

# Singita



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

### Temperature

Average minimum: 19°C (66.2°F)  
Average maximum: 30°C (82.0°F)  
Minimum recorded: 17°C (62.6°F)  
Maximum recorded: 34°C (93.2°F)

### Rainfall Recorded

Faru Faru	115mm
Sabora	80mm
Sasakwa	63mm

### Sunrise & Sunset

Sunrise	06:28
Sunset	06:42

Over recent years September has been a month of reprieve for the wildlife and the grasslands of Singita Grumeti.

Typically, it is the start of our early rains and this year was no different. Our conservation team conducted controlled burns in many places on the concession with gentle rain showers following thereafter. This has produced lovely grass regeneration in areas and with this we have seen great numbers of zebra moving into the region.

The Grumeti River continues to flow gently with rains experienced in the catchment further to the north-east. The return of many plains wildlife species to Grumeti River has been astounding with lovely topi, eland and wildebeest numbers moving through, close to Fara Faru Lodge.

## Here's a sightings snapshot for September:

### Lions

- The Butamtam pride has dominated most of the central area sightings often splitting into two groups; one group consisting of 21 members and the other has eight members.  
The Butamtam pride of 21 members consists of two males and six females with 13 cubs. Some cubs are approximately three months old, others being between six and seven months old. The two big males spent most of their time along the Grumeti River near the new German bridge.  
The other eight members consist of two females and six cubs that are about two months old. They have spent most of their time along the Chui drainage.
- The Nyasorori pride have been patrolling along the Raho drainage between the Kigelia crossing and West Link. The pride consists of three big males, with eight adult females, and 16 cubs. Four cubs are approximately two months old, the other 12 cubs are between three and five months old.
- There has been a mating pair of lions along the junction of Sabora Access and Funga Road. These were often accompanied by a pair of males in view of them. These are the Nyasorori males.
- All prides capitalized on the migratory population of wildebeests and zebras coming for the green grass.
- This month we also witnessed three big males (new to our reserve), kill and eat two Butamtam cubs. This was witnessed along the Wanjandegge Road.

### Leopards

- We have observed the Grumeti North female and her daughter completely independent of each other now. The mother has dwelled along the Grumeti North drainage, while the daughter was sighted regularly west of the Grumeti North hill and along the Eagle Nest drainage.
- Both animals have taken the advantage of the migration passing through by hunting the youngest of the wildebeests' calves.
- It has been a great month in terms of the leopard sightings, a relaxed male has been located several times up trees along the Mbogo drainage.
- A number of times, there have been encounters of a rather skittish male leopard along the Sabora drainage which has provided exciting views on game drives around the Sabora region. We recently viewed him with a reedbuck kill.
- Sasakwa hill has provided some great leopard sightings as well. Most of the times the animals have been encountered in the mornings walking back to the heavily wooded parts of the hill. We have viewed both a female and a big male - potentially a mating pair.

### Cheetahs

- This month we have observed good cheetah sightings mostly on the Grumeti West plains and in the Sabora region.
- A mother with three cubs, of about six months old, has been observed a number of times making hunting attempts on these plains, few of which were successful.
- Another mother with only one cub has been on sighted many times in the Sabora region, south of OP7 and also south of a hyena den-site.
- A territorial male wandered the Sasakwa plains, often sighted with a kill which provided incredible viewing. He seems to enjoy mostly wildebeest calves.
- One other single female has been sighted around the balloon launch site area.
- With the migratory wildebeests moving from the north towards the south, the wildebeest calves became the prey of choice for the cheetahs.

### Elephants

- Great herds continue to utilise the Singita Grumeti woodlands with aggregations of up to 60 on the southern and western wooded hills, plains and rivers.

- Sasakwa Dam has acted as a nucleus for the elephant movements through the central region. Many times, large sized herds have been seen moving in, drinking and walking out of Sasakwa Dam by guests on drives and also from the Sasakwa Lodge lawn.
- The Grumeti River has provided significant elephant experiences for the eastern region. Drinking and feeding on the riverine forest was very much enjoyed.
- Woodlands on the south-west and west of the concession attracted a huge population of elephants. Great elephant activities were watched by guests from the Explore Marula and Explore Balanitis camps.

#### Hyena

- We have experienced some great hyena interaction this month. Individuals have been teaming up creating small clans and many times they have been actively hunting together. We have watched hunting and feeding on mostly wildebeests.

#### Buffalo

- Great buffalo sightings have been experienced this month. Herds of 100, 200 and 300 have not been uncommon on the short grass plains of Sabora, Sasakwa, and the Gambaranyera.
- Herds have kept to one area as there is less movement now that green grass is found all over.
- With the presence of the migration, less buffalo have been targeted by the many lion prides residing in the Grumeti Reserve.

#### Rhino

- With a large part of the OP2 Rhino Sanctuary covered with green grass and trees after controlled burns, followed by rains, the high visibility has enabled easier spotting of our rhinos Eric and Laikipia. Eric particularly has been encountered on the eastern side of the sanctuary enjoying the new sprouts on the tree branches. Laikipia on the other hand has been providing good sightings on the northern side of the sanctuary with her staying in view for significant time periods before retreating back to thickets.



Edward Ayo enjoying his sundowners stop with guests on the Grumeti grasslands.

**A bush story follows, as well as a September Gallery of images.**

## A battle between owls

By Charles Semchaa

Birds have fascinated me since childhood, I find them captivating and when I came across this very special sighting on the Raho drainage, just south of Sabora Camp, I was blown away!

This Verreaux eagle owl (*Bubo lacteus*) had captured and was feeding on an adult marsh owl (*Asio capensis*). This was a once-in-a-lifetime sighting and to witness such an incredibly rare event was very interesting.

The Verreaux eagle owl is a mighty bird, powerful and the largest of our owl species. With powerful talons, keen eyes and flight of deathly silence, this bird is a formidable hunter. With its size and strength it may take a number of prey species such as rodents, mongooses, genets and young antelope of the smaller species. To see the hunter preying on a marsh owl was a unique interaction and could well be a first and a last experience for me as this is not witnessed on a regular basis. What an exciting situation and to be able to capitalise on the photographic opportunities made it unforgettable!



After watching the scene unfold for half an hour or so, we left the owls and continued on with our adventure down the drainage line.





Butamtam cubs

Photos by Calson Luka



It's been a long day....  
A tired Butamtam youngster yawns before lying back down again for an afternoon doze!





Photos by Calson Luka



A beautiful waterbuck bull on Sasakwa hill.





A mother and cub in the central Grumeti. Picture by Calson Luka



Nyasirori pride, close to Sabora.

Picture by Calson Luka



A spotted bush snake.

Picture by Grant Telfer