Singita



WILDLIFE JOURNAL
SINGITA SABI SAND, SOUTH AFRICA
For the month of October, Two Thousand and Twenty-Six

Temperature		**Rainfall Recorded**	**Sunrise & Sunset**
Average minimum:	18.3˚ C (64.9˚ F)	For the month: 10.5 mm	Sunrise: 05:08
Minimum recorded:	12.0˚ C (53.6˚ F)	Season to date: 10.5 mm	Sunset: 18.08
Average maximum:	31.4˚ C (88.5˚ F)	*Season = Oct to Sep	
Maximum recorded:	41˚ C (105.8˚ F)		

October came in hot in the Sabi Sands! With the early spring bloom slowly disappearing, we await summer and the cooling, sustaining summer rains.

The first impala lamb of the season was spotted by Field Guide, Alweet Hluwangane, and his guests on the 23rd of October, with many more hot on their heels.

Here's an overview of the month's sightings:

Elephants

- Elephants galore in the month of October! The river remains one of their favourite stops, and breeding herds, as well as bulls, are often spotted from the lodge deck while we enjoy breakfast.
- On game drives, the breeding herds have been abundant. The warm temperatures elicit some splashing entertainment from the herds.

Buffalo

- The large herd has been seen on a handful of occasions this month, but seems to be spending more time in the east.

Lions

- The Mhangeni Pride spent a short part of the month in the western sector of the Sabi Sands on a buffalo carcass. Upon their return, the Nkumati males appear to be spending more time close to the pride. So far, they have been allowing the young Mhangeni male to stay with the pride. One of the males was seen mating with one of the older Mhangeni lionesses.
- The Plains Camp males have been seen on a regular basis this month, around Othawa and on the southern banks of the Sand River, near the lodges. They were seen recently with the Othawa Pride.
- Sightings of the lone Tsalala Pride lioness have been scarce; however, she is often heard vocalising in the east, and guests were treated to a sighting of her following the Othawa Pack of wild dogs.

Leopards

- The female leopard and cubs are doing very well. She has been seen with several kills and seems to be doing a very good job of keeping the cubs hidden and safe.
- We have had sightings of one or two younger sub-adult females north of the Sand River.
- A dominant male has been present throughout the month, with constant sightings, especially of him staking out warthog burrows.
- A younger male has also been seen throughout, often in the territory of his father. As he gets older, this will become risky for the young male.
- Two of our trackers recently made an extremely exciting discovery. A female leopard appears to be hiding two brand new cubs in a hollowed-out leadwood tree!
- A young female spent several days on two different kills, hoisted in the same jackalberry tree, mere days apart. We have seen less of her sister, who was only spotted on a handful of occasions.

Cheetahs

- A coalition of male cheetahs has been seen sporadically throughout the southern and eastern areas of the Sabi Sands. However, more recently they have been reported beyond the eastern boundary of the reserve.

African wild dogs

- The large pack of wild dogs is doing very well. We have been privileged with frequent sightings of them.
- There has also been a pack of three dogs seen in the south-eastern parts of the property, on a handful of occasions.
- One lone, collared male wild dog was recently spotted on an impala kill in the central parts.

General game

- Zebra and wildebeest herds are still abundant in the south. Several journeys of giraffes have been spotted throughout the reserve. Impala populations are booming, with the first batch of lambs for the season on their way.

Hyenas

- Hyena activity has been quite prevalent this month. An active den-site with five cubs, of which two are still completely dark, is providing ample entertainment.

Unusual sightings

- A guiding team and their guests were treated to a sighting of a white-tailed mongoose hunting a field mouse.
- Two Cape clawless otters were spotted in front of Boulders Lodge.

Bird list

Our birding list is currently at 283. Special sightings for the month include a yellow-billed kite and a Kori bustard.

Some Bush Stories follow, as well as the images for the October Gallery.

Time is of the essence **Article by Matt Durell, image by Danelle Ferreira.**

It’s a phrase we usually use when we need to hurry. But out here in the African bush, a safari teaches us the exact opposite. Our only real deadline is departure day, which means our true task is to stretch every moment and make the absolute most of the wild space we have until that final game drive. A three- or four-night safari can come and go in the absolute blink of an eye. As we approach the end of another year, we constantly find ourselves looking back and asking, “Where did the time go?”

Whether it is your very first time stepping into the wild or your 15th, a safari offers a feast for the senses. The animals, the birds, the microscopic world of tracks and signs, the ancient trees, and the bursts of wild flowers - the list is endless, and there is so much to absorb in such a short window. So, where do you start? You start from minute one. There is an entire world to take in the moment you step through the lodge gates and smell the dust, woodsmoke, or fresh rain. It is a wonderful sensory overload, and it only gets better from there.

The catch in our modern world, of course, is technology. It is a delicate, fine balance. Our cellphones give us the incredible ability to capture a fleeting moment and preserve it forever. Yet, the real magic happens when you lower the lens and witness the wilderness with your own unfiltered eyes - hearing the crunch of dry grass under an elephant's foot or watching a predator lock eyes with you without a screen in the middle.



It is completely natural that work or family obligations sometimes bleed into our holidays; we live in a connected world, and we make the most of it regardless. Plus, sharing these wild spaces with people far away who may never experience a safari is part of the joy. What it really comes down to is mindfulness. Give the wilderness your undivided attention while you are out in the vehicle or sitting on the deck. Then, after dinner, while sitting by the crackling fire under a blanket of stars, pick up your phone. Call that friend you’ve been meaning to catch up with, or FaceTime your family while the nocturnal bush crickets and distant hyenas are calling in the background. Share the magic then. Because out here, time truly is of the essence—so let's not miss a single second of being fully alive in it.

An unlucky day to be an ostrich **Article by Andries Mohlala**

“Good morning, all, welcome aboard. Did everyone have a good night’s sleep, and how was last night’s dinner?” And of course everyone had a great evening, and all was good, and this family of four were all smiles and very chatty. Then an enquiry came in the form of, “Has anyone seen any lions recently?” I understood the question very well, and off we went to hunt for the lions after a brief discussion with my tracker.

It was a warm spring day, early morning, and the temperature started ascending from 18 degrees Celsius, with the slightest breeze. Driving along the Sand River in an easterly direction, we could hear baboons shouting and multiple bird calls. We were heading to Dudley, well known to the guiding team as the deep south, in search of lions. As we crossed into the deep south, we started off with a female ostrich that was feeding and minding her ostrich business. It was a good sighting, and we moved on to a place where we thought lions may have traversed in the night.

We had a visual of a male ostrich that was just standing still, looking around but not feeding. One of the things we do is mimic what some animals are doing to try and figure out what they are looking at. By looking in the same direction as the ostrich, the discovery was more shocking than expected.

The lions were not far from the male ostrich, and they were busy feeding on the ostrich eggs! All 16 eggs in the nest were being smashed by a pride of ten lions: two adult lionesses, two males of about two years old and six young females. Some struggled to crush open the eggs, but the adult female and the males found it easy to move from one egg to the next, with their hairy chins turning bright yellow from the yolk as they continued to feast.

Then things took another interesting turn when we looked around and saw a female ostrich running towards the nest. But the male ran to meet her with wings stretched out and spinning around! Next, they both took off, full speed, away from the nest.

So, we did find lions, and it was a first for me to see lions raiding an ostrich nest. We called it a success, but for the ostrich family it was a devastating loss.

A quiet assertion of dominance **Article by Daniel Hartmann**

There are moments in the wilderness that remind us that the most remarkable sightings are not always defined by action, but by the quiet presence of animals sharing a landscape on their own terms.

Over recent weeks, the two male cheetahs have been making their presence increasingly felt in the southern reaches of Singita Sabi Sand. Their movements through this part of the reserve have become a particularly fascinating development, with the brothers continuing to establish themselves within a landscape where every territory, every scent mark and every encounter contributes to the ever-changing dynamics of the wild.
Their growing presence has brought with it a sense of anticipation. As these two males continue to mature and assert themselves, their movements and interactions offer a captivating glimpse into the lives of two of Africa’s most remarkable predators. There is something compelling about watching this gradual shift in dynamics — not through a single dramatic encounter, but through the accumulation of countless small moments that ultimately shape the balance of the wilderness.

Yet, amid all the excitement surrounding their increasing prominence, it was a particularly peaceful encounter that provided one of the most memorable moments of our recent sightings. We found the males stretched out comfortably on the ground, entirely at ease in their surroundings. Behind them, an elephant continued to feed



undisturbed, quietly moving through the vegetation as though entirely unaware of the magnificent predators resting just metres away.

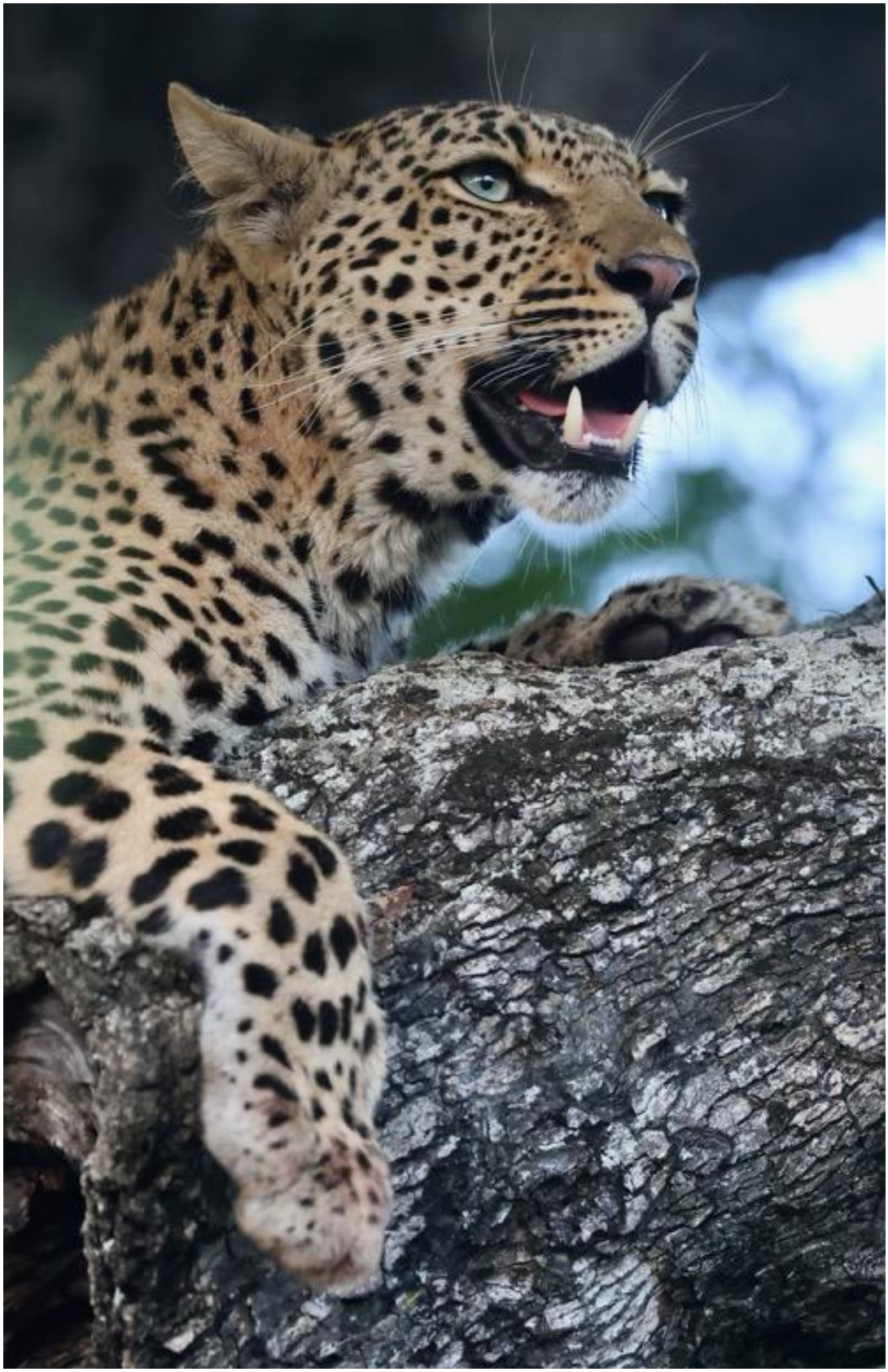
It was a scene of remarkable contrast. The cheetahs, symbols of speed, precision and finely tuned predatory instinct, lay motionless in the foreground. Beyond them, the elephant moved with the effortless assurance of an animal that has little reason to concern itself with the presence of other species.
There was no tension, no urgency, and no interaction — simply two species occupying the same landscape. It was a beautiful reminder that the wilderness is not always defined by the dramatic encounters we so often anticipate. Sometimes, its greatest stories are found in the quieter spaces between them.

As the two males continue to establish their presence in the southern reaches of Singita Sabi Sand, we look forward to following their journey and witnessing how their story unfolds. Their growing dominance adds another fascinating chapter to the ever-changing tapestry of life in this remarkable wilderness.

October Gallery



One of the cheetah brothers scent-marking. Image by Danelle Ferreira



A female leopard relaxing in the treetops. Image by Matt Durell



Beautiful impala lily in bloom. Image by Matt Durell



Painted reed frog on a Euphorbia leaf. Image by Matt Durell

Jones’s creeping scorpion. Image by Danelle Ferreira



SPECIAL OCTOBER MENTION

The safari team says goodbye to two legends of Singita, Colman Mnisi and Johan Ndlovu, as they retire. We wish them every happiness and thank them from the bottom of our hearts for their incredible service.

