

Singita



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

Temperature

Average minimum: 17°C (62.6°F)
Average maximum: 32°C (89.6°F)
Minimum recorded: 16°C (60.8°F)
Maximum recorded: 34°C (93.2°F)

Rainfall Recorded

Faru Faru	134mm
Sabora	95mm
Sasakwa	137mm
Lamai	177mm

Sunrise & Sunset

Sunrise	06:38
Sunset	18:40

April started off fairly dry and there was a steady wind blowing from east to west. The wind dried out all the small mud pools and the grass had even begun to turn a shade of gold. The open areas with long grass tended to remain fairly quiet, however, the short grass plains to the south consistently had good game viewing. From around the 20th of the month some rain arrived and we either had short powerful afternoon storms or soaking rain that persisted through most of the night. The plains by the end of the month were green and humming with the sounds of crickets, frogs and cicadas. The yellow-throated longclaws were busy shifting nesting material and the guinea fowl with their new chicks – sometimes a dozen in number – would dart down the roads before slipping away into the long grass.

A sightings snapshot for April follows:

Lions:

- There was a good amount of lion activity on Sasakwa Hill and eight lions were seen around Kivulini, Lawatu and Sabayaya a number of times. There were often waterbuck moving through the area and it was assumed the lions were opportunistically trying to find them. Tracks on the Farasi track showed that lions had also been in the area where the old buffalo bulls like to spend time.
- Four Nyasirori Pride lionesses sighted South of OP 7.
- An unidentified coalition of two lions sighted north of one of the old Explore camps.

Leopards:

- The longer grass and rainy days later in the month seemed to make it a little tougher to find the leopards although they were certainly around, and at night from the camps we often heard the baboons and monkeys alarming.
- A large male sighted north of Watershed and Fort Ikoma Road junction.
- A young male sighted walking along Sabora Access heading east towards Fungo junction.
- Female sighted up on *Albizia* tree along the drainage line west of Grumeti North Hill.

Cheetahs:

- The dominant male cheetah that we see on the Sasakwa plains was seen a couple times during the month. In one sighting the trainee guides sat with him for most of the morning and he went from fast asleep to catching a young eland calf in less than a minute. The calf was only a few days old and the mother unintentionally walked into the cheetah.
- Another action-packed sighting was when a cheetah killed a large male bushbuck. An unusual prey animal and a brave move considering the reputation bushbuck have for being able to defend themselves.
- Female with cubs was seen in the central areas on the short grass plains.

Elephants:

- The elephant herds continue to spend a lot of time moving along all the drainage and river lines on the property. Reports often came from the Ikorongo of large numbers in the woodlands.
- Breeding herd of about 70 individuals was sighted south of Fungo and Sabora Access junction.
- Breeding herds frequented the forests near German Bridge.
- A breeding herd of 12 individuals sighted north of Bangwesi camp.
- Single bull sighted East of Martin's Hill, moving between herds.
- Breeding herd of about 50 individuals sighted east of Sabora camp.

Buffalo:

- The buffalo herds are strong and there are a large number of calves within them. It has been interesting to hear of a few sightings where a small clan of hyena had caught and were eating a calf. This clan have learnt the skills of how to isolate a female and her calf. They then wait for an opportunity to race in and can kill the calf with one fatal bite to the head or spine. This had also been reported in the March journal – an interesting hunting strategy while the migration is still away.
- Several breeding herds of between 200 and 400 have been seen regularly.

Rhinos:

- Rhino in the boma and in the Grumeti / Serengeti land management areas are all doing well and accounted for.
- We still are very fortunate to see our male black rhino on the eastern side of the boma.

Hyenas:

- The hyena cubs at Nyasirori den are still doing well and the clan is always good value to be around.

General game:

- A journey of 15 giraffes sighted north of Pundamilia Hill with some impressive old dark bulls in attendance. A journey of 24 giraffes sighted at Old School.
- Great numbers of topis, elands and gazelles sighted at Nyati plain – this is what has been attracting the cheetah to the area.
- Around the middle of the month there were good zebra numbers and then when the rain came they seemed to disperse and moved back towards the Serengeti.
- Reports from the southern Serengeti (Ndutu) as having been quite dry and the migration being quite fragmented all north of Seronera. The late rains might swing the herds back south again.

A short bush story to follow as well as the April Gallery of images.

A new life in Grumeti

Story and photos by Godson Birdi

My guests and I were out on an evening drive around Pundamilia Hill when we found a zebra giving birth. What was interesting was that it was in the afternoon, around 16:30. Normally we see foals born in the morning so that they have the day to gain strength before the predators become active.

While the female gave birth, and when the foal was trying to stand, the other zebras watched from a distance of about 10 metres. They did not disturb or come across to investigate – those first few minutes when the foal is imprinting the patterns, smell and sounds of its mother are critical to being able to locate each other in future.

The foal was trying to stand steadily at 10 minutes, and after 30-40 minutes its legs were stable enough for it to “dance” behind the mother. As soon as it could stand it went straight to nurse.

The following morning I went back with my guests to see if we could find the small family unit but it seemed that they had moved on and there were no signs of predators in the area. We hope for a good future for that little zebra!

In the photos overleaf you can see the foal attempting its first few steps and being supported by its mother, while the other zebras stay far back. The stallion kept an eye open for predators and kept other zebra away.



April Gallery



Safely tucked away within the herd.



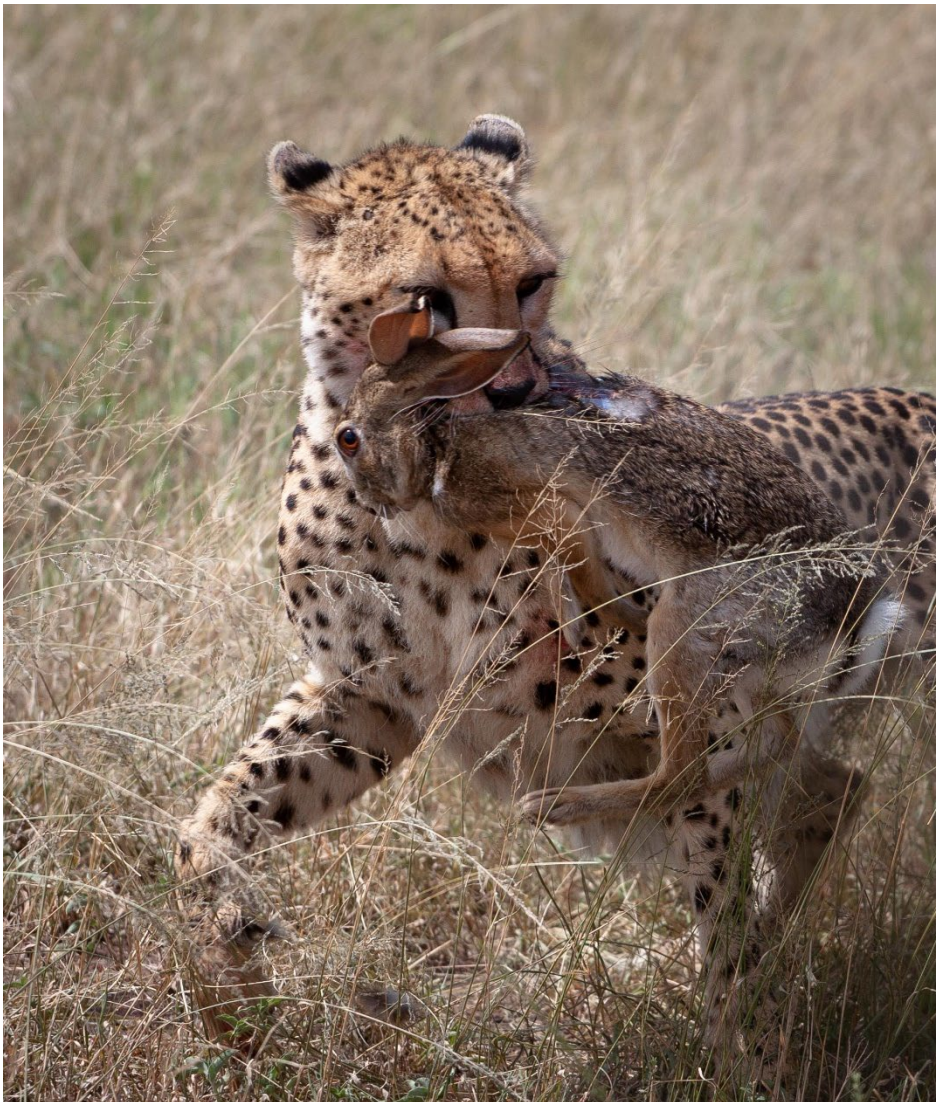
Good herds of eland on the short grass plains.



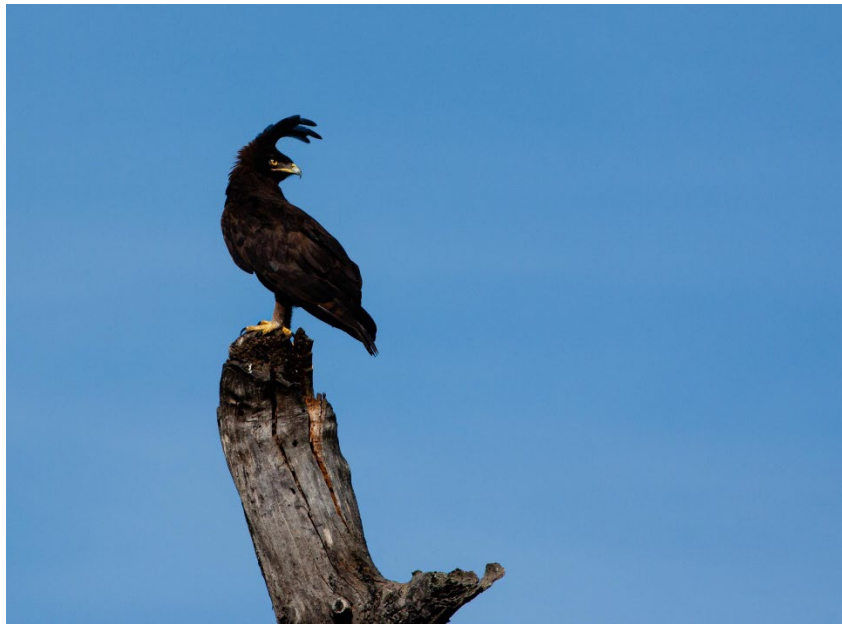
Leopard trying to take advantage of some height in order see above the sea of grass.



The Butamtam Pride continue to thrive and dominate on the Sasakwa Plains and to the south.



Any opportunity to hunt and satisfy the hunger of these cubs was taken by this mother. A scrub hare was what she managed to catch – incredible speed, agility and awareness to be able to catch it in the long grass.



Long crested eagle.



Three bulls sharing the shade.

Images: Godson Birdi; Calson Luka & Grant Telfer.
Compiled by Grant Telfer.