

Plans for Tanzania's Serengeti Highway? shift towards a bypass

Title

In 2010, Tanzania's government announced extremely controversial plans for a 53-kilometre long commercial highway to run East-West through the Serengeti; Tanzania's oldest national park and a UNESCO World Heritage site. The announcement caused worldwide concern, with catastrophic consequences forecast such as a collapse of the world's last terrestrial mass migration (of wildebeest), as well as its supported ecosystems. An obvious solution and only viable option as seen by many of the world's scientists is for a new route bypassing the Serengeti altogether. A bypass proposal could now be included in the World Bank's Country Assistance Strategy (CAS). With the project in the lending pipeline, the World Bank is willing to work with the government of Tanzania on an alternative southern route. NABU International (BirdLife Partner in Germany) supports an anti-poaching project in the northern extension of the Serengeti, Kenya's Maasai Mara, and is also an official partner of a new film, *Serengeti*. Vice President of NABU, Thomas Tennhardt, welcomed the news. "This solution would not only spare the Serengeti, but benefit a far greater number of rural people in a densely populated area adjacent to the Serengeti by connecting them to commercial centres and road networks." "The regular pulse of the migration is the very heartbeat that keeps the Serengeti alive", says Dr Barbara Maas, NABU International's Head of International Species Conservation. "Without it, it will die. The World Bank's initiative throws a lifeline to this unique wilderness and the animals and people that depend on it." The alternative southern route should avoid the Serengeti, as well as the land of the last 400 Hadza, Africa's last true hunter gatherers. NABU also supports an online petition asking Tanzanian government to bypass the Serengeti, which can be signed [here. www.nabu-international.de](http://www.nabu-international.de)
