

Singita



WILDLIFE REPORT SINGITA GRUMETI TANZANIA For the month of February, Two Thousand and Twenty One

Temperature

Average minimum: 22°C
Average maximum: 31°C
Minimum recorded: 17°C
Maximum recorded: 33°C

Rainfall Recorded

Faru Faru 160 mm
Sabora 46 mm
Sasakwa 84 mm

Sunrise & Sunset

Sunrise 06:52
Sunset 19:00

Early February was a little dryer than the previous months and the long grasses upon the plains began to dry out during the middle of the month. Towards the end of February the rain began to intensify once again, the rivers came up and the grass grew.

We continue to see great herds of elephants moving through Singita Grumeti. As the grasslands dried out during the middle of the month we began seeing large herds of both zebra and topi moving back into the central and western regions. Beautiful herds of eland have been congregating close to Sabora and the buffalo herds, as always, have been impressive.

Cat sightings have been lovely this month with regular viewings of both the Butamtam and the Nyasirori prides. Leopard and cheetah sighting have also been great despite challenging conditions. Fantastic flocks of migratory birds have been flooding the plains including Abdim's stork, Senegal lapwings and great white pelicans.

Here's a sightings snapshot for February:

Lions

- The Butamtam pride have provided some powerful sightings this month as they have regrouped and 24 individuals were seen together.



Picture by Gadmel Kimaro

- The Butamtam pride have hunted and killed buffalo a number of times this month as other prey species have been scarce. This has provided incredible viewing.
- The Nyasirori pride moved south of Sabora for two weeks before eventually moving back closer to the camp once again at the end of the month.
- There have been two mating pairs from the Nyasirori pride that were sighted close to camp this month.

Leopards

- We have observed the Grumeti North female and her daughter a number of times this month in the Grumeti North hill region. The animals are fit and strong. The daughter each day becoming more and more independent as we have watched her hunting alone.
- A new rather relaxed female has announced her presence on Pundamilia ridge in the central region of Singita Grumeti. We are currently still trying to identify her. There is a possibility she may be the Mkomure female's daughter.
- There has also been great leopard viewing both on the Grumeti River and the Grumeti North drainage.
- I am pleased to report that we have had some great leopard action on Sasakwa hill too with a mother and youngsters sighted in the garden at cottage 9.

Cheetah

- This month we have observed good cheetah sightings on the Sasakwa plains and in the Sabora region.
- The Nyasirori high ground has also been very rewarding for cheetah hunting.
- We observed a female cheetah hunting a number of times close to Sabora camp which has provided dramatic viewing.
- A second female had been sighted hunting on the high ground south of Sabora camp.



Picture by Gadmél Kimaro

Elephants

- Great herds continue to graze on Singita Grumeti with aggregations of 300 sometimes on the southern and western plains.
- We continue to see good numbers of bulls following the cow herds, making for impressive viewing.
- Elephant herds have been utilising Sasakwa hill and the surrounding drainage lines and no matter where you decide to explore the elephants never seem to be too far away.

Hyena

- We have experienced some great hyena interaction this month. A clan of 30+ were sighted hunting on the Nyati grasslands providing exceptional action!

Buffalo

- Buffalo herds have been fantastic over the month of February. Some really impressive herd sizes were observed.
- We have observed fantastic buffalo bull numbers in the Sand Road region.

Rhinos

- We have had some great sightings of both Ivan and Victory on the Grumeti River as they continue to utilise certain areas in the Ikorongo region.
- At the end of February, we embark on the next stage of refitting the transmitters on all rhinos. This is going to be a major step forward and will allow us, once again, to monitor their movements with further precision.

An exciting and informative bush story to follow, as well as the February Gallery of images.

The story of a young giraffe

By George Tolchard

Serengeti giraffes will usually give birth within their home range, often returning alone to a similar area to give birth each time they calve. It must be quite a shock for the young giraffe as it bursts into this world and drops from its standing mother at a height of two metres to hit the earth beneath! The young giraffe is usually up on its little hooves within 20 minutes and can be nursing within a couple of hours.

It is incredibly important that the mother keeps the youngster well-hidden during these early stages for the calf is vulnerable to predation at this point. The young giraffe may spend a large amount of time hidden in thickets out of sight from predators moving around in the area. The mother is never too far away, keeping a watchful eye out on her calf as she continues to browse on the surrounding trees and shrubs.



Picture by Emma Wilson

After a week to ten days you may find that the young giraffe will return to the safety of its mother. There may well be other giraffe cows that have also given birth to youngsters of a similar age. At this point it is possible for a maternity group to associate closely with one another, as seen in this picture above. There were eight youngsters of similar age within this nursery creche observed on the Sabora drainage, just south west of Sabora camp. The youngsters observed were of ages between two and eight weeks, and on the younger calves an umbilical cord was still visible which usually suggests the animal is younger than 3 weeks. At around this time the umbilical cord eventually dries out, hardens and drops off.

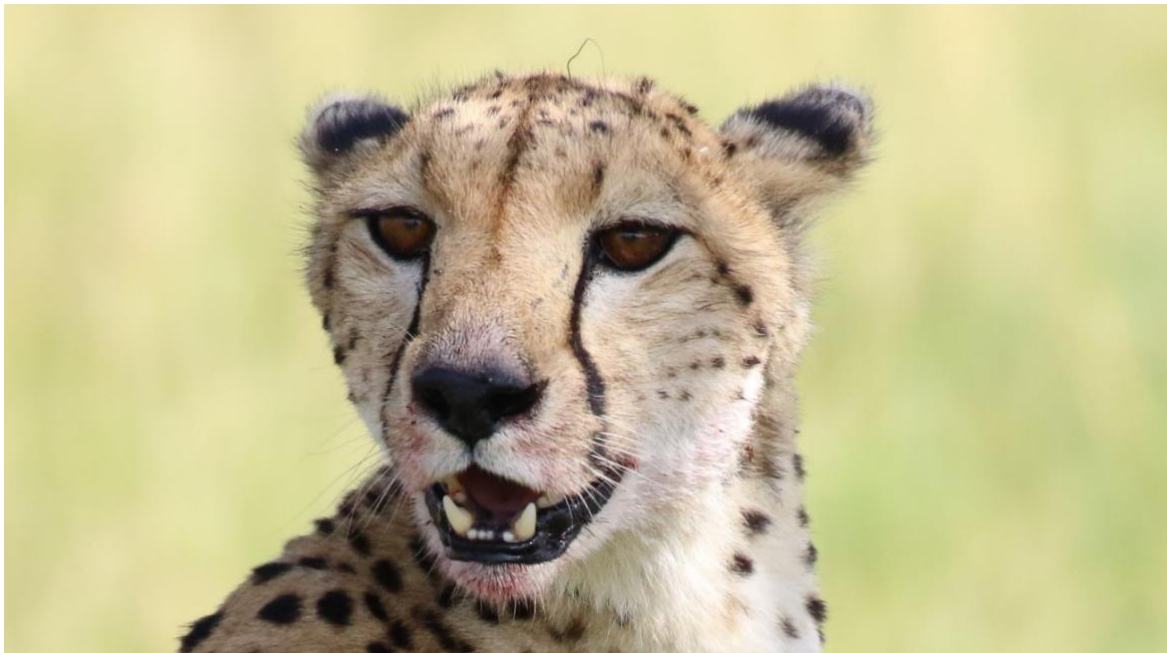
Notice the skin folds beneath their necks - like a puppy with plenty of skin to grow into! Both animals are alert with ears cocked in our direction. The smaller calf at the rear has one ear pointed at us and the other still tuned in to what is going on behind it... Their eyesight is excellent and as they grow tall, the combination of height and superior vision makes for quite a set of specialised adaptations. Giraffe will often aid us in the field when looking for big cats. Observing their behaviour from far away may show you exactly where lions are as they stare intently, ears cocked forward, a nervous swish of the tail...

Looking again closely at these youngsters you cannot fail to notice the lovely tufted ossicones. The ossicones are what we call the giraffes "horns" and they are, in fact, structurally different to a horn as in other species. Amazingly the young giraffe is born with these ossicones, however, they are flat to the skull and in the early stages of development slowly fuse in the upright position to the skull. As the animals mature you will find that the males tend to lose the hair on the tops more so than the females.

February Gallery



The beautiful Sabora female cheetah cools down in the shade of a tree after successfully bringing down an impala ewe. Picture by Emma Wilson

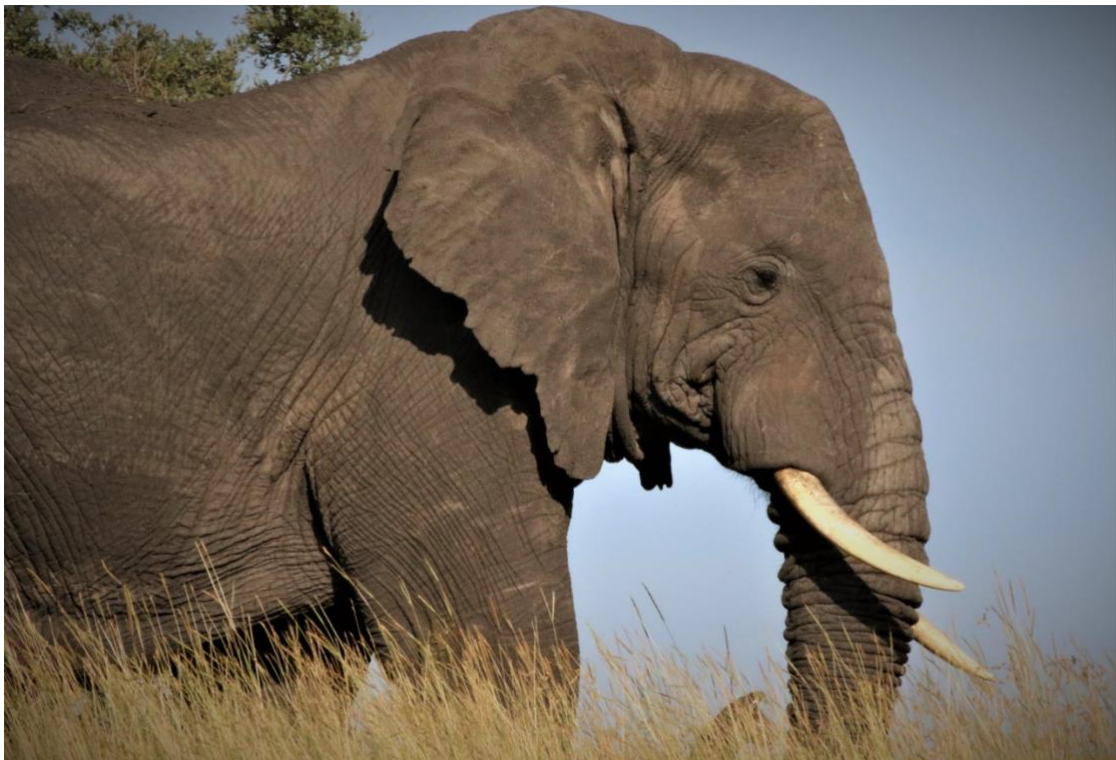


A close-up of the Sabora female's face. Notice she is missing a lower incisor.



The tips of a buffalo bull's horns just seen through the long grasses of the Sabora plains.
The animal was standing tall. Picture by Emma Wilson

An impressive bull elephant moves past slowly, close to the German Bridge, Grumeti River.





The beautiful Mkomure female leopardess resting in a false marula tree.



The lovely Grumeti North female's daughter on a fallen tree in amongst the purple flowers.
She is 17 months old now.



Young lions of the Butamtam pride rest in
the long grasses close to Koroya Hill.
Picture by Gadmel Kimaro

Compiled and photographed by George Tolchard,
unless otherwise indicated.