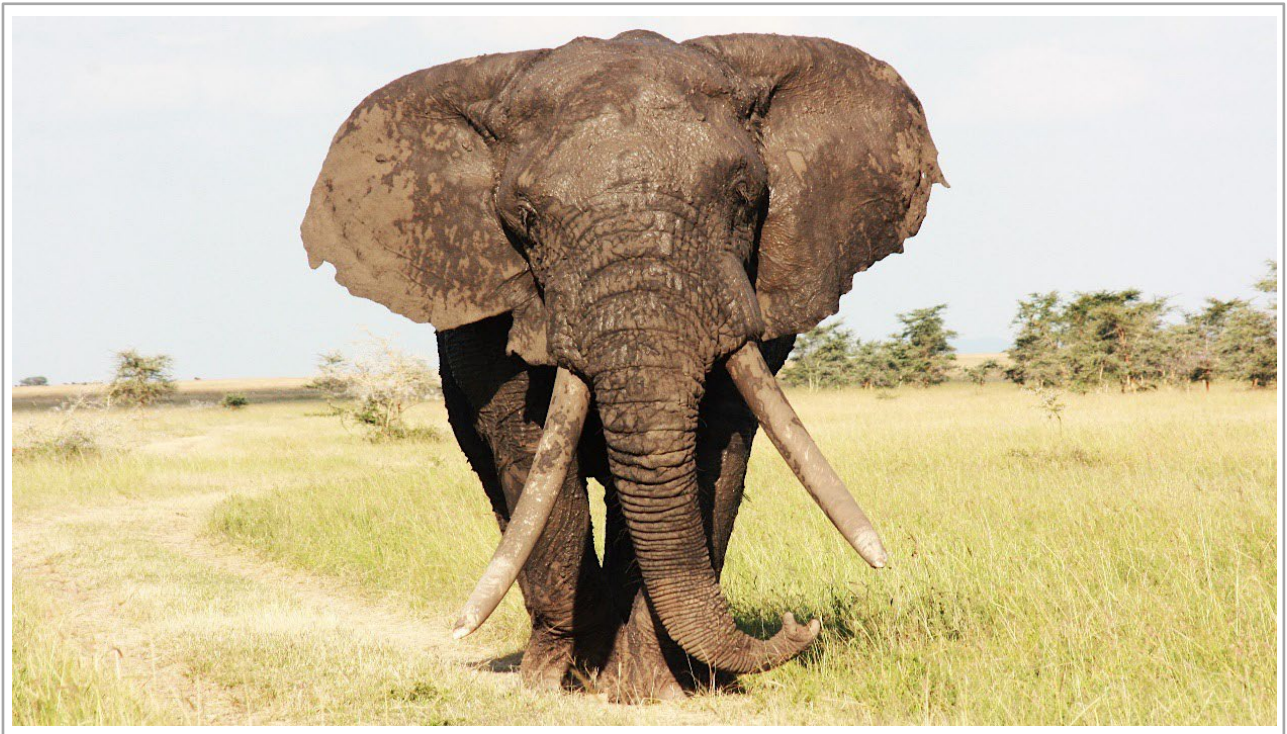


Singita



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

Temperature

Average minimum: 17°C (62.6°F)
Average maximum: 30°C (86.0°F)
Minimum recorded: 16°C (60.8°F)
Maximum recorded: 31°C (87.8°F)

Rainfall Recorded

Faru Faru 38mm
Sabora 3mm
Sasakwa 15mm

Sunrise & Sunset

Sunrise 06:43
Sunset 18:42

June is always a month of intense anticipation as we begin to see the great herds of wildebeest near our southern boundary. Many thousands edged closer and each day we scanned with binoculars from the high ground to see how the herds' movements were developing. On 23 June we saw tens of thousands of wildebeest descend onto the central plains. Now huge numbers of wildebeest and zebra can be heard all around, like a constant hum.

The grasslands are generally drying out well with the exception of some of the lower depressions, close to the Raho drainage.

We have been graced by the presence of a very special bull elephant this month. "Zito" has returned to the Singita Grumeti, an incredible individual with beautiful tusks, each weighing over 100 lbs. A marvellous icon of the Serengeti!

A sightings snapshot for June follows:

Lions:

Fantastic lion sightings this month. From the western plains through to the Ikorongo.

- The Bangwezi Pride of 12 have been hunting just south of Bangwezi Hill, towards the Rokari drainage and successfully brought down buffalos on a number of occasions.
- The West Pride have also been hunting buffalos on the Gambaranyera plains. With the migratory wildebeest still to the south of the Grumeti, the lions have no choice but to hunt buffalo.
- The Butamtam Pride are based in the centre of their territory currently and have been offering incredible sightings.
- The Nyasirori Pride, with their territory close to Sabora Camp, have been hunting the Raho drainage recently. The pride has been successful over the weeks. Some migratory wildebeest and zebra have been skimming through their territory, on the very southern boundary of the reserve.
- The Sasakwa Hill Pride have been actively hunting by night on the hill and are often heard roaring in the evenings and early mornings.

Leopards:

Hotspots for leopards this month have been both Faru Faru and Sasakwa Hill. Some great sightings close to the river and the Grumeti north drainage.

- The large male of Sasakwa Hill has been seen whilst patrolling at night time but remains hidden by day.
- A lovely sighting of one of the Sasakwa females was observed close to the lodge. She had killed a young waterbuck and continued to feed for a few days, never wandering too far. During breaks between feeding, she would lie in a marula tree, out of the long grass and the biting flies.
- A large male has been seen on the Sabora drainage yet again, and was seen killing an impala just a stone's throw from Sabora Camp, towards month end. This incredibly powerful male leopard leapt up into a sausage tree with the impala in his mouth, and treed it as if it was nothing more than a sack of air.

Cheetahs:

A little quieter on the cheetah side given the challenging conditions, however, some great sightings of individuals passing through the area.

- The large male of the Sasakwa plains still holds strong within his territory and continues to hunt regularly close to the central hills. He may be seen often in the early mornings sitting on top of a favoured termite mound, watching the grasslands beyond, reading his surroundings like the morning newspaper.
- A mother with two youngsters of about eight months old were sighted just east of Koroya Hill. The animals were observed for three or four days moving steadily through the area until later, disappearing into the long grass and have not been relocated since.
- A single adult female was sighted west of Sabora on a number of occasions.

Elephants:

Elephant sightings have been incredible. There has certainly been no shortage of elephant movement through the reserve this month. Fantastic breeding herds and large bulls have been observed.

- One bull in particular has captured our attention this month.... "Zito" has returned for the first time since 2019 and we are thrilled to see him back in the western regions of Singita Grumeti. This bull elephant is rather special, carrying 100 lbs of ivory with each tusk. He is an incredible sight to see! He is the most impressive bull in the Serengeti ecosystem, without a doubt, and we have been incredibly lucky to see him once again.
- Despite the great numbers of elephants this month, we have definitely seen a shift in their movements - perhaps they are anticipating the arrival of the large herds of rutting wildebeest? As the noisy herds of wildebeest approach it is not uncommon to see the elephant herds give way, change their routes and move to other areas of the reserve. Quite often we see a shift in their movements towards the Ikorongo area offering some great viewing along the Grumeti River, close to Bangwezi Hill.

Buffalos:

- Great resident buffalo herds as expected. The buffalo population moves from strength to strength. Large herds are encountered on the long grass plains with many calves. Despite the pressures of lions, these herds remain unwavering. Some herds in the west are numbering up to 700 individuals. In years to come, it may well be possible to see herds of over 1000 strong.
- We have observed some great buffalo and hyena interactions this month.

Rhinos:

- All rhino are healthy and accounted for, despite some extensive movements.



Grasses of the Grumeti captured beautifully here by Grant Telfer.

A bush story follows as well as the June Gallery of images.

“Zito” returns, after a considerable time away

By George Tolchard

On 15 June 2022 we were very privileged to have spent some quality time with a very special elephant. The name “Zito” arises from the incredible tusks, each weighing somewhere close to 100 lbs (“Nzito” in Swahili means “heavy”) This bull elephant is one of the oldest and most impressive bulls in the Serengeti ecosystem.

This incredible animal has moved great distances and when we observed him he was in fact in a state of heightened testosterone, a state that is known as “musth.” This condition is linked with breeding and establishing dominance. Amazingly, we have noticed with Zito that he is actually somewhat calmer than one might imagine, in his state of musth. We believe Zito to be in the region of 50 years old. This bull knows the Serengeti very well, he is wise, experienced and by no means needs to waste energy.

He largely spends time alone, although, he may well be joined by other bull elephants here and there. We noticed him paying close attention to the various matriarchal herds in the area, moving with intent in such a way as to investigate the various females in the herds, probing for receptive cows or cows approaching oestrus.



His body language is strong, he is confident, he stands tall. Often you will see the other bulls giving Zito plenty of room as he passes by, and even other bulls, of similar body size, are observed submissively making way for the “boss.”

What a magical experience, spending time with such raw wisdom. In the next photo, he can be seen drinking from a small water hole out on the open planes. As he tilts his head backward slightly we are able to see the full length of the tusks as they rise over the tall grass.

Zito always eventually moves on, but we hope that it is not too long again before he returns.

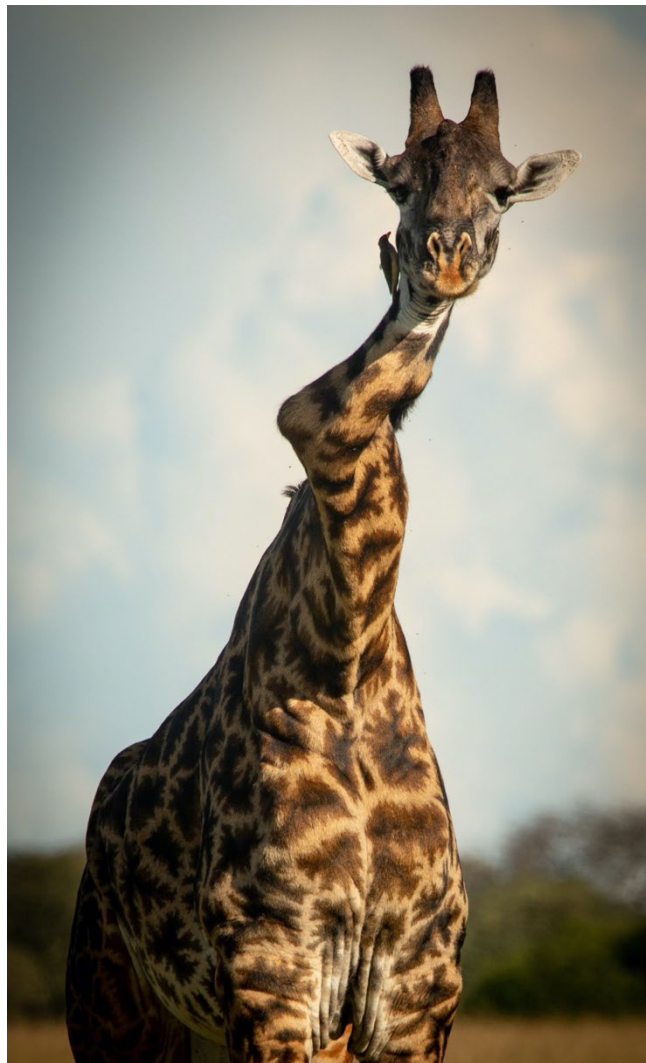


Pictures by George Tolchard.

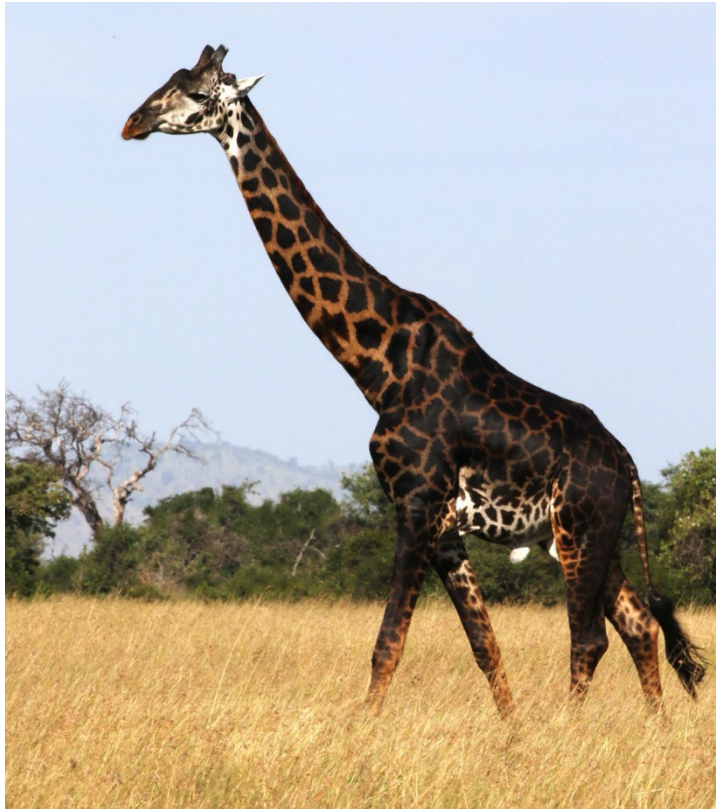
June Gallery



A young lion in the tree close to Sabora Camp. Picture by Calson Luka.



The incredible "V" in this bull giraffe's neck was probably a result of fighting with other males. Perhaps a dislocation or a break caused when "necking." Picture by Grant Telfer.



Striking colours make this bull quite noticeable. The female giraffes seem intrigued by his presence, but other large bulls keep a close eye on him and usher him away as he approaches other herd members.

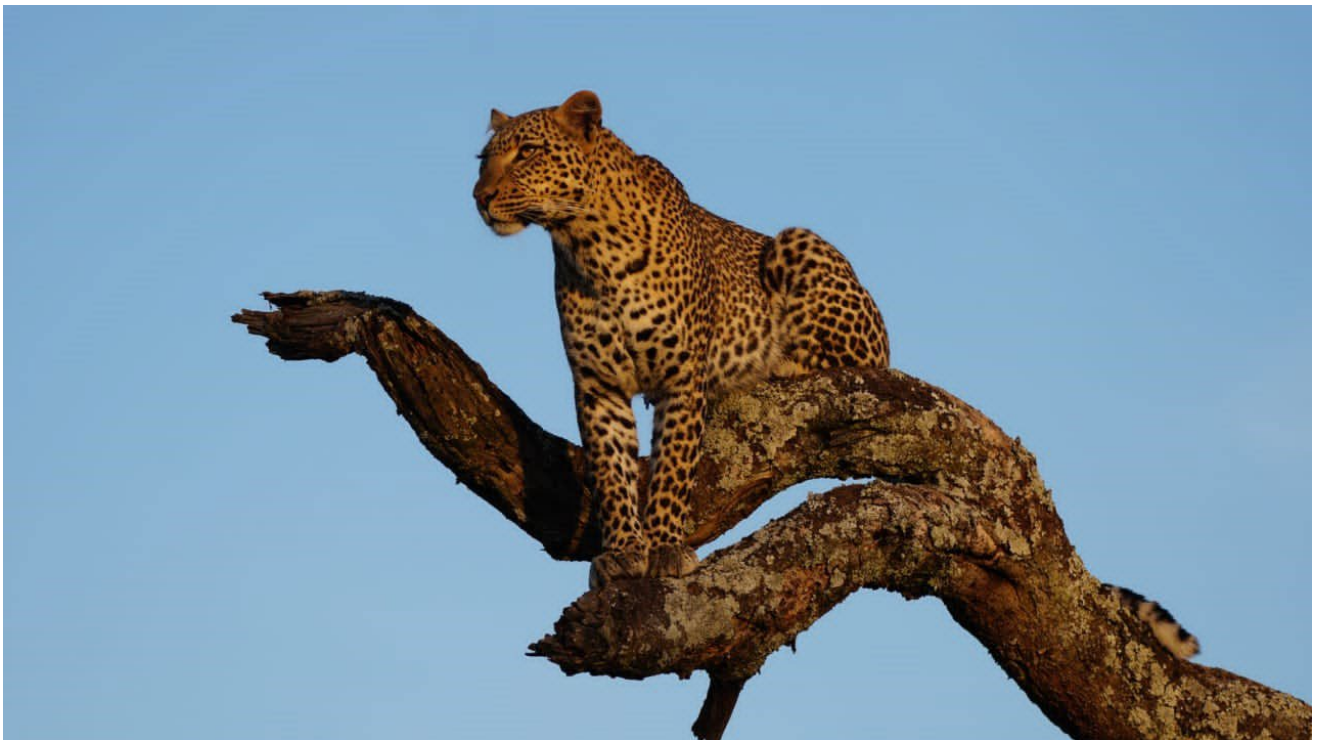
He is clearly seen as a threat with his bold colour contrasts. Picture by George Tolchard.



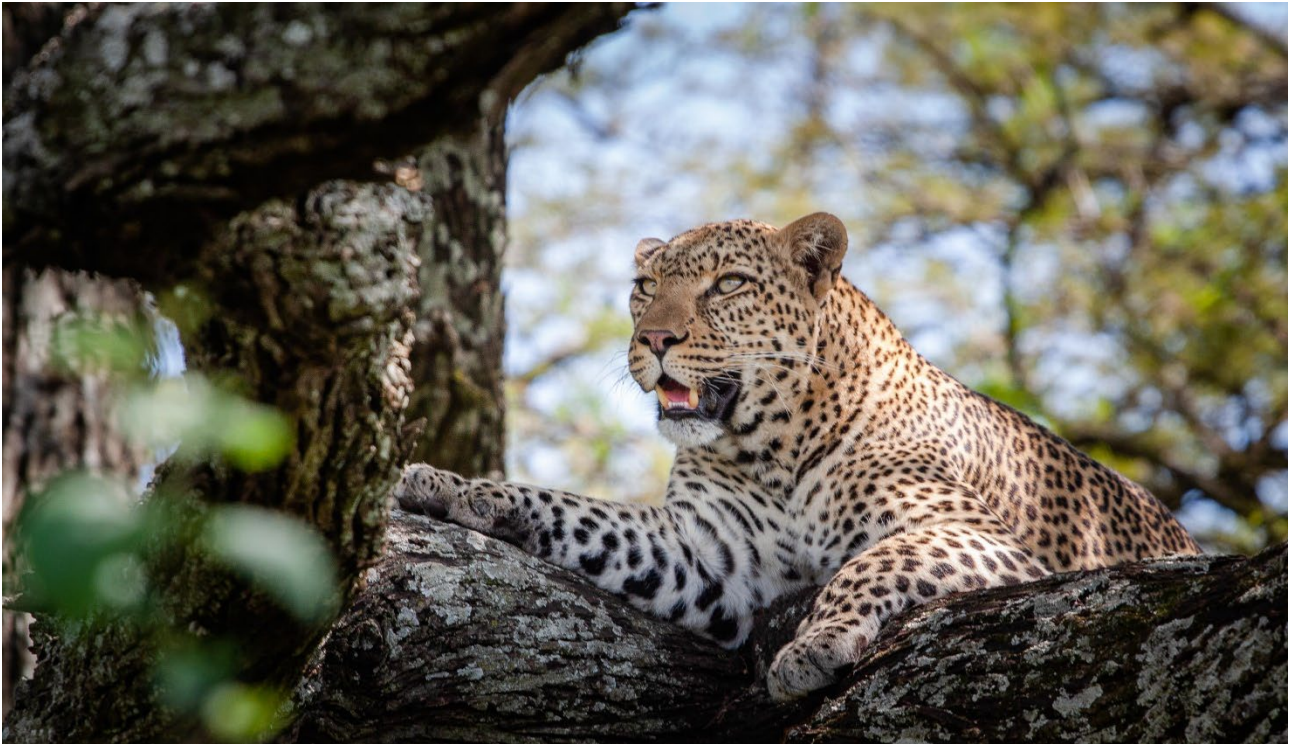
“Eric” meanders through the thickets feeding peacefully. This East African black rhino bull is still naturalising within the Intensive Protective Zone. He continues to do very well and one day he will roam freely within the Serengeti ecosystem. Notice the “notches” in his ears - these little nicks are used to identify individuals as no two rhinos are given the same notch pattern. Picture by George Tolchard.



A beautiful shot of this Sabora leopardess captured here by Bernard Hosea.



A fantastic shot of the Grumeti North female captured here by Jimmy Ikamba.



The Grumeti North female photographed here by Calson Luka.



Some great herds of wildebeest begin skirting the southern boundary of the Singita Grumeti Reserve. Moving slowly but purposefully to the east, they make their way towards the Grumeti River. Picture by Bernard Hosea.



A Nyasirori lion looks over towards his two brothers as they begin searching for a place to rest for the day.
Picture by Bernard Hosea.



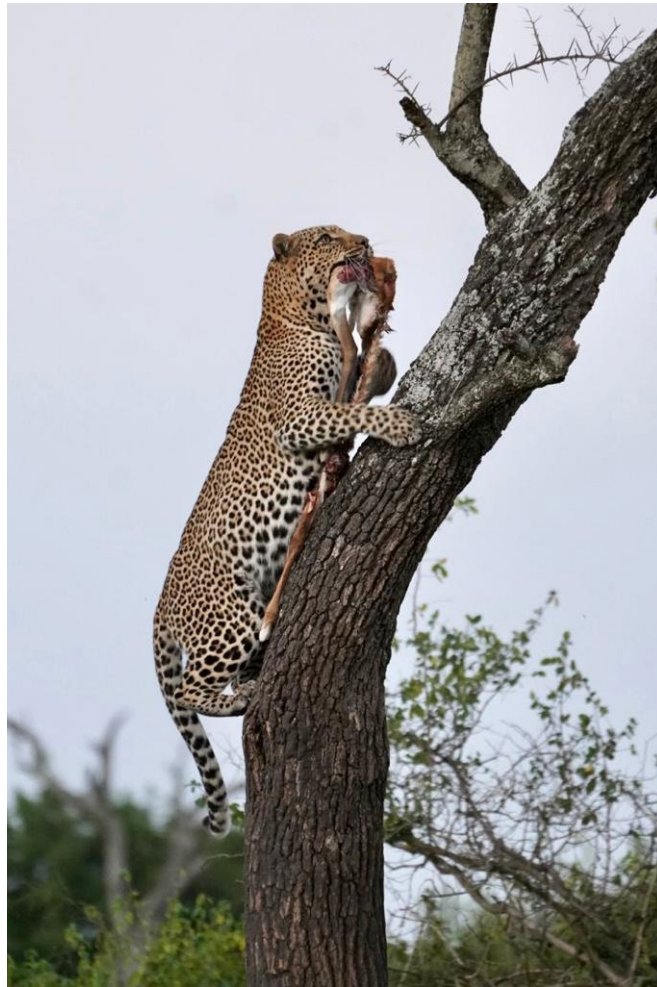
A Nyasirori lioness and youngster get up and out of the tall grass. Picture by George Tolchard.



A golden herd of eland. Photo by George Tolchard.



A great herd of wildebeest. Photo by George Tolchard.



The Grumeti North female with her kill, photographed here by Edward Kaaya.



Zito on the move... Picture by trainee guide, Clinton Hussain.



Young lions in the tall grass on the western plains. Picture by George Tolchard.