

# Singita



## WILDLIFE REPORT SINGITA GRUMETI TANZANIA For the month of September, Two Thousand and Twenty Five

### Temperature

Average minimum: 19°C (66.2°F)  
Average maximum: 28°C (82.4°F)  
Minimum recorded: 19°C (66.2°F)  
Maximum recorded: 32°C (89.6°F)

### Rainfall Recorded

Grumeti: 61 mm  
Lamai: 27 mm

### Sunrise & Sunset

Sunrise: 06:29  
Sunset: 18:36

September has brought with it a noticeable shift in the landscape, as the early stages of the short rain season begin to unfold. This period, which is characteristic of western Serengeti climatic rhythm, is typically marked by a gradual increase in moisture and a dynamic transformation of the natural environment. As expected, the month has been not too wet, although the rainfall has remained moderate and well-distributed. Weather patterns have been notably variable, with rapid transitions between sunshine and sudden bursts of rain. Afternoons are often punctuated by scattered thunderstorms that roll dramatically across the skies. The approach of dark, brooding clouds—interspersed with vivid flashes of lightning—creates a striking visual spectacle. Thunder reverberates across the expansive plains, while the earthy scent of fresh rain awakens the senses, signalling renewal and abundance.

Despite the rains, surface water accumulation has been minimal, with few puddles or temporary pools forming across the terrain. As a result, wildlife continues to rely heavily on the Grumeti River as a primary source of hydration. The river level remains relatively low, making it accessible for a variety of species to quench their thirst. Throughout the month, the riverbanks have become a popular congregation point for game, offering excellent viewing opportunities for our guests.

The nourishing rains have breathed new life into the open grasslands. A lush carpet of short, vibrant green grasses now blankets the plains, providing rich forage for herbivores. Wildflowers have begun to bloom in patches, adding colours to the landscape, while an increase in insect activity signals the onset of a more productive ecological phase. Butterflies, beetles, and bees move busily among the flora, playing their roles in pollination and decomposition.

Across the Serengeti, the return of the Great Wildebeest Migration from the northern regions of the ecosystem has reinvigorated the area. Massive herds of wildebeest, accompanied by zebras, topi, and Thomson's gazelles, traverse the rejuvenated grasslands with energy and purpose. Their movements are both rhythmic and chaotic. Not far behind, predators such as lions and hyenas maintain a calculated presence, ever watchful for an opportunity amidst the abundance.

The seamless interplay between flora and fauna, coupled with the atmospheric drama of the rainy season, has made September a truly remarkable time to witness the Grumeti's natural beauty. The symphony of sights, sounds, and scents during this transitional month offers an immersive and unforgettable experience.

#### **Here's a September sightings snapshot for Grumeti:**

##### **Lions**

September was nothing short of spectacular when it came to lion activity, with sightings of six distinct prides spread across the concession. The presence of these regal predators infused the entire reserve with a palpable sense of excitement, making it a great month for game viewing. A standout highlight was witnessing all six prides in different areas, still feasting on wildebeest, zebras and buffaloes.

- Momukomule Pride provides great sightings at the base of Sasakwa Hill and around Sasakwa Plains and south of the rhino sanctuary. The pride looks healthy with all the youngsters growing strong.
- Butamtam Pride has been seen along the Sasakwa Plains with at least seven adult lionesses lactating a group of 15 healthy cubs.
- Ridge Pride has been frequently seen at Sasakwa Hill, and they have been between Old Equestrian Centre and Sabayaya. The whole pride looking very healthy.
- Sabora Pride has been seen more often around Sabora camp and the western part of the camp with the extension territory south along Nyasirori Plains. The whole pride has been seen in a very good condition.
- Nyasirori Pride has been sighted on the southern boundary of the concession and most of the pride members are in good condition.
- The West and Gambaranyera Prides have been seen in the western section closer to the Explore camps.
- The Rokare and Bangwesi Prides have been sighted at Ikorongo at different locations with both prides having cubs in good healthy condition.

##### **Leopards**

The month of September has been amazing with a remarkable number of leopard sightings. A steady rise in their appearance has graced the landscape, offering a rare and captivating glimpse into nature's quiet resurgence.

- Maridadi has been spotted more frequently around Sabora and Nyasirori Plains.
- Momukomule male has been seen on the northern side of Sasakwa Hill and south of Sasakwa Hill.
- Subadult female (Mazingira female's daughter) has been seen below Sasakwa Hill, in between Sasakwa Lodge and Serengeti House.

- Albizia male was seen frequently on the northern side of Sasakwa Hill.
- A skittish young male has been seen north-west of Sabora camp.
- An adult male was seen at the junction of Fort Ikoma Road and Sand Road.
- A shy male was seen south of Marula Explore camp, we suspect this is the new male in the area with no territory yet.
- An adult male was seen west of Sasakwa airstrip.

### **Cheetahs**

- One adult male (resident) has been seen on Sasakwa Plains, Nyati Plains and Pundamilia Plains.
- One adult female has been seen on the western section of the concession.

### **Elephants**

Due to the substantial short rain during the month of September, the herds have become increasingly scattered, breaking into smaller groups. The widespread availability of lush, green thickets throughout the concession has allowed them to disperse more freely across the open plains, along the Grumeti River, Rubana River and throughout many tributaries. The abundance of grazing opportunities has significantly influenced their movement patterns, reducing the need for large congregations in specific areas.

- Singita Explore and the areas west of it had significant numbers of these humble giants which made an impressive scene for viewing them on the open plains of Gambaranyera and Kawanga.
- Sabora Plains continued to be one of the routes for the herds moving off the ridge hills into the open plains into Raho Drainage. It's been an epic sight with the herds crossing the open plains.
- In Ikorongo the sightings of large herds have been scattered on the eastern side of Bangwesi Hill and along the Rokare Drainage.
- The central areas of the reserve had very small herd movements. Pundamilia and Nyati Plains, Momukomule Drainage, and the Mazingira woodland had small to medium sized herds, spotted moving slowly and quietly along the wooded areas where they spend most of their browsing time.
- There were also herds seen along Grumeti River and along Mbogo Drainage.

### **Buffalo**

The month has been teeming with buffalo activity. As the open plains become increasingly green they've transformed into ideal grazing grounds for these massive herbivores. The nutritious grasslands now offer abundant forage, attracting large buffalo groups to feed and roam. Meanwhile, temporary pools and mud-filled wallows scattered across the open plains serve as vital watering holes to quench the animals' thirst, and they also offer relief from the midday heat.

- The Sasakwa Plains had a large herd that was roaming between Old School, Sasakwa Dam and below Kilima and Milele Villas. The movement of these herds of large bovines provided spectacular views from Sasakwa Hill.
- The western part of the concession was not short of these large herds as the plains of Sabora and Gambaranyera have been great areas for the big herds.
- A big herd was seen along Grumeti River and the Triangle areas that stretched to Romoti woodland.
- The Nyati and Pundamilia Plains have been hosting the large herd that has been moving between the plains, and Grumeti River, and the boundary of Serengeti National Park.
- A large herd was spotted west of Bangwesi Hill and on the northern side of the Mbega Bridge.
- A small herd was spotted on the plains of Pofu at Ikorongo.
- A very large herd was seen east of Chumvi Drainage at Ikorongo.

### **Rhinos**

The month of September has been great with the sighting of one of the bulls from Ikorongo which was seen on the southern side of the concession. He is known as "Otto" and is in good condition.

**Some bush stories follow, as well as our September Gallery.**

On the morning of September 18, I had the pleasure of guiding two guests from Mara River Tented Camp on a full-day game drive. It was their first visit to Africa, and like many first-time visitors, they arrived with high expectations—hoping to witness iconic scenes such as the Great Migration river crossing and sightings of the continent's most elusive predators. Their enthusiasm was palpable, and while their hopes were ambitious, I gently guided their expectations, reminding them that nature operates on its own timeline and that the best experiences often require patience and presence.

Understanding their primary desire to witness the wildebeest crossing, we made our way directly to Crossing Point No. 4 along the Mara River. Upon arrival, the scene was quiet, the air filled with anticipation. We settled in and waited, allowing the natural rhythm of the bush to unfold around us. Hours passed, and our patience was rewarded.

In the early afternoon, the landscape suddenly burst into motion. Hundreds of wildebeest began to gather at the river's edge. Then, as if driven by an unseen signal, the herd surged forward, pouring down the riverbanks and plunging into the water. The crossing had begun. It was a spectacular sight—raw, chaotic, and profoundly beautiful. Dust rose into the air, hooves splashed through the current, and the rhythmic calls of the wildebeest echoed through the valley. For the guests, it was a surreal, almost cinematic moment—one that perfectly mirrored the scenes they had seen in wildlife documentaries.

As the adrenaline of the crossing began to settle, the guests turned to me with another question: "Do you think we might see a kill today?" Before I could respond, nature once again provided.





A lone lioness emerged from the thickets nearby, accompanied by a young cub. It was immediately apparent that this was a teaching moment—a mother imparting vital survival skills to her offspring. With focused intensity, the lioness targeted a wildebeest that had strayed from the herd. In a calculated burst of speed and strength, she gave chase and successfully brought it down just meters from our vehicle. The cub remained close, observing every movement, learning the techniques and timing necessary for a future as a hunter. It was a powerful display of maternal instinct and the transfer of knowledge between generations.



After feeding, the lioness made a second attempt—this time targeting a zebra. The chase was thrilling, showcasing her determination and agility, but the zebra ultimately managed to escape. Even in the wild, not every hunt ends in success—a lesson as important for the cub as the initial triumph.

By the end of the day, the guests were in awe. Their dream of witnessing the river crossing and seeing a predator in action had been fulfilled, and in a way that was authentic and unforced. More importantly, they gained a deeper understanding of the delicate balance of life in the savannah and the lessons that are constantly being passed from one generation to the next.

It was a truly memorable experience—not only because we were able to meet all of the guests' hopes, but also because the day offered such a profound window into the natural world. As a guide, it was a privilege to facilitate that connection and to witness such extraordinary events unfold in real time.

## The Momukomule Pride at Sasakwa Dam

Story by Japhet Mwenura



The Momukomule Pride, predominantly based around the Sasakwa Plains, is regarded as one of the most dominant and successful lion prides within the concession. Currently, the pride boasts a formidable membership of over 20 individuals, comprising five lionesses, four fully mature males, and eleven sub-adults.

Due to their impressive size and strength in numbers, the pride has specialised in hunting large and challenging prey, most notably, buffalo. During one particularly memorable encounter near Sasakwa Dam, I was fortunate to witness the lions in action as they prepared to ambush a sizeable buffalo herd.

Observing such a strategic and calculated hunt unfold was truly awe-inspiring. The younger lions played an active role, gaining invaluable experience in bringing down such formidable prey—a critical aspect of their development and survival skills.

The hunt lasted approximately 55 minutes, culminating in a successful takedown near the edge of a large waterhole. Once the buffalo was subdued, the entire pride converged to feed, with the dominant males eventually joining the feast. The sheer size of the kill ensured that all members were well-fed and sustained for at least two days before the need to hunt again arose.

This display of cooperative hunting and communal feeding behaviour underscores the strength, unity, and cohesion of Momukomule Pride. It also reflects the broader success of conservation initiatives within the Grumeti region—efforts made possible through the ongoing dedication and support of the Grumeti Fund and its committed team. Their work continues to provide a secure and thriving environment for these apex predators to flourish.



On the afternoon of September 12th, we embarked on a game drive with two first-time safari guests staying at Sabora. Our primary objective was to locate the resident lion pride — the iconic Sabora Pride, known for its strong social dynamics and striking individuals. Luck was on our side: not only did we find them, but we witnessed the entire pride together, fully active and engaged in social bonding behaviour. The subadults were playful, the cubs energetic, and the atmosphere vibrant with feline vitality.

As the sun began its descent, casting long golden shadows across the grasslands, the pride began to disperse — each individual seemingly drawn by instinct and opportunity. We followed one lioness who appeared especially focused. She adopted a classic stalking posture, ears flattened and body low to the ground, as she locked onto a small herd of topi grazing nearby.

After several tense minutes of slow, calculated movement, she broke into a burst of explosive speed — a textbook example of a lioness's hunting technique. The chase ended with the capture of a topi calf. But then, something unexpected happened. For nearly two hours, the lioness did not feed. Instead, she gently licked the calf's body, displaying a strange mix of restraint and almost maternal behaviour. We speculated she might be planning to carry the carcass back to her cubs, but eventually, she began to feed alone — a rare and slightly unsettling moment.



Later in the evening, her cubs and sisters arrived. There was no aggression or tension, only warmth: mutual grooming, gentle nuzzling, and playful interactions resumed as if nothing had happened. The pride's social bonds remained intact.

That evening, I reflected on what I had witnessed. Even amidst moments of solitary instinct or apparent selfishness, lions return to each other with affection and connection. There's a raw honesty in their relationships that we, as humans, might do well to observe. In the wild, love and survival coexist — sometimes in tension, always in balance.

September Gallery



A sub-adult lion from Momukomule Pride on the lookout. Picture by Mishi Mtili.



The lioness from Butamtam Pride with her two-month-old cubs on the stroll. Picture by Mishi Mtili

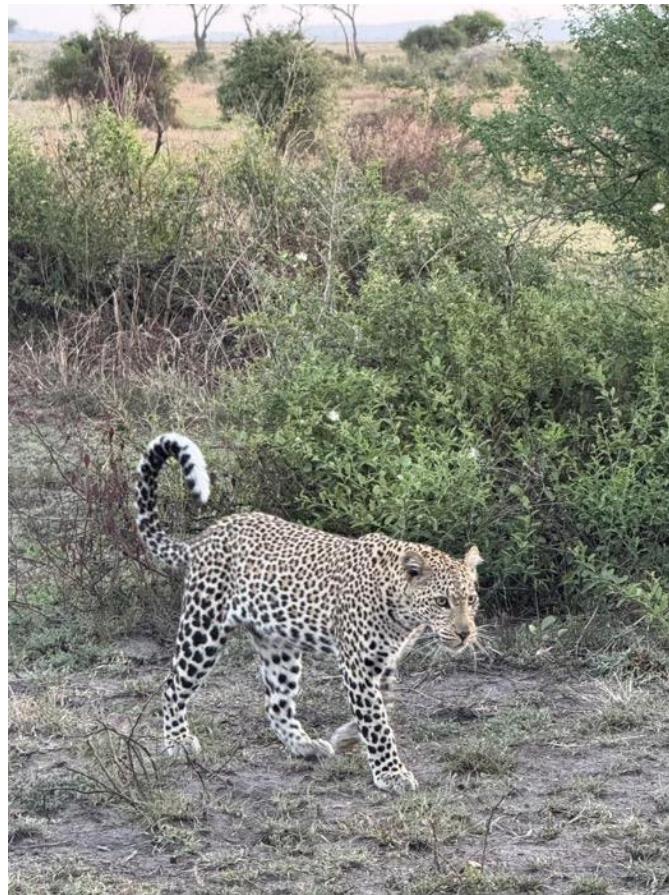




A silhouette of an adult lion from Butamtam Pride. Pictured by Paulo Kivuyo



Momukomure male thinking about his next move. Pictured by Paulo Kivuyo.



Maridadi. Picture by Saitoti Olekuwai

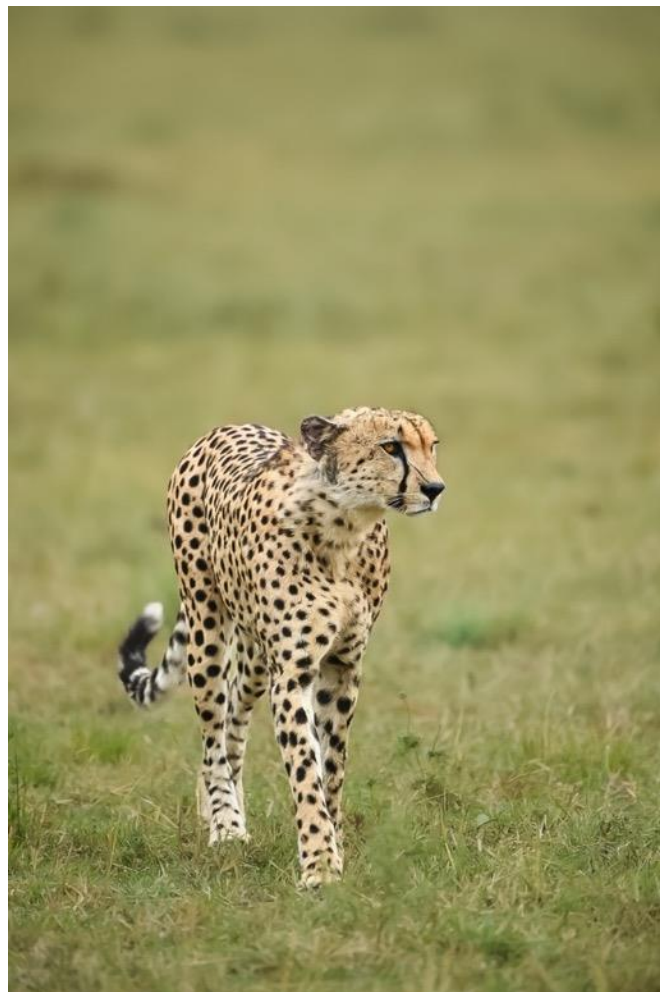


A journey of giraffes crossing the plains into the woodland. Picture by Saitoti Olekuwai.





Curious hyena cubs. Picture by Baraka Mtalo.



A resident male cheetah on territory patrol. Picture by Paulo Kivuyo.





Sabora Pride male. Picture by Bernard Hosea.



A rare sighting of a black rhino bull from Ikorongo (Otto) on Nyasirori plains. Picture by Godson Birdi.





A male kori bustard on a courtship display. Pictured by Bernard Hosea





An endemic grey-crested helmetshrike. Picture by Paulo Kivuyo.



A dazzle drinking at Sasakwa Dam. Picture by Mishi Mtili.





Marabou stork. Picture by Bernard Hosea.

Report compiled by Saitoti Olekuwai.