the distance. A large, semi-transparent ampersand is overlaid on the left side of the image.

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EAST AND SOUTHERN AFRICA

The Baby Boom
East & Southern Africa

Season Of The Baby Boom

There is something incredibly beguiling about the young of wild animals, it is almost impossible for us not to go ‘aaaahhhhhh’. This affects us all, both young and those with large dollops of life experience and pretty much everyone in between. Here we have collected some of our favourite itineraries that offer your clients plenty of “aaaahhhh” moments. Whether it is seeing the young wildebeest and zebra in the world’s second largest migration across the Mkagdikgadi Salt Pans (coupled with wonderfully cheeky meerkat babies) or seeing the beautifully ugly Shoebill stork babies in Uganda, we really do have the “aaaahhhh” effect here.

My family’s favourites have to be the penguins chicks of Simon’s Town (I think the amazing ice-cream at Noordhoek also had something to do with making this a ‘best day ever’), Africa Wild Dog pups in Madikwe (which is also malaria free) and watching the newly hatched turtles scamper down Watamu beach to the sea – as an aside, if anyone knows how to stop kids from desperately screaming “I want one” at the top of their voice at this normally magical moment, then do please let me know!

John Round-Turner
Regional Sales & Marketing Director, East and Southern Africa

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The Great Migration Baby Boom

Serengeti National Park, Tanzania

Our planet is amazing. Between 400,000 and 600,000 years ago a series of volcanic eruptions occurred throwing a huge amount of white ash over what we now call Southern Serengeti. Over thousands of years the ash compacted with only grass and small shrubs being able to grow. Coupled with seasonal rains it has become the perfect spot for wildebeest and zebras to have their babies.

It is a truly astonishing sight to look out over the gently undulating plains and almost find it impossible to see the grass. Millions of wildebeest and zebras litter the grasslands, joined by approximately 400,000 wildebeest calves and zebra foals. This is the migration birthing season, starting at the beginning of **February** and lasting around six weeks. The high protein grass, plentiful water supply and safety in numbers means these little ones get the best chance of survival.

But that doesn't mean everyone survives, because the huge numbers of plains game draws in thousands of predators. This is the best possible time to see the big cats on the hunt. There is nothing as exciting as seeing the lionesses working as a well drilled unit, the concentrated stealthy stalking of a leopard or the thrill of watching the cheetah go from stationary to full speed (around 120 kph or 75 mph) in just a few strides.

Please click [here](#) for our suggested itinerary which includes three nights in the Southern Serengeti.



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Africa's Second Great Migration Rejuvenation Makgadikgadi, Botswana

It is a little known fact but the expanses of the Makgadikgadi in Botswana is home to Africa's second largest migration of wildebeest and zebra's.

The Makgadikgadi National Park is where the Okavango Delta finally fades into desert. The Boteti River draws a line in the sand, separating the dry Makgadikgadi from the thirst lands of the Kalahari beyond. This is the last chance for hundreds of zebras and wildebeest that crowd the water's edge to quench a desert-drawn thirst.

During the wet season (January to March), rains transform the pans into lush, nutritious wetlands and provide a wonderland habitat for migrating animals; the longest zebra migration in Africa finds its way here to gorge on the sweet grass.

At the height of the Green Season, between **November and April**, the zebra and wildebeest give birth to their young, taking advantage of the vast swathes of lush, nutritious grass, and ensuring that the herd lives on.

Please click [here](#) for our suggested itinerary which includes three nights in Makgadikgadi.

The Elusive Shoebill Stork

Mabamba Swamp, Uganda

The shoebill stork is among Uganda's most unusual and interesting creatures and considered rare and will always get keen bird watchers excited. They are often overshadowed by the primates of the country which are much easier to see.

The shoebill lives in the swamps around Lake Victoria including the Mabamba Swamp, a short boat ride from Entebbe, the Semuliki National Park and in the southern sector of the Queen Elizabeth National Park.

This unusual bird is a monogamous breeder, whose eggs are laid at the end of the rainy seasons and are ready to hatch after 30 days of incubation. Most eggs will hatch between **May and June and November and December**, the chicks are then nurtured by their parents for a whopping 112 days until they are strong enough to fly, however they still hang around for a further month before they set out on their own. Seeing these birds and their chicks is a totally unique experience and pairs very well with visiting the gorillas and chimpanzees of Uganda.

Please click [here](#) for our pre or post extension which can be added onto any Ugandan safari.

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African Wild Dogs Pups

Madikwe Game Reserve

African wild dogs, also known as 'Painted Wolves' are the largest of the wild canids in Africa and one of the continent's most endangered carnivores. They tend to breed between **April and July** each year.

There are five species of African wild dogs recognized: Cape wild dog, East African wild dog, Somali wild dog, Chadian wild dog and West African wild dog. While genetically diverse, they are typically all called African wild dogs for the sake of simplicity.

Wild dogs are extremely sociable animals and are usually found in packs of between five and 15 members in size. Each pack has a clearly defined social hierarchy and is led by an alpha male and female. In most packs only the alpha male and female reproduce. The average number of pups per litter is 10, but there can be between six and 16 pups per litter.

The Madikwe Game Reserve is a haven for this endangered species and once they have denned they are easy to locate. This, coupled with the adorable pups, makes seeing these predators a game viewing delight.

Please click [here](#) for our suggested itinerary which include three nights in the Madikwe Game Reserve.



Under the Sea - Green Turtle Hatchlings

Watamu, Kenya

The endangered green turtles are the largest species of hard-shelled turtles and second largest of all turtles. The females of this wonderful species will always return to the same beach that they hatched to lay their eggs. This is what makes Watamu Beach such a special place – every year between **March and May** hundreds of green turtles make their way up onto the powder white sand to lay their eggs. Each female will lay up to 100 eggs in a clutch and will lay between three to seven clutches in a season, then just two months later the hatchlings will appear – between May and July. Most hatchlings will choose to make their break for the sea early in the morning or under the cover of darkness; this is perhaps one of the most special things to witness on the Kenyan coast.

Please click [here](#) for our suggested Watamu Beach Extension that can be added onto any East African itinerary.



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Whale Calves

Hermanus

Whale Watching Season is early **June to early December** in Hermanus. Migrating from their feeding grounds in Antarctica to the safe, warmer and nurturing shores of Cape Town, it's a whale baby boom around this time. The males will still be around, while some of the females will have given birth, and many will be waiting to do so. Before making their way to the colder waters, they need to ensure that their young are strong and fat enough to brave the journey. Just one of the many reasons why this part of the country is known as the Cape Whale Coast.

Please click [here](#) for our suggested itinerary that includes three nights in Hermanus.

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Penguin Chicks

Boulders Beach, Cape Town

Boulders Beach is home to a breeding colony of over 2000 African penguins on the outskirts of Simonstown. **Late November to late January** are certainly two wonderful months to see the penguins. Nestled in a sheltered cove between Simon's Town and Cape Point, Boulders has become world famous for its thriving colony of African Penguins and magnificent wind sheltered, safe beaches.

Please click [here](#) for our suggested itinerary which includes a visit to Boulders Beach.

