

Tweet treat

Even the most urban of dwellers can be transported to the Amazon or African savannah with the British Library's new CD *Beautiful Bird Songs from around the World*. Does exactly what it says on the tin. £15.95, www.bl.uk/shop

What's in a name?

A US biologist who's just discovered a new spider has chosen to honour his favourite musician: *Myrmekeiaphila neilyoungi*. We'd like to stake our claim to the travel bug: *Grandus wanderlusti*, perhaps...?



Europe's big 5

»To highlight the wealth of fauna on our doorstep, a bunch of top nature photographers – including Mark Carwardine – has launched the Wild Wonders of Europe project (www.wild-wonders.com), showcasing the diversity of species across the continent. Fancy your own local safari? Keep your eyes peeled for the European Big Five:

Iberian lynx

One of the world's most endangered species, this graceful cat numbers just 150 or so individuals in Spain's Sierra de Andújar and Cota Doñana National Park. You have a better chance of experiencing the lynx effect in Scandinavia or Romania.

Alpine ibex

A hefty goat-deer beast with a beard and mighty, curling horns, the ibex (*above*) forages at high altitude. Get hiking on the trails of France's Parc National de la Vanoise, near the Italian border, to catch a glimpse of some of its 2,000 ibex.

Wolf

Who's afraid? The wolf, actually – they're pretty hard to spot, keeping out of the limelight. But you might get a sniff if you head to Romania's Carpathian Mountains, where you could also see wild boar.

European bison

The wisent, similar to the North American bison in appearance, was almost extinct before being reintroduced into Poland's Bialowieza National Park. Now you can observe these chunky brutes in the reserve area if you don't spot them in the wider park.

Brown bear

While catching a glimpse of bear is no picnic, you've got a decent chance in Finland's Kainuu region – arrange trips from Kuhmo or Kajaani.



WILD WORLD

Kenya needs you!

Too few safari-goers is as bad as too many, laments **Mark Carwardine**

I have a long-running competition with a group of widely travelled friends: to spot the worst case of environmentally irresponsible wildlife tourism.

The winner, so far, is a cameraman who saw more than 70 safari vehicles crowded around a single pride of lions in East Africa.

It's depressing, but a good way of venting our frustrations at the lack of control around wildlife in many parts of the world. Sometimes it makes us want to ban wildlife tourism altogether.

But the recent troubles in Kenya show just how wrong that would be. Last year Kenya earned over \$1 billion from tourism. But the riots and ethnic violence that exploded after Christmas scared away almost all foreign holidaymakers and, consequently, earnings for the first quarter of this year dropped by more than half.

Worst hit is the Masai Mara Game Reserve – the country's best-known and most-visited wildlife area. Gate receipts have plummeted by as much as 80%, and this is disrupting the delicate balance between predators and the Masai people living next door.

The Maasai live high on an escarpment above the reserve, where zebras, gazelles and other wildlife mingle with their cows, goats and sheep to graze. At night, lions and leopards come to feed on wild and domestic animals alike and, understandably, this causes resentment among the Maasai.

In recent years tourist dollars have been used to make compensation payments for lost livestock; this has successfully prevented the tribesmen from killing the big cats in retaliation. But with insufficient money coming in, there are no compensation payments. The fear now is that the Maasai might take the matter into their own hands.

Cutbacks in anti-poaching patrols have also come at a time when demand from the homeless for relatively cheap hippo and buffalo bushmeat is at an all-time high. Essential improvements to the reserve have also halted.

One pride of lions surrounded by 70 safari vehicles is wildlife tourism out of control but, in a world where wildlife is expected to pay for itself, an absence of safari vehicles around a pride could be just as bad. ■

» WHEN TO GO

Help Kenya – and see one of the world's great wildlife spectacles with fewer tourists: the Great Migration transits the Masai Mara between late July and October.