



The Ruaha National Park in southern Tanzania is one of the destinations not to be missed for its unique and exciting atmosphere emanating from its wild nature and for the excellent opportunities of sighting of wild animals.

The great river Ruaha is the lifeblood of the park. The name Ruaha originates from the word *Ruvaha*, which means river, used by of the Hehe people.

The history of the park begins in 1910, when the announcement of the creation of the Saba Game Reserve, by the Germans, was published in the Official Journal. The name was later changed by the British to Rungwa Game Reserve in 1946 and in 1964 the southern part of the reserve was declared Ruaha National Park.

The Ruaha National Park is part of a much larger set of joint wildlife, areas an ecosystem that includes the reserves of Kizigo, Muhesi and Rungwa which, together, cover an area of over 45,000 square kilometres.

In 2008 the Usangu Game Reserve and other important wetlands in the Usangu basin were annexed to the Ruaha National Park bringing the protected area to 20,000 square kilometres.

The Ruaha National Park is located at a **transition point between two distinct vegetation zones**, the typical miombo woods of southern Africa and the biomes of the savannah characterized by acacias, or better than the vachelia, typical of East Africa.

Occupying a transition area between two zones also means the **presence in a single territory of animal species belonging to both the biomes of southern areas of Africa and those of East Africa**. Therefore, you can observe species such as the Grant's gazelle, which is typical of the savannas in Tanzania and Kenya, together with the roan antelope and the black antelope, typical of more southerly territories.

The Ruaha National Park is also home to the largest population of elephants than any other national park in Tanzania, with around 12,000 elephants migrating through the largest ecosystem of Ruaha.

The park is also famous for the large herds of lions which are specialized in elephant hunting. It is estimated that in the park there are about 2000 lions.



Among the predators we can also find a good number of leopards, cheetahs, hyenas and wild dogs. About the leopard, in the Ruaha National Park is relatively easier to spot them here than in other parks, for two reasons: the high concentration of this splendid feline and the arid territory, especially in the dry season, that concentrates all the fauna near rivers and pools of water.

In the Ruaha National Park you can admire huge herds of buffaloes, giraffes, jackals, waterbucks, warthogs, hippos, crocodiles, zebras and the two species of kudu, the greater and the lesser.

The best time for safaris is during the dry season, between June and October, when wildlife congregates near the rivers, while for the birdwatching the best time is during the rainy season.

With over 580 registered species, Ruaha is a true paradise for birdwatchers: also, for the avifauna there is a mix of species of the south and of the east that coexist in a single



territory.

The adjoining wetland, the Usangu basin, is one of the important birdlife areas of the country (IBA) recognized by Birdlife International.

The Ruaha National Park will be the first Tanzanian stop of our travel, a splendid destination but still little frequented by mass tourism and this will allow us to enjoy safaris and sightings in total tranquillity.

In the park there are also some historical and cultural sites used for the Hehe people's rituals. In fact, the park area is often considered the land of the brave leader Mkwawa, the leader of the Hehe people who withstood the German attack at the end of the 19th century.

