

# Singita



## **WILDLIFE REPORT** **SINGITA GRUMETI TANZANIA** **For the month of September, Two Thousand and Twenty-Two**

### **Temperature**

Average minimum: 18°C (64°F)  
Average maximum: 34°C (93°F)  
Minimum recorded: 17°C (62°F)  
Maximum recorded: 35°C (95°F)

### **Rainfall Recorded**

Faru Faru	84 mm
Sabora	59 mm
Sasakwa	60 mm
Lamai	131 mm

### **Sunrise & Sunset**

Sunrise	06:33
Sunset	18:38

September has been a wonderful month with some welcome early rainfall. The wildlife on the property has been incredible with thousands of topi and their newly born calves dotted across the grasslands. We have observed dazzling zebra numbers this month, and many giraffe, eland, gazelle and wildebeest too.

The Grumeti River has begun to flow steadily once again and, as always, the river provides excitement and adventure whilst on the quest for the ultimate nature experience! Crocodiles and hippos begin their movements further upstream and crossings for the plains wildlife can become a little more hazardous. Towards the end of the month, however, we have seen the river levels drop once again.

### **Here's a sightings snapshot for September:**

#### **Lions:**

There has been good viewing of the Nyasirori, Butamtam and West prides this month.

Many guest observations have included prides of up to 24 strong, making for some excellent viewing.

- Lion activity on Sasakwa Hill has been intermittent with individuals reluctant to relax after last month's raid. Two large male lions moved in from a neighbouring territory and took lionesses and youngsters by surprise, ultimately killing a young individual and wounding others before heading back south and disappearing into the Ridge Hills. Lionesses were hunting zebra once again on Sasakwa Hill towards the end of the month which was great to see, and confidence in their range has strengthened once more.
- The Butamtam Pride have been spending much of their time in the central areas, predominantly hunting topi and zebras.

#### **Leopards:**

- Great leopard interactions this month with some lovely sightings of a mother with cubs in the Faru Faru region and leopards hunting impala on the Grumeti River Road.
- An incredible battle was witnessed by a handful of guests as our Grumeti North female gave it her all in an effort to bring down a large, powerful impala ram. She was successful in the end but what an incredible fight for survival!
- Leopard sightings have been good in the Sasakwa Hill region with fleeting sightings in the valleys close to the RISE facility.
- Regular sightings of the Sabora Drainage male this month as this individual begins to relax a little around the vehicles, which is lovely to see.

#### **Cheetahs:**

- Fantastic sightings this month of the Sasakwa Plains male. A wonderfully powerful cheetah who is always impressive to observe. He has been hunting the plains in the central areas this month. A number of hunts were successful where he was able to bring down young wildebeest and impala.
- Across the rest of the concession, sightings of cheetahs are here and there as there is much movement amongst the individuals with the ever growing lion population.
- The Sabora mother and four youngsters were sighted again this month, however, much further west, on the Kawanga Plains. This highlights the distances this mother covers with her four young cubs. She utilizes a considerable range in order to feed herself and her young, always having to be vigilant of the larger, ever threatening lion and hyena populations.

#### **Elephants:**

- The elephant herds have been steady this month with very good numbers on the property.
- With the beginning of some reasonable rain, we have seen them dispersing widely as alternative food sources become readily available.
- At the beginning of the month we observed incredible elephant activity on the Grumeti River during the dryer days.
- There have been some great bull sightings out on the open grasslands. Such a pleasure watching them slowly breeze by over the green flush, in amongst great numbers of zebra, eland and Thomson's gazelle.

#### **Buffalos:**

- The buffalos on the property continue to do very well, with large herds observed throughout the Grumeti Reserve.
- A herd of close to 800 was seen during our last wildlife survey, out on the western plains.

#### **Rhinos:**

- All rhinos are in good condition and accounted for. There have been good sightings on the eastern boundary of the boma this month.

**Bush stories follow, as well as the September Gallery of images.**

## A new reptile for the Grumeti-Ikorongo records: Hook-nosed snake

By Grant Telfer

In September 2022 a group of guides spent a few nights camping in Ikorongo to the west of OP 8. We set up a base camp and from there we explored the rocky ridges on foot. There were a lot of migratory animals in the area, and fresh signs of elephants from the night before. We saw a number of klipspringer sunning themselves in the morning sun and found two old buffalo bulls tucked away under a thicket.

At about 09:00 on the 23 September we had ascended a steeper section of broken rocks, small thickets and tufts of grass and reached a flatter plateau. Crossing the plateau we crossed paths with a snake that none of us had seen before.



White flecking ran the length of its stocky, shiny body. It had a blueish iridescence with a pale belly and the tapering tip of the tail also changed into a pinkish colour. Its head was short and blunt and there was a noticeable hooked beak/nose (a protruding rostral scale). It had a black tongue and noticeable black eyes. We managed to grab a few quick photos of our new discovery and when we finished the walk we climbed into the field guides and books to try and ID the snake we had seen.

What we had found was a juvenile (grey or grey/blue with spots) hook-nosed snake (*Scaphiophis albopunctatus*). Apparently the East-African population is quite disjunct with specimens having been found in Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, Burundi and potentially as far west as Gabon.

Not much is known about this snake but some interesting behaviour regarding it is that it lives in holes, burrows and it is harmless. When it grabs hold of potential prey (lizards, mice and eggs) it will aggressively bash and slam the prey against the walls of the hole in order to kill it.

We shared our discovery with the East African reptile group, and they confirmed it as the first recorded sighting of this snake in our area. It was so rewarding to put in the effort, to get out on foot and explore, and then find something new and interesting.



## Caught on camera



A bushbaby captured with a camera trap on Sasakwa Hill. Picture by George Tolchard

We have long since wondered why we do not seem to see the number of lesser bushbabies (*Galago senegalensis*), also known as the Senegal bushbaby, Senegal galago, or the lesser galago on Sasakwa Hill that we once did. It seems that over the years the numbers have dwindled away or the individuals that once inhabited the hill have perhaps moved away to different areas of woodland.

I would see these fantastic little nocturnal animals bouncing around skilfully in the thorn and *Commiphora* trees right outside Sasakwa Lodge, however, more recently they have been harder and harder to observe, and sightings have become more infrequent.

We were very pleased to capture this one with our camera trap just the other night! Fantastic to know that despite fewer sightings, they are still here on the hill!

So, don't forget your torch when you go walking around the lodge gardens after dark, you may just get lucky enough to spot one of these incredible little animals.

Look closely in the trees with the torchlight and keep a sharp lookout for a shining pair of red eyes up in the branches. This is what is likely to give away the bushbaby's presence.

This interesting little animal feeds on tree gum, fruits and invertebrates. Insects are caught with great dexterity up in the trees or on the ground. The Swahili name for the bushbaby is "Komba."



A pair of bateleurs perch together on a dead tree, Raho drainage. Picture by George Tolchard





The Butamtam Pride at a waterhole after feeding on a wildebeest they had brought down in the night.  
Picture by Charles Semcha

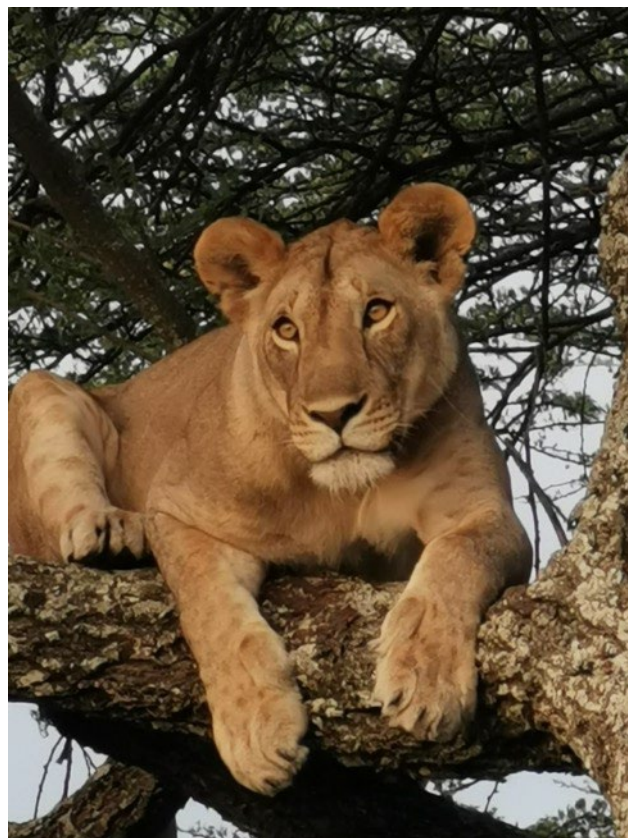


A Butamtam lion drinks his fill. Picture by George Tolchard

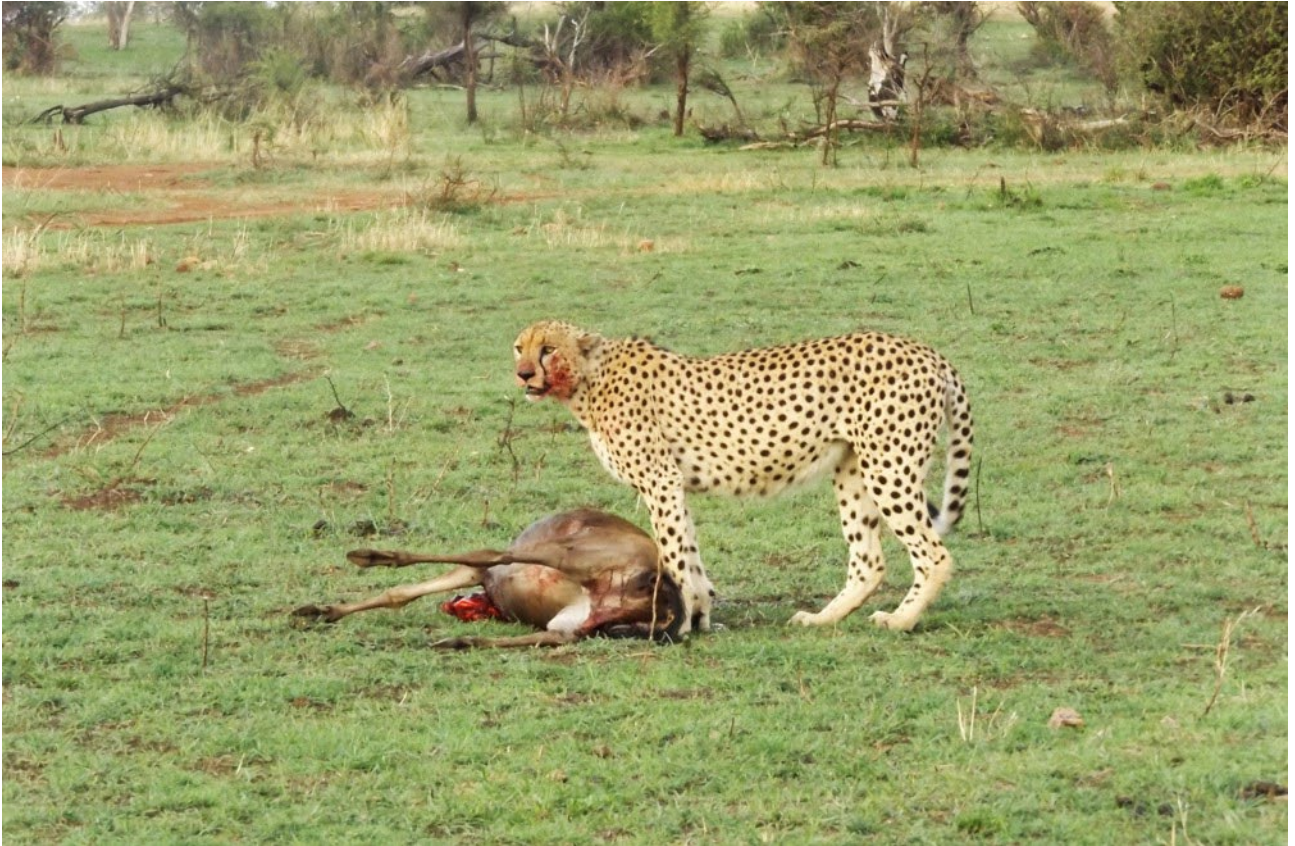




A lioness gets comfortable as it may be some time before it is safe to return to the ground once again.  
Picture by Medard Fundi







The Sasakwa male cheetah with a successful kill. Picture by Gadmél Kimaro

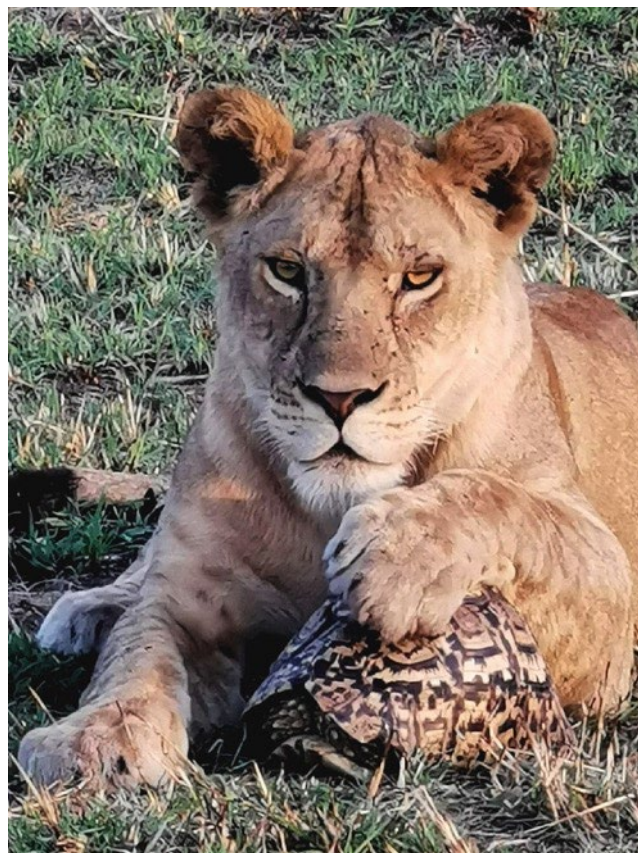


A new born topi finds its legs. Picture by Medard Fundi





A young black mamba moves cautiously through the trees. Picture by George Tolchard



Let the challenge begin... Picture by Medard Fundi





A very alert and protective mother watches over her tiny young calf. Picture by Bernard Hosea



A lovely capture of a young Defassa waterbuck. Picture by Bernard Hosea





A playful lion enjoys the soft green flush. Picture by Bernard Hosea.



A male leopard photographed through binoculars. Picture by George Tolchard



A proud young lion noses the wind. Picture by Bernard Hosea



The Grumeti River running crystal clear. Picture by George Tolchard