

# Common wildebeest ... a gnu species for you!

ASSOCIATION  
OF ZOOS &  
AQUARIUMS  
ANTELOPE AND  
GIRAFFE TAG



## MEASUREMENTS

**Length:** 6-8 feet

**Height:** 4-5 feet  
at shoulder

**Weight:** 300-650 lbs



Grassland



Africa

IUCN  
LEAST  
CONCERN

~1.5 million  
in the wild

## Why exhibit common wildebeest?

- Display one of the most iconic species of the African savanna. Their preference for open areas encourages them to stay in full view!
- Contextualize popular African predator exhibits (lions, hyenas, wild dogs) with a display of this abundant and recognizable prey species.
- Expand the interpretation of migratory wildlife to an international scale. Serengeti wildebeest are renowned for their spectacular "Great Migration."
- Turn heads with these unique and ungainly-looking antelope - especially when they get excited and begin prancing comically around!
- Use wildebeest as a cornerstone for interpreting survival strategies: they breed synchronously (90% of babies are born in a 3-week period), and calves are able to stand within six minutes and keep up with the herd within a day.

## Stewardship Opportunities

Wild Nature Institute/Tarangire Ungulate Observatory

<http://www.wildnatureinstitute.org/tungo.html>

## Care and Husbandry

**YELLOW SSP:** 76.109.42 (227) in 22 AZA (+1 non-AZA) institutions (2019)

**Species coordinator:** Kristen Wolfe, Disney's Animal Kingdom  
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**Social nature:** Gregarious; best kept in herds of 3-35 individuals (success depends on holding space). Bachelor groups have been successful.

**Mixed species:** Successfully housed with a wide range of hoofstock and large birds. Wildebeest often run and leap, and may startle other species or incite them to run. Breeding males can be aggressive.

**Housing:** Space is key, especially for large herds and bachelor groups. Will tolerate near-freezing temperatures for short periods, but heated holdings are needed where temperatures regularly fall below 45°F. Wildebeest swim well; water moats are not an effective barrier.

**Medical notes:** Hardy, with little vet care required. Can stress easily when separated from the herd or in unfamiliar surroundings. Wildebeest are carriers of Malignant Catarrhal Fever (MCF).

**Special requirements:** Risk of fatal transfer of MCF to other ungulates is highest in breeding groups. A veterinary risk assessment is advised.

**Keeper resources:** Typical husbandry. Wildebeest can be skittish, and do best with a consistent routine.

Please contact the TAG for full husbandry guidelines.

<http://www.azaungulates.org/>



Photos by B. Huffman, Fossil Rim Wildlife Center, and Lion Country Safari.  
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