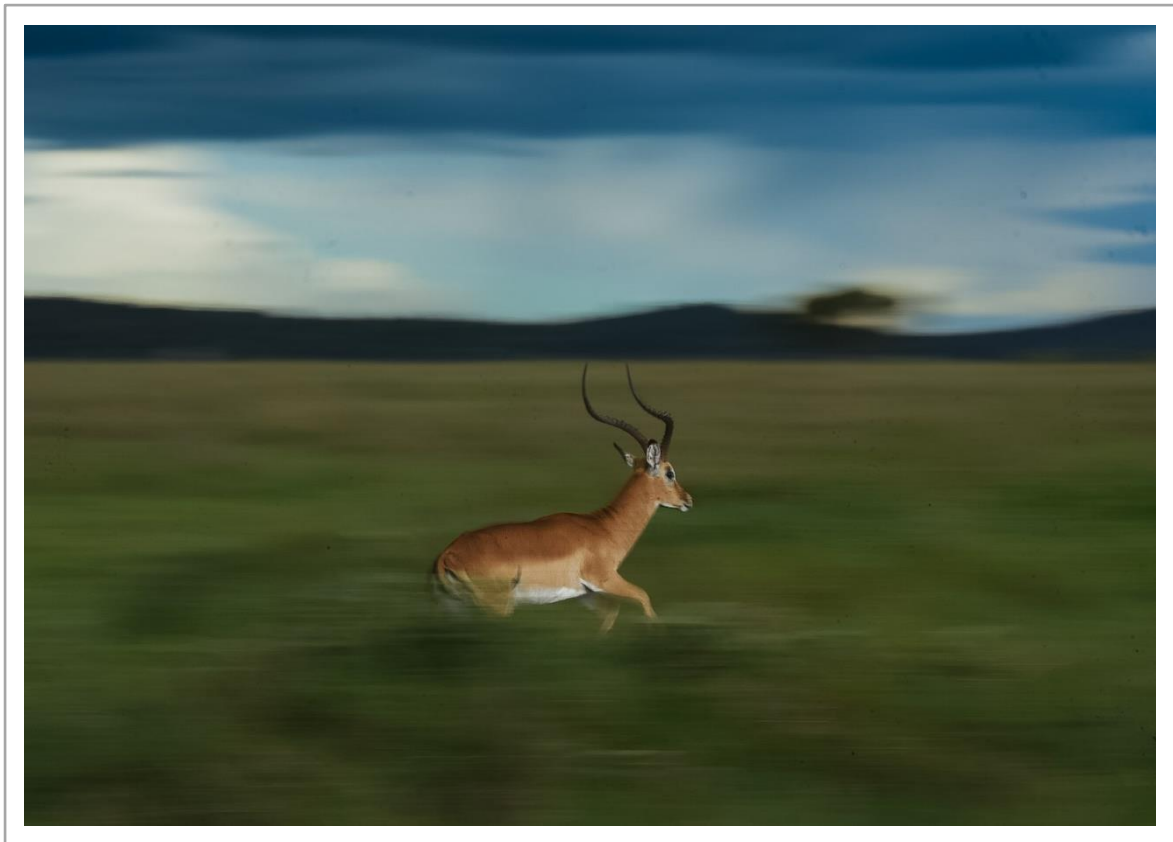


Singita



WILDLIFE REPORT SINGITA GRUMETI TANZANIA

For the month of January, Two Thousand and Twenty Four

Temperature	Rainfall Recorded	Sunrise & Sunset
Average minimum: 18°C	Faru Faru 161 mm	Sunrise 06:50
Average maximum: 30°C	Sabora 167mm	Sunset 19:01
Minimum recorded: 17°C	Sasakwa 143mm	
Maximum recorded: 31°C		

January has once again been a wet month with rain most days, conditions extremely damp and much of the grasslands flooded. The Grumeti river and other drainage lines flowing strong with thick chocolate surges.

Plumes of colourful Butterflies gather at the puddle edges and amongst the many wildflowers dotted throughout the grasslands. Wherever you may explore you are sure to be accompanied by a chorus of different Frog species calling.

When the sun breaks through the clouds, its touch is warm and strong. Nature grasps at the chance to dry out just a little before the next storm rolls in.

A sightings snapshot for January

Lion:

- The Butamtam pride have been sighted regularly this month, moving from the central plains to the southern border, following prey species.
- The pride is strong despite the challenging conditions and the Butamtam Lionesses have successfully brought down Buffalo on a number of occasions this month.
- The Ridge pride have been sighted too on the Northern side of Sasakwa hill, occasionally pushing up onto the top of the hill to hunt during the night.
- We often hear the Ridge pride calling at dusk close to Sasakwa airstrip at the bottom of the Northern slopes of Sasakwa hill.
- The Nyasirori pride have offered good sightings this month with some Lionesses seen pinching Impala from Sabora camp under the cover of darkness.
- The West pride have been holding their ground on the Raho drainage, close to Marula Explore despite challenges from two powerful nomadic male Lions that have strayed from the national park.

Leopard:

- Leopard activity has been good on Sasakwa hill this month. There have been fantastic numbers of Impala taking up residence in the area and we have witnessed a number of kills as a result.
- The Sasakwa hill female was sighted laying on the warm concrete strips just after dark on the northern access. She had been sighted close to Sabayaya as well as on an Impala kill close to Kivulini guiding department.
- A shy male was sighted on the Nyasirori high ground.
- Another male sighted on the southern side of Arab camp hill.
- The Boundary Pan male was sighted with a young Zebra foal kill
- The large Sasakwa male was sighted between Serengeti house and the base of Sasakwa hill guest access.
- Another shy male sighted close to Serengeti Hill, Sasakwa plains.

Cheetah:

- Cheetah sighting have been trickling in this month and we have had some good sightings in the west and central areas.
- A female was sighted on the Nyasirori high ground, close to Sabora camp.
- A male Cheetah sighted south of Koroya hill.
- The same male was sighted with an Impala kill just North of Pundamilia hill.
- Another female sighted in the Boundary Pan region with a Thompsons Gazelle kill.
- The Koroya hill male Cheetah was sighted further south towards the Nyati plains
- A sub adult male was sighted close to Mbuni crossing, West of Sabora camp.

Elephant:

- Elephant numbers have been great this month with many family groups being seen across the reserve.
- A breeding herd of 20 sighted on Chui drainage.
- A small herd of 7 sighted just south of Chui Link.
- A large herd of 40 sighted at Kigelia Crossing

- A breeding herd of 15 sighted at the old shooting range hill
- A single large bull sighted just north of Sasakwa dam
- A breeding herd of 21 sighted west of the airstrip feeding along the Rubana
- Aggregations of close to 200 animals sighted rolling across the Sasakwa plains



Bull Elephants following the breeding herds on the Sabora plain. Picture by George Tolchard

- 70 individuals sighted feeding along the Grumeti river close to the old Germa bridge.
- 2 large bulls sighted close to Sabora camp
- A herd of 40 sighted on the eastern slopes of Sasakwa hill
- Good numbers of Elephants sighted in and around the Albizia woodland, Eastern Mkomure drainage
- A large adult bull sighted close to OP 2

Buffalo:

- Large Buffalo herds have been impressive this month accompanied by huge numbers of Cattle Egrets in tow.
- A herd of 400 strong sighted on the Sasakwa plain
- A herd 300 seen west of Sabora lodge.
- A herd of 14 bulls sighted on a number of occasions with a single cow and very young calf. The herd moves between the Sasakwa plain and the top of Sasakwa hill. An interesting dynamism that has raised some good discussions.
- A breeding herd of 200 sighted just North of Koroya hill.
- A herd of 12 bulls sighted close to Sabora camp

- A herd of 6 bulls sighted at Martin Hill
- A herd of 250 sighted on the Nyasirori high ground.
- A herd of 90 sighted on the Rhino Rocks
- This month we have seen more extensive movements from the Buffalo herds as they search for the dryer high ground.
- Shifting significantly as they are harassed by Lions and Hyena during the nights.

Rhino:

- The Rhino in the IPZ continue to thrive
- Other individuals in the greater reserve also do well with sightings of 7 individuals together recorded.

Other Interesting Sightings:

- The Southern Ground Hornbills nesting on the Grumeti river continue to do very well. The chick is strong and is growing extremely fast.
- Some fantastic Giraffe herds sighted this month
- Great numbers of Eland, Zebra and Gazelle sighted on the Nyasirori high ground
- Good Bat – eared Fox sightings on the Nyasirori high ground
- The single female Roan Antelope has been spending time close to Sasakwa dam this month
- Lovely Zebra numbers on the Nyati Plains
- An active Hyena den site with 3 very young cubs on the Nyasirori high ground
- A Pangolin sighted just south of OP 7 on the 4th of January
- Some lovely new bird sightings including a Yellow – crowned Bishop and Common Moorhen
- The migratory Whinchat has been sighted on the Sasakwa plains



A female Whinchat. Likely to have come all the way from Britain, wintering with us here in the Serengeti.
Picture by George Tolchard

Some short bush stories to follow as well as the January Gallery of images

“Birding in the Grumeti” by Paulo Kivuyo

Here on the Grumeti reserve in western Serengeti we have successfully identified 384 species of bird. This really is quite an exceptional destination for the keen “birder” on might say! This IBA (Important Bird Area) boasts iconic species such as the Southern Ground Hornbill, of which we currently have nesting on the Grumeti river, The Grey – crowned Crane and the colourful Saddle – billed Stork.



A keen Fork – tailed Drongo eyes up insects flushed from the wheels of the passing game viewer. Picture by Paulo Kivuyo

A few special endemic species can be found here on the reserve such as the Rufous – tailed Weaver, Usambiro Barbet, Grey – crested Helmet Shrike, The Grey – breasted Spur Fowl and the Karamoja Apalis. Some of the species mentioned here above can only be found here in the Serengeti and no where else on the continent of Africa.

The diversity of vegetation types on the reserve is ultimately the reason for such an array of species. The mixed woodlands and sansevieria thickets close to the Explore camps offer great bird viewing. The riverine forest on the Grumeti river is special and invites species all the way from the forests of Rwanda and Uganda.

The riverine forest offer favourable habitat for Ross's Turaco, Western – banded Snake Eagle, Brown – throated Wattle Eye, Eastern Grey Plantain Eater and Red – throated Bee – eater. All of these species can be viewed just a stone throw from Faru Faru Lodge here on the Singita Grumet Reserve.



The beautiful Brown – throated Wattle Eye captured again here by Paulo Kivuyo on the Grumeti river

The productive mixed Apple Leaf and Combretum woodlands of the hills offer sanctuary's for the African Grey Hornbill , Green – capped Eremomela, Willow Warbler and Semi – collared Fly Catcher and many more. The open grasslands are home to some of the largest and the smallest of African birds. From the Ostrich to the African Penduline Tit and so many others in between.



The male African Grey Hornbill captured here by Paulo Kivuyo

In the very North East of the reserve in the Ikorongo region the landscape is dotted with Granite rock formations of which are lined with diverse plants, shrub and trees not found anywhere else on the property. This in itself brings extensive insect life and of course more birds!



The Little Bee – eater hawks insects from its perch on the edge of the rocky outcrops. Picture by Paulo Kivuyo

Species that can be seen up and around the rocks include the Cliff Chat, Sooty Chat, Beautiful Sunbird, White – headed Barbet, Black – billed Barbet and Cinnamon – breasted Bunting.

During these months we are seeing considerable numbers of migratory species making this a prime time for the keen birder to come and capture a few lifelong sightings. A keen birder will tot up to 200 species in a four day safari with our expert guides.



The stunning Silver Bird captured here by George Tolchard on the Sabora drainage



A grassland assassin.... the "Secretary Bird" captured here by Grant Telfer

These incredibly well adapted birds are easily viewed here on the Grumeti reserve, where numbers are strong. Breeding pairs can often be observed building nests at the very top of Desert date trees out on the plains. Notice the extremely colourful facial skin of this bird in the picture... We believe this bare skin may be used to aid in thermoregulation and for display purposes. The changing of these colours may indicate different emotional states during breeding seasons. Powerful long legs are used to negotiate the tall grasses and assist in dispatching prey species such as snakes, lizards and rodents. A truly prehistoric, Dinosaur like bird with a very interesting story.

“Track & Sign” by Grant Telfer and George Tolchard



Tracks and sign is something we have been focusing on in great detail over the last few months. The wet conditions have allowed for great tracking opportunities and to really focus on honing the teams skills. The ability to tell an animals story and bring to life where it came from, what it was doing and where it was going provides a very grounding guest experience, bringing about a powerful connection with nature.



A measuring device or a reference of scale is often very handy in order to determine the details. Above Left: Civet tracks. Above Right: A single White – tailed Mongoose track. Below: Lioness tracks in very soft mud.





An unusual example of a Lioness track in soft murrum, showing the claw marks which are not usually seen in the track



Studying Leopard tracks in the sand as it walked across Nyamamba bridge in the Ikorongo

January gallery of images



The sun sets over the plains. The view to the west from Sasakwa hill. Picture by George Tolchard



A Defassa Water Buck female captured here on Sasakwa hill by Paulo Kivuyo



A male Leopard photographed by Paulo Kivuyo in the northern most reaches of the reserve



A Klipspringer photographed by George Tolchard on the rocky edges of Sasakwa hill.



The Butamtam pride are on the move! Photographed here by James Ikamba.



A Rock Python emerges from the tall grasses to cross the road. Picture by James Ikamba

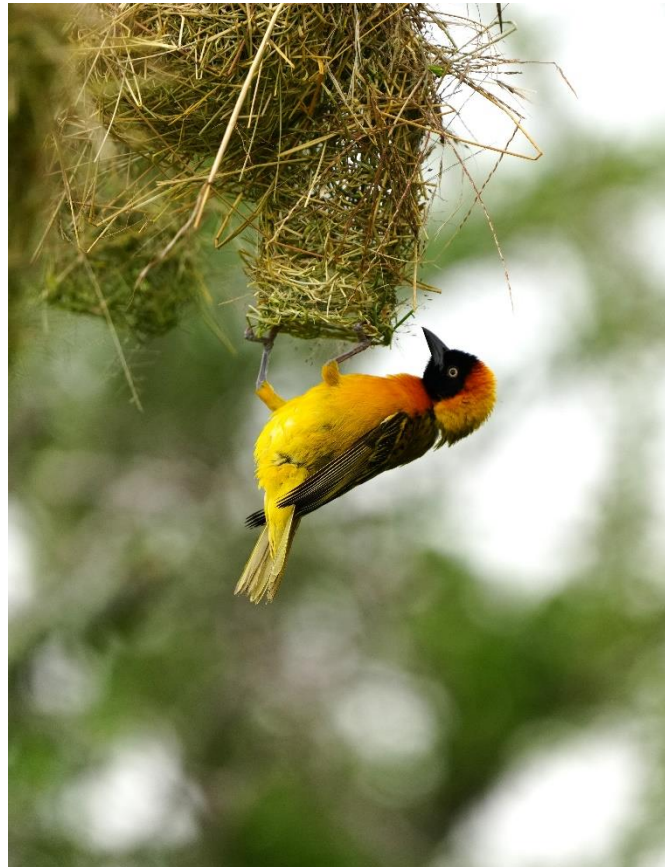


Lions escape the long wet grass and the biting flies...catching a pleasant breeze up in a Sausage tree.

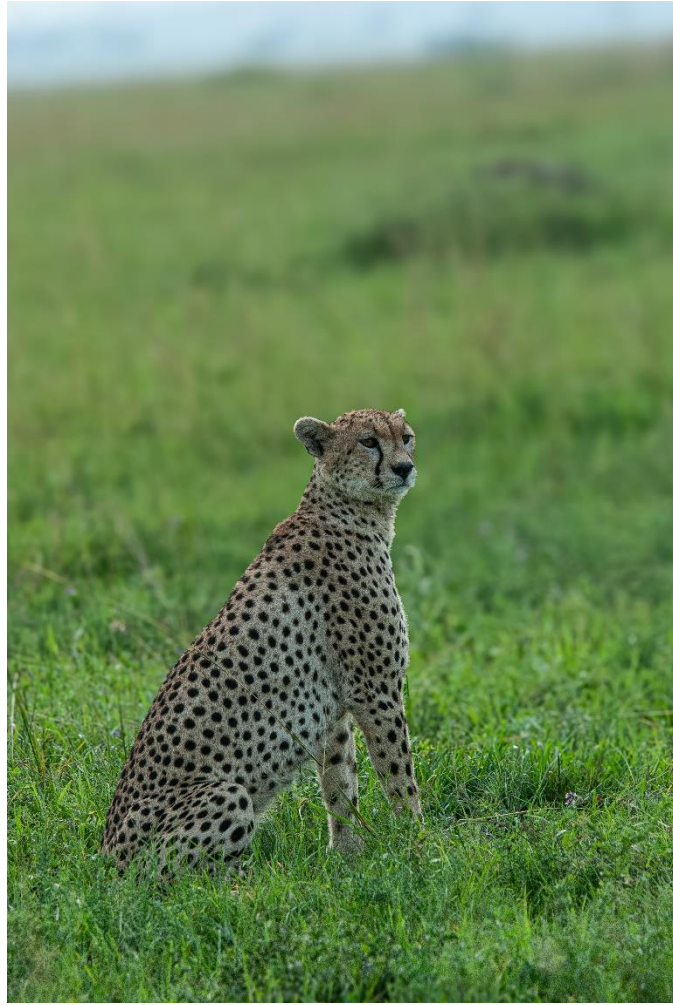
Picture by Jimmy Ikamba



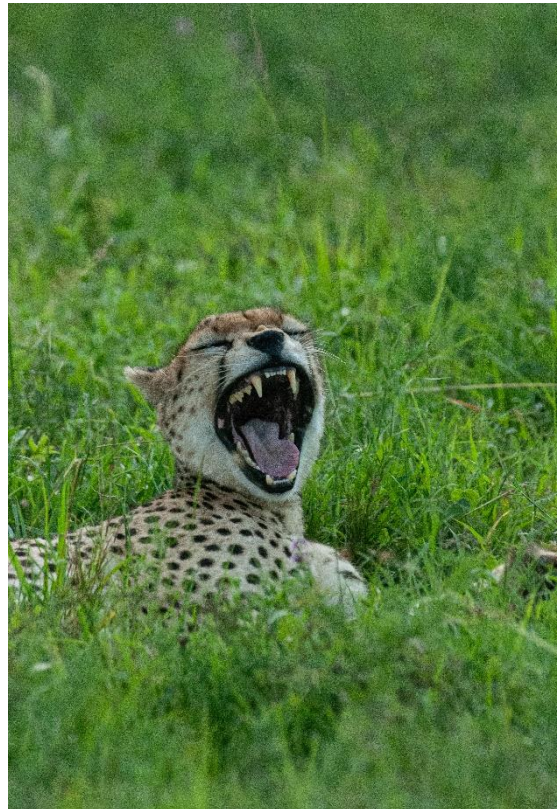
The sun sets over a herd of Giraffe on the Western plains. Beautifully captured here by Jeremiah Morris



A Lesser – masked Weaver male busy with the nest build. Picture by Jimmy Ikamba



A female Cheetah captured here by Peterlis Kibwana on the Nyasirori high ground





A Nyasirori Lioness looks for a comfortable position to lay up after a good feed.
This picture was taken by Medard Fundi close to Sabora Camp.



Laikipia and her young calf Photographed in the IPZ by Braya Masunga

Report Compiled by George Tolchard