

Singita



WILDLIFE REPORT SINGITA GRUMETI TANZANIA

For the month of March, Two Thousand and Twenty One

Temperature

Average minimum: 20°C
Average maximum: 32°C
Minimum recorded: 17°C
Maximum recorded: 33°C

Rainfall Recorded

Faru Faru	102 mm
Sabora	155 mm
Sasakwa	80 mm

Sunrise & Sunset

Sunrise	06:37
Sunset	18:41

March has been a little dryer this year which is rather unusual for this time in the western corridor, Serengeti region. Warm sunny days with a hot dry wind from the east have been the order of most days. We have experienced isolated thundershowers from time to time but nothing substantial and the grasslands remain parched, turning golden cream in colour.

The Grumeti River continues to flow, although the level of water has dropped quite considerably. The water is turning clearer now with little sediment being washed into the catchment. Beautiful white sandy banks have become exposed which makes for lovely bush stops along the river with guests. A chance to jump off the vehicle, feel the sand beneath your feet and explore the tracks and signs of nature left during the night.

Here's a sightings snapshot for March:

Lions

- The Butamtam Pride have been residing close to Pundamilia ridge and hunting regularly in the area. There are now 17 cubs within the pride between the ages of 3 and 5 months. Really quite spectacular, and with many mouths to feed the Butamtam lionesses are keeping busy! They have been hunting zebra, topi and buffalo. The pride is an awesome spectacle as they gather 30 strong. The three territorial males have been spending quite some time with the rest of the pride and to see them all together is breath-taking.
- The Nyasirori Pride has returned to the western side of Sabora camp which is great to see.

Leopards

- Leopard sightings have been good this month with a female spending much time in the Koroya Hill area. We have been lucky enough to view her on a number of drives as she stalks the resident herd of impala on the slopes of the hill.
- Good activity on Sasakwa Hill towards the end of the month where we observed a mating pair very close to Farasi, and a mother and youngster still walk the valleys and hill sides close to the lodge.
- A lovely leopardess has been observed on Pundamilia ridge hunting in the woodlands on the northern shoulder. She is very relaxed and has offered fine viewing.
- The Grumeti North female's daughter has been seen on a number of occasions on the Sand Road, close to the German bridge.

Cheetah

- Some truly fantastic cheetah sightings this month, despite the long grasses.
- Sabora has been the hot spot as you might expect, however, some great cheetah action was had on the central Sasakwa plains and the Nyasirori region.
- A total number of 9 different individuals were recorded this month, including a mother with three four-month-old youngsters. The youngsters look well and strong and are currently residing with their mother in the Sabora camp region. What great news!
- The big Sasakwa male cheetah continues to hunt on the plains in front of Sasakwa Lodge and we have been fortunate to catch the action from time to time.

Elephants

- Great elephant viewing again this month. The numbers have dropped off just a little in comparison to last month as the animals disperse again with some heavy rainfall right at the end of the month.
- Great aggregations in the western region of the reserve and some lovely herds moving through the central areas.
- Faru Faru Lodge has had some fantastic elephant numbers close to camp which is always a pleasure as guests relax and watch the elephants cross the beautiful Grumeti River.
- We have seen some good elephant activity on Sasakwa Hill, the valleys in the surrounding area and on the Rubana River that flows along the northern base of the hill.

Spotted hyenas

- Great hyena sightings in the southern sections of Grumeti Reserve. Great numbers of plains wildlife residing in these areas currently and not surprising to see the great Serengeti clans not too far away.
- Recently we have been observing greater hyena activity on Sasakwa Hill too which is very interesting. These animals tend to be shy and rather secretive.

Buffalo

- Awesome buffalo sightings this March, right across the reserve.
- Some very impressive herds east of Sasakwa Hill and in the Sabora region.

- It is very rewarding to see the herds with many calves. Such a great success story and fantastic to see the buffalo numbers here on the Grumeti going from strength to strength.

Rhino

- A great month for the rhino, with some lovely sightings on the Grumeti and the Nyamamba Rivers.
- A very successful operation was completed with the conservation team managing to replace transmitters in the horns of these animals. It was a challenging time, but great to see all of them doing very well indeed!

Plains game

- We have encountered beautiful herds of zebra, giraffe and buffalo in the central regions. Resident herds of topi, Thomson's gazelles and impalas have been impressive in the Sabora region, always offering lovely viewing.



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

Eyes in the skies – The Great Rift Valley unfolded

The safari has begun as you set foot upon the steps of the Grumeti Aircraft. Ambling on up the little stairwell, finding yourself a seat and making yourself comfortable for a truly incredible flight awaits, for the Great Rift Valley is moments away from unfolding before you in all its glory. Whatever you do, do not miss the incredible scenery from your window. If you thought that perhaps now was the time to put your head back, close your eyes and doze, you would be very wrong!

There is an incredible story to be told as you soar over some of the great freestanding mountains of the eastern rift, the incredible escarpments, the great rips, upheavals and craters in Mother Earth. These formations and the shape of the earth beneath you has been carved over millions of years and, interestingly enough, has a huge amount to do with the birth of the Serengeti and surrounding areas.

On taking off, we cut north west right between two of the most impressive mountains in East Africa. To the east Kilimanjaro and west to the beautiful Mt Meru. Both were active volcanoes many years ago. Mt Meru lies dormant whilst Kilimanjaro is now extinct. Look carefully down at the eastern slopes of Mt Meru and you will notice the lush, green forests home to incredible wildlife including the black and white colobus monkeys and incredible bird species!

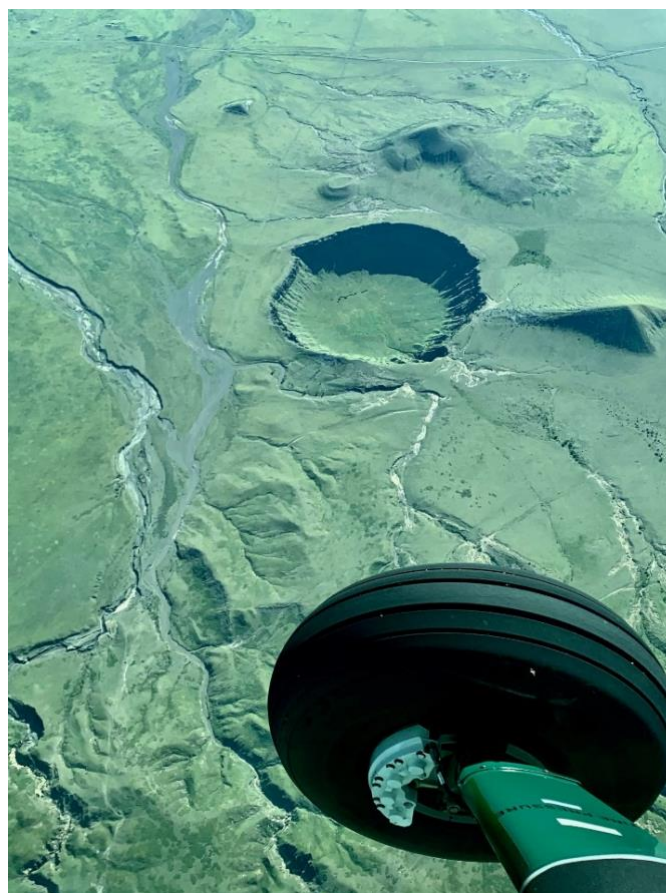
Flying west, you can see how the earth has literally been pulling apart, creating impressive escarpments and mountains. Leaving Mt Meru and Kilimanjaro behind you to the east you will begin to notice other free standing mountains rising out of the shimmering blue horizon... Kitumbeine, Gelai, the infamous and very much active volcano Ol Doinyo Lengai, otherwise known as the Mountain of God. To the north you may see the great Lake Natron and if you're lucky you might just see the pink wash of thousands of lesser flamingos congregating on the shores, as the lake is a very important breeding ground for these lovely birds.



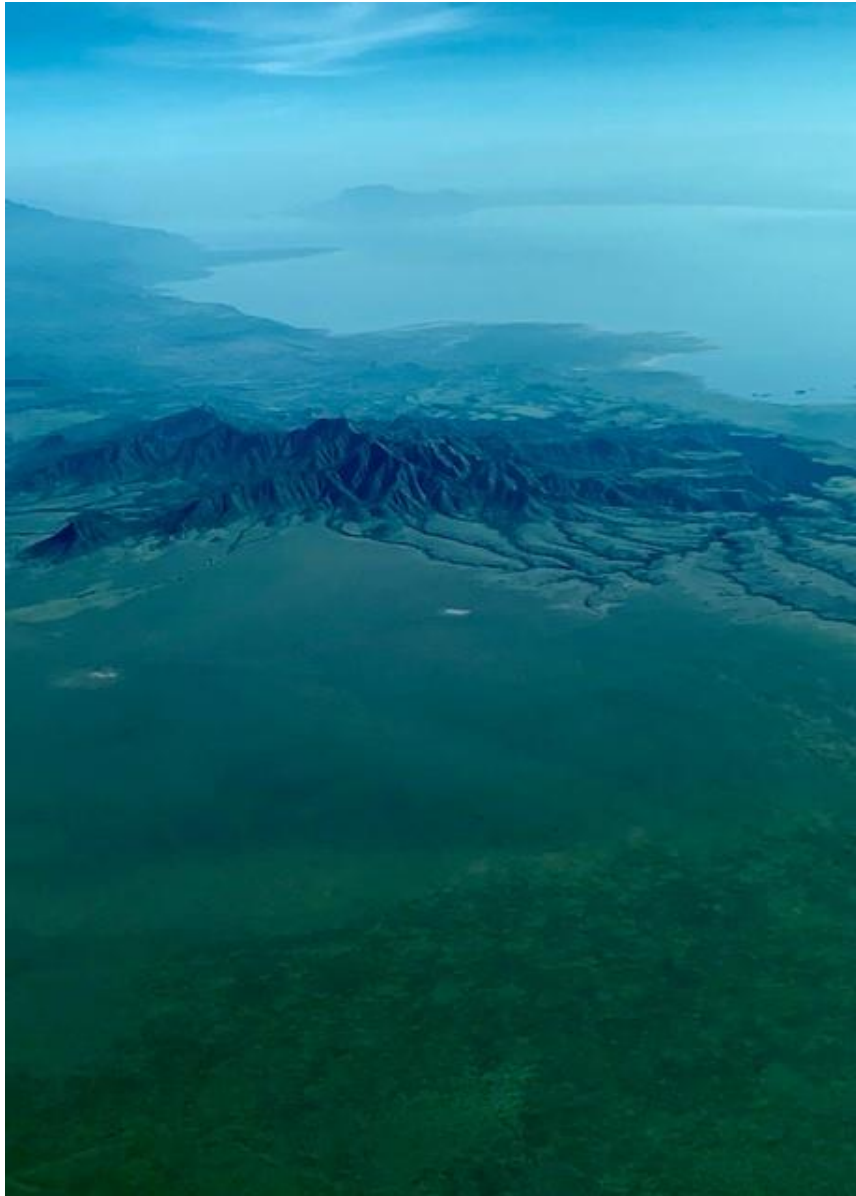
This is the awesome view back east to the three mountain formations, Kilimanjaro at the very back, Mt Meru in the middle and Mt Monduli closest to the great scar in the earth on the edge of the rift valley.



This shows the wonderful flat-topped Mt Kitumbeine in the foreground and the peaks at the rear from left to right are Mt Longido, Mt Kilimanjaro and Mt Meru. The top of Kitumbeine is covered in montane forest harbouring many animal and bird species.



The incredible crater formations as you near the Mountain of God and the eastern Gregory Rift. The landscape seems to be dotted with these formations all over making for a pretty impressive seen.



The last photo shows the jagged mountains known as Mosonik and the beautiful Lake Natron behind. When you reach this point with lake Natron to your north and the Ngorongoro highlands to the south, the great Serengeti plains begin to unfold to the west.

As a result of the incredible volcanic activity, the Serengeti plains, as we know it today, became part of an incredible high altitude plateau with grasslands extending for miles and miles. Thanks to the volcanic activity of the Great Rift Valley there are many nutrients to be found in the soils of the Serengeti. This gives rise to endless grasses of high nutritional value. It is these grasses that sustain the great herds of ungulates that roam across the Grumeti and the Serengeti regions.

A remarkable story of a little trip on a light aircraft from Arusha to the Grumeti that in a way reveals an amazing amount of information as to how the Serengeti and Grumeti came to be what they are today.

March Gallery



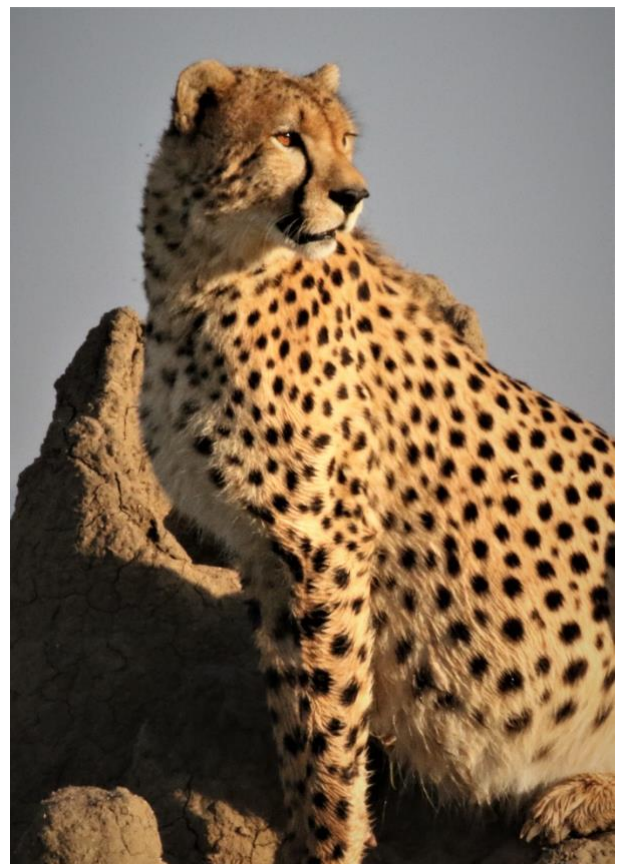
This Narina Trogon was captured just downstream of Pelican Pan, on the Grumeti River.



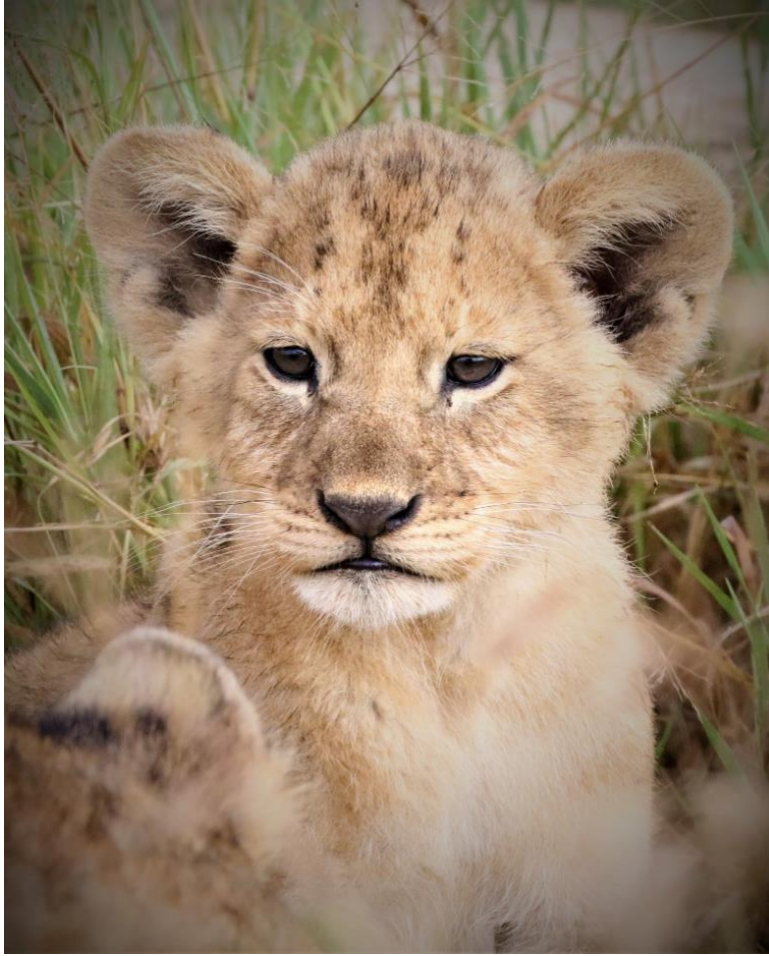
A lovely picture of a Sabora female cheetah hunting impala. Photo by guest Charles Tolchard



Success for this cheetah as she brilliantly brings down an impala.



More cheetah sightings from both the Sabora region and the Sasakwa plains.
Photos by Francis Gagiri & George Tolchard



A very young Butamtam cub saying hello to the game-viewer for the first time.



Guide Training – Viewing a cheetah with Godson and Issa, whilst talking about Nature.



The awesome Grumeti River.



A Nyasirori lion walks out across the western plains. Notice the mountain Chamrio in the background. This is the highest point in the Mara region. Pictures by Calson Luka.

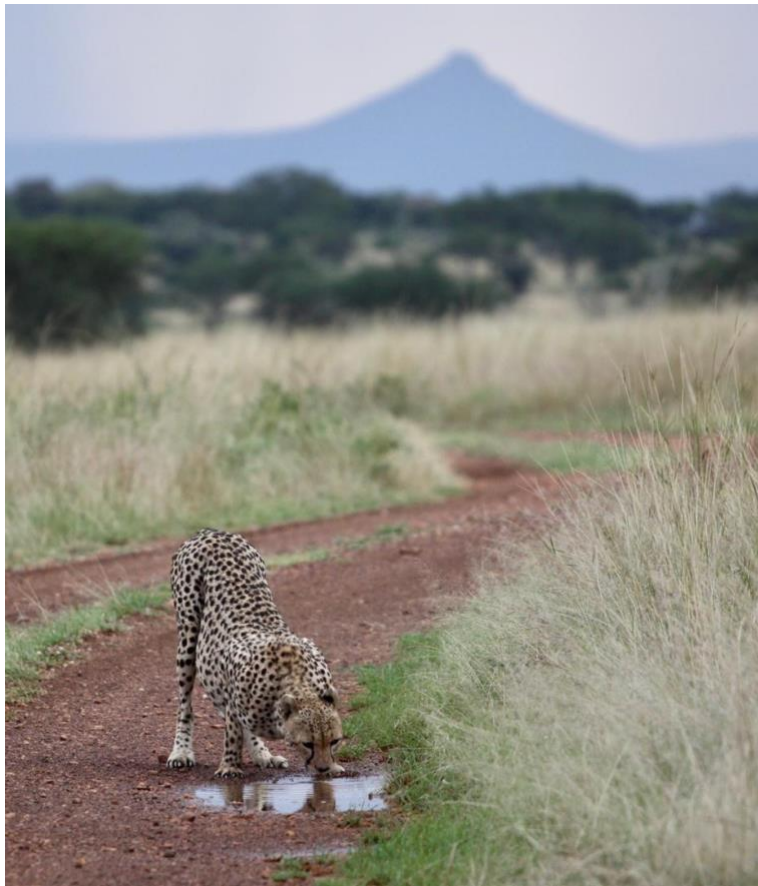




A male leopard sighted on the Nyasirori high ground.



Elephants at Sasakwa Dam.



The Sabora female and her three youngsters. These pictures were taken just west of Sabora.
Photos by Calson Luka.





A pod of hippo in the Grumeti River. Photo by Calson Luka.

Compiled and photographed by George Tolchard, unless otherwise indicated.