

Singita



Butamtam Pride male lion. Photo by Adas Shemboko

WILDLIFE REPORT SINGITA GRUMETI & LAMAI, TANZANIA For the month of June, 2026

Temperature

Average minimum: 15°C (59.0°F)
Average maximum: 31°C (87.8°F)
Minimum recorded: 14°C (57.2°F)
Maximum recorded: 34°C (93.2°F)

Rainfall Recorded

Grumeti 11.6 mm
Lamai 33.0 mm

Sunrise & Sunset

Sunrise 06:44
Sunset 18:44

June marks one of the most exciting stages of the Great Migration as hundreds of thousands of wildebeest, joined by zebra, fill the western corridor of the Serengeti and the Grumeti Reserve. The landscape comes alive with movement and sound. Vast herds stretch across the open plains, gather at waterholes, and weave through woodlands as they continue their persistent journey north. It is also the peak of the wildebeest mating season, bringing constant activity as males compete for territories, chase females, and fill the air with their deep, unmistakable calls. Along the way, the herds cross the Grumeti River and its seasonal drainages, where every crossing carries uncertainty and every day presents a new challenge.

With the migration comes an explosion of wildlife activity throughout the ecosystem. Lions, leopards, cheetahs, hyenas, crocodiles, and vultures all take advantage of this seasonal abundance, making June one of the most rewarding months for wildlife viewing. Every game drive offers something different from

dramatic predator-prey interactions and river crossings to newborn life and the sheer spectacle of endless columns of animals disappearing into the horizon. It is a time when the Serengeti reveals the full rhythm of its natural world, reminding every visitor why the Great Migration is considered one of the greatest wildlife spectacles on Earth.

June sightings snapshot for Grumeti:

Lions:

June was an exceptional month for these cats. As the migration spread across the plains, the grass was grazed down and the bush opened up, making them much easier to spot at any time of day, whether in the cool of the morning or during the late afternoon. The arrival of hundreds of thousands of wildebeests and zebra brought an abundance of prey, turning what had been a challenging time into a feast. Cats that had struggled to find food suddenly had a buffet laid out before them, with hunting opportunities surrounding almost every corner.

- Sabora Pride spent time around the Nyasirori high ground, West Link and along Sabora drainage throughout the month.
- Momukomule Pride members were seen along watershed, Biribai and Arab Camp areas.
- Mkuyu Pride members were seen lying in the Grumeti riverbed, just downstream of Faru Lodge.
- Butamtam Pride dominated the central section around Koroya hill, Pundamilia hill, and old Pundamilia Explore Camp.

Leopards

As always, leopards lived up to their reputation as the most secretive and elusive cats of the African bush. Yet June had a surprise in store. Throughout the month, sightings were unusually frequent, with these normally elusive predators appearing time and again, rewarding patient guests with unforgettable encounters.

- Kombre male was seen with a warthog kill up in a tree just below Sasakwa hill for almost a week during the first few days of the month.
- There was a mating pair seen along Mbogo drainage.
- A single young cub was seen once along Mbogo drainage.
- A shy female seen up in a sausage tree at the beginning of Raho drainage.
- A shy male seen with a wildebeest calf kill along Nyasirori dam drainage.
- A male seen on a wildebeest calf kill along Biribai Road.
- A female seen with a Thomson's gazelle kill along Rhino Rocks.
- Maridadi seen along Sabora drainage.

Cheetahs

- The numbers of cheetahs remained constant as we only saw the dominant male moving along Pundamilia and Nyati Plain few times during the month.

Elephants

June brought a noticeable shift in elephant movements across the reserve with the arrival of large numbers of migratory animals, particularly wildebeest. As the wildebeest entered their mating season, dominant bulls became increasingly vocal and active, creating a noisy and energetic atmosphere across the plains. In response to this heightened activity, elephants were frequently observed splitting into smaller family groups and moving towards quieter areas, often in the opposite direction of the wildebeest herds. Despite their smaller group sizes, elephant sightings remained excellent throughout the month, offering memorable viewing opportunities. June highlighted the elephants' adaptability as they adjusted their movements while coexisting with the dramatic influx and breeding activities of the migratory wildebeest.

- Elephants were seen across the reserve, with Kombre drainage, the Rubana River, and the Grumeti River being the main hotspots for these magnificent creatures.

Buffalos

Buffalo herds were widely distributed across the reserve throughout the month, with large concentrations observed in the Nyamamba plains, Sasakwa plains, and extending towards the Kawanga plains. As the dry season gradually approaches, the buffalos began congregating in impressive numbers around key water sources, particularly during the mid-morning and late evening hours. These gatherings provided remarkable wildlife viewing opportunities, as herds moved purposefully towards the water points and lined up to quench their thirst. The sight of hundreds of buffalos drinking together, surrounded by the vast open plains, was dramatic, highlighting the importance of these water sources during the seasonal transition.

- Sasakwa Dam specifically was the main point of the central area and those who happened to be at Grumeti had an amazing experience.

Plains game

The best general game-viewing areas included Nyasirori high ground, Rhino Rocks, morum pit, and Nyati plain. These areas offered excellent opportunities to observe a wide variety of wildlife, including Topi, Grant's and Thomson's gazelles. Giraffes were particularly common along the Grumeti River, Tembo Road, and the Chui drainage, where they were frequently seen browsing among the thorn trees.

Rhinos

We had the opportunity to enjoy Zaitun, a female rhino on the western side of the sanctuary and she appeared in excellent condition.



June sightings snapshot for Lamai:

Lions

Lion sightings remained highly rewarding throughout the month, as the ecosystem gradually transitioned toward the migration season, providing favourable conditions for observing these iconic predators.

- Korongo la minazi Pride provided the best experience and were seen almost every day, especially early mornings, before they disappeared into the drainages for shade during the heat of the day.

Leopards

Lamai never disappoints, and as always, leopard viewing was exceptional. Excellent sightings were recorded across the open plains near the boundary and along the Kenyangaga drainage, where these elusive cats were frequently observed.

- The well-known female, Bhoke was seen with her young cub of almost four months old, roaming the boundary open plain.
- The famous male known as Kunta was observed a few times along Kenyangaga drainage and he was heard making territorial calls a few time near camp during the night.

Cheetahs

Throughout the month, two cheetah coalitions were observed in the Lamai, providing consistent and exceptional sightings for visitors.

- A coalition of three brothers was seen on the Kampikampi open plain.
- A coalition of two brothers roamed near Chaka Majangili.

Elephants

Elephants were observed in smaller groups throughout the month and were widely distributed across the area. The Kenyangaga drainage, from the camp through Daraja Mbili and further upstream, remained one of the key hotspots for elephant sightings.

Buffalos

Medium-sized buffalo herds were frequently observed on the open plains of Lamai throughout the month. Bachelor bulls were also commonly seen around the mud holes in the afternoons, where they gathered to rest and wallow during the heat of the day.

Plains game

General game, including Topi, Thomson's gazelles, resident zebras, and resident wildebeest, was concentrated along Korongo la Fisi, extending all the way to the boundary areas. These locations consistently supported high densities of herbivores, making them excellent areas for wildlife viewing throughout the month.

Other interesting sightings

With the Mara River running low, viewing of crocodiles and hippos became a major highlight of the month. The reduced water levels concentrated these species in accessible pools and channels, offering excellent and consistent observation opportunities.

Some Bush Stories follow, as well as the images for the June Gallery.

The rutting season

By Grace Matemba

June marks the peak of the wildebeest mating season in the Serengeti. Across the western Serengeti and the Grumeti Reserve, hundreds of thousands of wildebeests gather before continuing their long journey north towards the Mara River. The plains come alive with movement, fierce competition, and the deep, rumbling calls of males announcing their presence to rivals and potential mates.

One early morning, we found ourselves surrounded by what we call "Nyumbu Nyeusi" in Swahili, meaning an incredibly dense concentration of wildebeest. As far as the eye could see, the Gambaranyera Plains were covered in moving animals.

I switched off the engine about 200 metres away.

Almost instantly, another sound took over.

The deep chorus of thousands of wildebeest echoed across the open plains. Most of the loud, grunting calls came from the males, advertising their strength and defending their territories during the rut. The sound rolled across the savanna like a distant thunderstorm. In fact, the name "gnu" is believed to come from this very noise, the distinctive "g-nu, g-nu" call that carries for remarkable distances.



The rutting season is full of energy and drama. Every mature male competes for the chance to breed. They lower their heads and crash their horns together with incredible force, pushing until one finally gives up. Some fights are so fierce that a horn may even crack or break.

The victorious male earns the right to hold a small territory, where he tries to attract passing females. During the hottest part of the day, these dominant males often claim the shade beneath lone trees, allowing only females into their territory while chasing away rival males.

This breeding season lasts only a few weeks, and because so many females mate during this short period, they also give birth at almost the same time the following year.

This is one of nature's most remarkable survival strategies, known as synchronous breeding. When hundreds of thousands of calves are born within just a few weeks, predators such as lions, hyenas, leopards and cheetahs simply cannot catch them all. Although many calves will still fall prey, the sheer number of newborns means that the vast majority survive, ensuring the continuation of one of the world's greatest wildlife migrations.

Watching the rut unfold is about far more than witnessing dramatic fights. It is seeing the beginning of the next generation of the Great Migration, a reminder that every incredible journey starts with the cycle of life itself.



The sun was dropping fast as we made our way back to camp. After spending hours searching for lions without any luck, the vehicle had gone quiet. Everyone was simply taking in the last light of the day. Then the guest in the front seat suddenly pointed. "Wait... that vulture." I stopped the vehicle and looked up.

There, sitting on the ground against the glowing orange sky, was a lappet-faced vulture. But something wasn't right. It wasn't the usual dark brown. It was almost completely white. For a second I just stared. "Leucistic," I said quietly, almost to myself.

In 13 years of guiding, I'd never seen one. I'd never even heard of one being seen in this area. The whole vehicle fell silent. The bird slowly turned its bald pink head and looked straight at us. Its huge, hooked beak, red eye, and loose throat lappets were exactly what you'd expect from a lappet-faced vulture. But its feathers were cream and ghost-grey, making it look almost unreal. When it stretched its wings, the last rays of sunlight seemed to shine right through them.

Around me I heard the guests whisper. "Is that real?" "Are we actually seeing this?" I never reached for the radio. Some moments are too special to interrupt. They're meant to be lived before they're shared. For nearly three minutes, nobody moved. Nobody spoke. It was just us, the fading African sunset, and one extraordinary bird.

Later that evening, back at camp, nobody mentioned the lions we hadn't found. Instead, everyone talked about the white lappet-faced vulture. Because sometimes the bush gives you something far more valuable than what you were looking for. It gives you a moment you could never plan for, a rare gift that reminds you why we keep coming back. Those are the sightings people carry with them forever. And they are the ones they will never forget.

When the rains finally stop in the Grumeti Reserve, a quiet transformation spreads across the savanna. The great migratory herds disperse over the open plains, leaving behind a landscape shaped by survival. Scattered bones lie among the grasses – silent reminders of nature's cycle. Some are from animals lost to age or exhaustion, while others are from those taken by the unforgiving power of predators.

Yet even in death, life continues.

Moisture from the recent rain seeps into the earth, reawakening scents long dried by the sun. Bones that have lain dry for months become aromatic once again, signalling an opportunity. From the grass, in long dark trails that seem to flow like living rivers, safari ants emerge.

Siafu, the Swahili word for safari ants, means "travellers," and it suits them well. They are always on the move, marching in organised trails with astonishing purpose. Though small in size, these ants are among the most fearless creatures of the African wilderness.

I have witnessed a remarkable scene where a pride of lions was forced to abandon a buffalo kill as waves of safari ants swarmed over it! The same fate has met vultures and hyenas. Within hours, the carcass becomes blanketed in a moving layer of black. The ants claim it entirely, sometimes occupying the feast for days. Completely carnivorous, they consume flesh with remarkable efficiency.

Their courage extends beyond the wild plains. In many parts of Africa, safari ants are known to enter local homes in search of food, collecting leftovers from unwashed dishes. There have even been instances where people and pets were attacked, leading to dire consequences. Such events are rare but serve as sobering reminders of their power.

The story of safari ants carries profound lessons. First, never underestimate anyone because of their size. Strength is not always measured by appearance. Even the smallest creatures can command respect and shape their environment in powerful ways.

Second, there is unmatched strength in unity. One individual cannot bring down an elephant, but together, as a team, even the impossible becomes achievable. The ants move as one body, driven by a shared purpose, discipline, and cooperation.

In the vastness of the savanna, where giants roam and survival is ruled by tooth and claw, it is often the smallest warriors who demonstrate the greatest courage. Safari ants remind us that fearlessness is not about size, it is about unity, determination, and the will to move forward, no matter what stands in the way.

June Gallery





Wildebeest migration. By Clinton Kilite.





Elephants. By Clinton Kilite.

The dominant male cheetah along Nyati plain. By Clinton Kilite.





Sabora dominant male leopard. By Adas Shemboko.

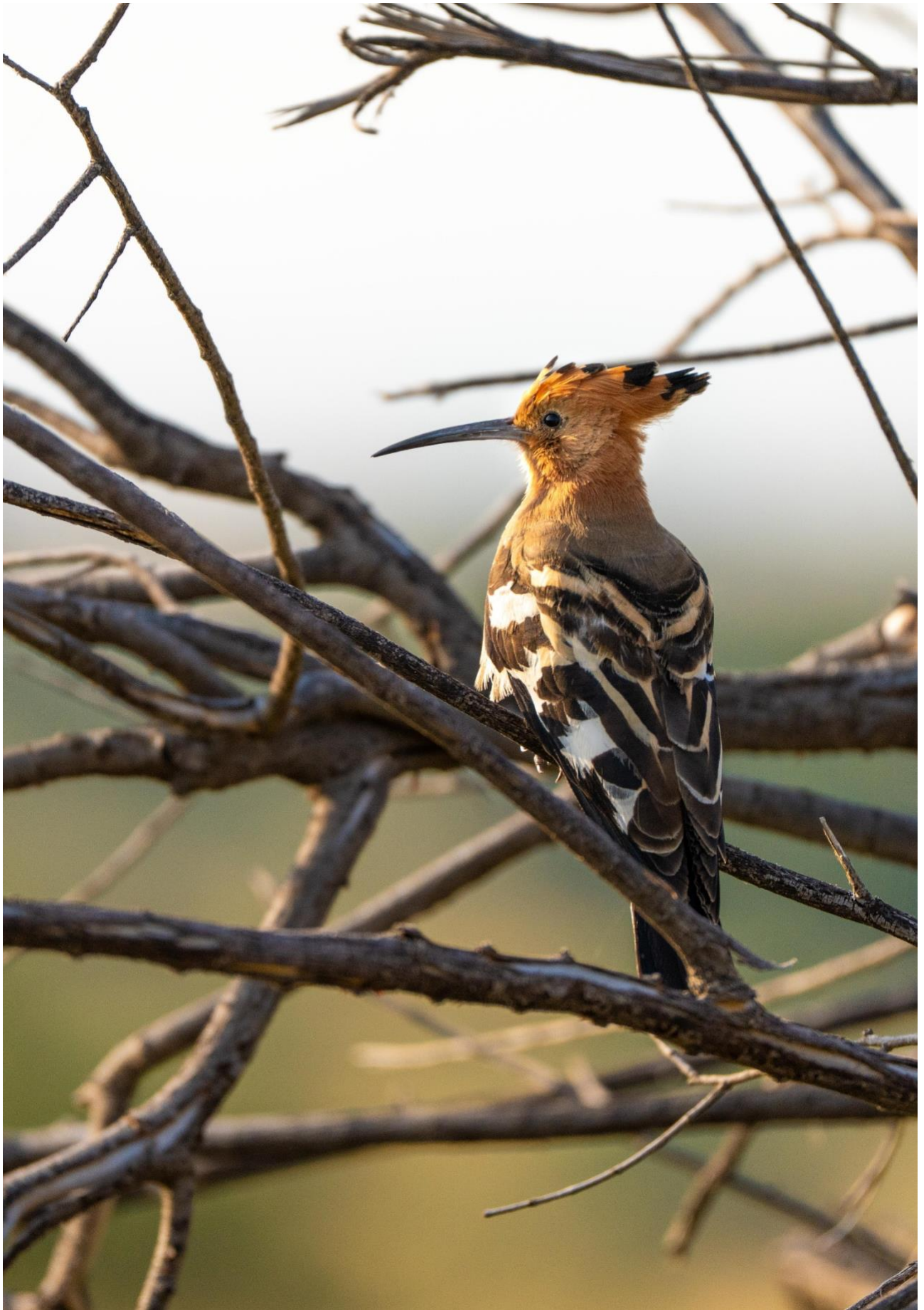


Maridadi – female leopard, along Sabora area. By Clinton Kilite.

Sabora Pride lioness up in a sausage tree scanning around the area. By Adas Shemboko









Secretary birds, African hoopoe and long-crested eagle. By Adas Shemboko.

Report compiled by Edward Kaaya