

Singita



WILDLIFE REPORT SINGITA GRUMETI TANZANIA

For the month of March, Two Thousand and Twenty Four

Temperature	Rainfall Recorded	Sunrise & Sunset
Average minimum: 20°C	Faru Faru 26 mm	Sunrise 06:47
Average maximum: 32°C	Sabora 56mm	Sunset 18:51
Minimum recorded: 18°C	Sasakwa 63mm	
Maximum recorded: 34°C		

March arrived with continued rains, however, after the first week a sudden change in the weather brought very dry conditions. The temperatures soared into the high thirties and a dry easterly wind began to blow.

Consequently, we have seen the grasslands drying out incredibly quickly. Fires began to burn on both the eastern and southern boundaries, some spreading into the reserve, keeping our fire management teams on their toes!

The Grumeti river has dropped right down now to a shallow flow with beautiful white sandy beaches exposed. There have been some very large herds of Zebra and Topi sighted moving onto the western plains, a true sign that even the wettest reaches of the reserve are too beginning to dry.

A sightings snapshot for March

Lion:

- Life has been hard for our Lions these last months. Limited food sources makes things incredibly tough for the resident prides.
- The Butamtam pride have lost youngsters this year due to the challenges of bringing in enough food
- Both Ridge and West prides continue to do well. We believe their skills in bringing down Buffalo exceed those of the Butamtam and so both Lions and Lionesses are able to provide enough food for the pride.



- 15 members of the Nyasirori pride sighted on a Buffalo kill just west of Sabora camp.
- A mating pair sighted just South of Serengeti Hill
- 7 members of the West pride sighted on the Raho drainage, close to Nyuki BB site
- 4 sub adult Lions sighted at West Link Crossing
- 13 members of the Butamtam pride sighted just south of OP 7
- 6 Nyasirori Lionesses sighted on the Nyasirori dam drainage line
- Four members of the Mkuyu pride sighted just north of Faru Faru lodge
- Three mature Lions sighted on the Mbogo drainage, just north of Faru Lodge
- Two mating pairs of the Butamtam pride sighted active on the Nyati plains
- 16 members of the Butamtam had shifted from Nyati to Arab camp hill and were sighted close to Arab Camp thicket
- 18 members of the Butamtam pride sighted on their only Buffalo kill for the month
- 9 members of the West pride sighted on a Buffalo kill close to Marula Explore
- A Lioness sighted on Sasakwa hill with three very small cubs of only 8 weeks old

Leopard:

- We have had some great sightings of Leopard this month.
- The Mbogo female continues to do well with her two young cubs. She is still located on the Mbogo drainage but has changed her hiding place for the cubs on two occasions.
- We have learnt this month that we have another Mother Leopard again with two cubs here on Sasakwa hill.
- We have had some nice sightings early morning of the large Sasakwa male Leopard. This Leopard is always impressive to see.



- A male Leopard was sighted on the Manangai drainage in the middle of the month
- A male had been sighted in a Sausage tree on the Grumeti West road.
- A lovely male Leopard was sighted with a female Ostrich kill hoisted into a Desert Date tree just west of Sabora camp.
- A shy female sighted close to Mbuni hill on the Grumeti river road.

Cheetah:

- With the burst in dryer conditions, we have seen a small spike in Cheetah activity in the central regions.
- As some of their favoured prey species make an appearance once again we have had a couple of individuals popping up here and there.
- A male Cheetah sighted hunting Impala at the base of Pundamilia hill.
- A lactating female Cheetah sighted close to Serengeti hill.
- A female Cheetah sighted hunting Thompsons Gazelle on the Nyasirori high ground
- Another female sighted on the Boundary Pan.

Elephant:

- Fantastic Elephant numbers continue to be observed across the reserve this month.
- Some impressive aggregations on the Sasakwa plains
- Large bulls sighted following matriarchal herds tasting the air in search of receptive females.
- Breeding herds descending on Sasakwa dam as other water sources dry out



- Elephants have been frequenting Sasakwa hill during the night to feed
- Great sightings of large bulls walking the open plains always impressive
- Many breeding herds utilising the woodlands between Sabora camp and Marula Explore.

Buffalo:

- Huge herds of Buffalo spotted on both the Sasakwa plains and the Nyati high ground
- The large herds, under pressure from the Lions and Hyena during the night, can shift considerable distances.
- Fantastic buffalo bull numbers on the Rubana drainage and the Grumeti river road.
- A herd of 700 strong sighted out on the Gambaranyera plain.
- A herd of 500 sighted on the Kawanga plain.
- Good buffalo numbers sighted on the Sabora plains North of Sabora camp
- A herd of 16 buffalo bulls sighted at a large wallow on the boundary pan drainage

Rhino:

- All Rhino are accounted for. The animals are fit and well.
- The Rhino IPZ has been burnt this month allowing for continued safety from encroaching fires from other areas. Visibility has improved vastly and sightings occur often.

- Free roaming Rhino within the greater ecosystem continue to do well.
- Calves are fit and strong

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

A Martial Eagles Tale by George Tolchard

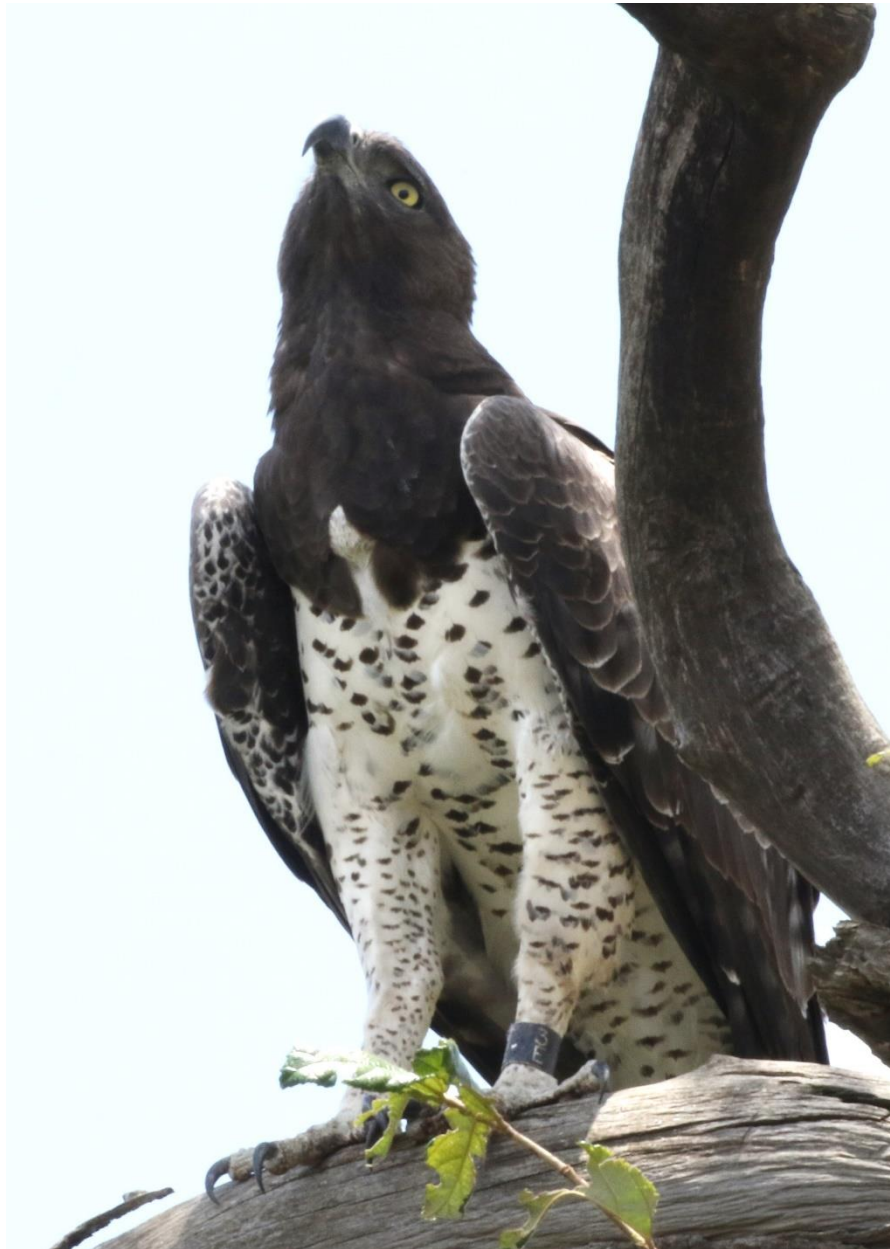
This month we have had some fantastic sightings of our resident territorial female Martial Eagle. She has been spending a lot of time displaying high in the sky over Sasakwa hill, perched in trees overlooking the valleys and calling loudly in the evenings.



The female Martial Eagle (Ring ID 3E) captured here on Sasakwa hill by George Tolchard

Her partner has been seen close to her too from time to time. The male is a little smaller than the female. He tends to be a lot more mobile and so make sense for him to be a little more nimble in the air. The female Martial Eagle will take larger prey species such as young Gazelle and Impala. She is incredibly powerful whereas the male usually targets smaller prey such Guinea fowl and Monitor Lizards.

This bird really is quite special to say the least. She arrived to stake her territory over Sasakwa hill right around the same time as I arrived on the hill for the very first time. She was ringed in 2017 and from the Masai Mara she began the great adventure that is life and arrived in the Grumeti reserve shortly after. Establishing her territory in prime time habitat, she continues to roam the skies. She has successfully raised at least two chicks that we know of who will have moved off in search of their own territories.



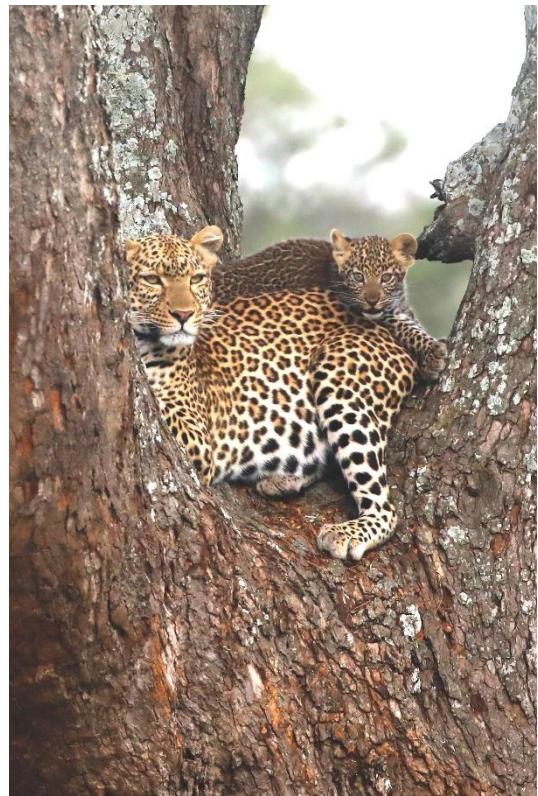
Here she is again with her band clearly visible 3E

If you look closely, you will see a slight swelling in her throat. This is sign that she had been feeding not so long ago and had food stored in her crop of which she will process later as she rests.

The Art of Patience - A game drive in search of one of the most elusive creatures on the Grumeti Reserve
by Medard Fundi

I have always loved the challenges involved with finding particular animal species whilst out in the field with my guests. This time, my guests were very keen on unveiling a Leopard. I was excited to hear this and began to plan our safari.

For a chance to see this mythical beast, I decided to drive along Mbogo drainage in very tall grass and through areas with biting Tsetse flies. Looking into every potential tree and bush for signs of the animal and listening for monkeys or baboons alarm calling. The drainage was quiet, no sign just yet.



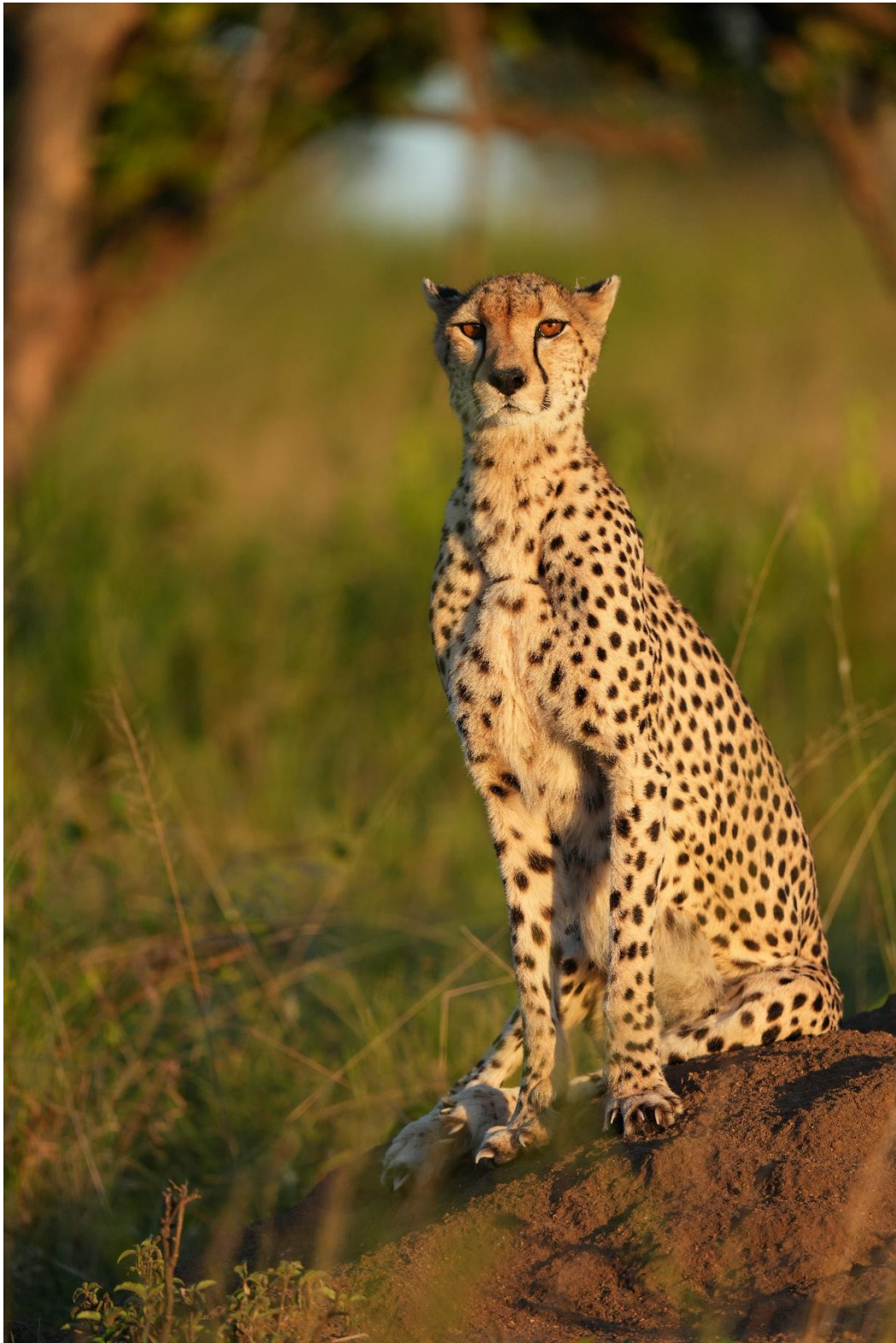
Pictures captured here by Bernard Hosea & Baraka Mtalo

We drove for another half an hour when suddenly a glimpse of the animal in a Tamarind tree! After a few minutes, the animal descended down the tree and disappeared into a thicket. I explained to my guests that the animal will of course emerge once again, however, it may take some time. We will have to be patient!

We waited for almost an hour without making a sound! We knew the Leopard had two cubs she was hiding in the thicket at the base of the tree. All of a sudden we heard the cubs making noises as they wrestled one another playing. This gave us new found energy and hope that we may just see this little family emerge yet from their hiding place.

After half an hour, we came to embrace the virtues of patience and silence as the mother leopard came out of the thicket. My faith was rewarded when one of the **cubs** came out and started to play with the mother. Few minutes later the second cub came out as well. Such an incredible moment we shared together.

March Gallery of images



A lovely female Cheetah captured here by Jimmy Ikamba at Pundamilia hill. Look at the colour of those eyes in the sunlight!



A herd of Elephant cross the Sasakwa plains. Pictures by Calson Luka



Sunsets and Elephants of the Grumeti!



A bull Elephant trails a breeding herd gently, stopping to feed from time to time. Bangwezi hills loom in the distance. Picture by George Tolchard



Another lovely capture by Calson Luka



The beautiful but shy Caracal captured here by Jimmy Ikamba in the tall grass of the Sasakwa plains

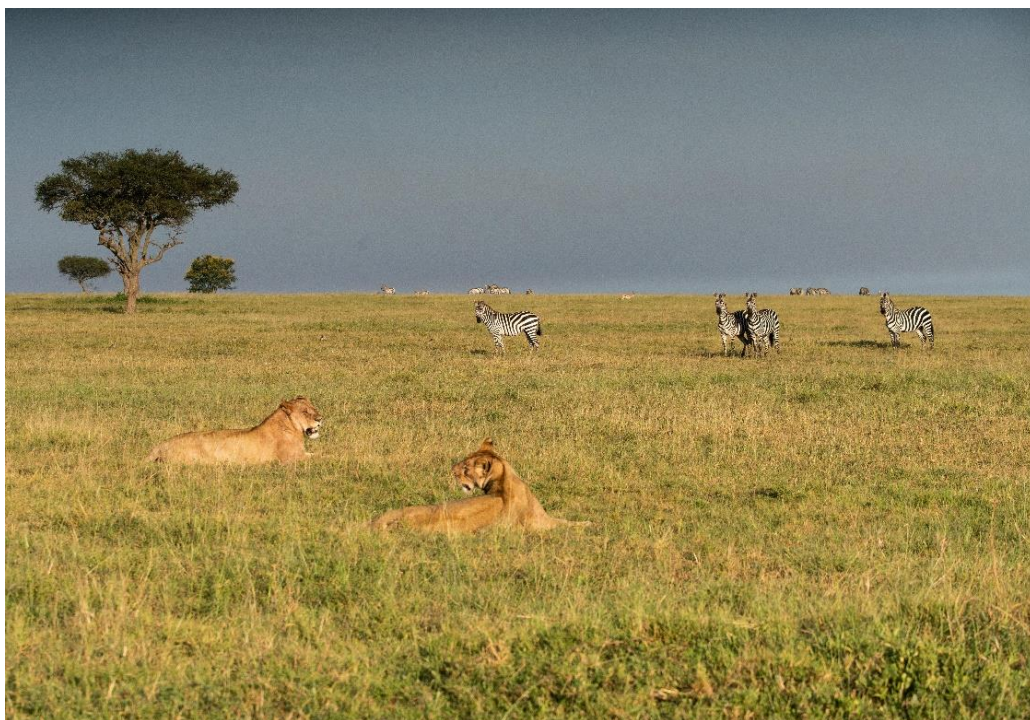


A well worn & well fed Lioness breaks away from the rest of the pride to return to her cubs on the Manangai drainage. Picture by George Tolchard



Beautiful evening light falls amongst the Zebra herds on the Nyasirori high ground.

Pictures by Paulo Kivuyo



Two Nyasirori Lionesses lay calmly as all eyes are upon them.



The Bare – faced Go-away-bird (above) and the Yellow – throated Long – claw (below) snapped here by specialist birder Paulo Kivuyo



A burst of golden yellow out on the Sabora plains.... The Yellow throated Long - claw



A Woodland Kingfisher poises to strike! This Kingfisher has incredibly sharp eyesight, sitting motionless until spotting insects in the grass and then descending upon them with lightning speed!

Picture taken by George Tolchard on the Grumeti river bank.



The awesome Dark – chanting Goshawk captured here by Calson Luka

Look at the lovely dark orange legs, feet and cere! Those black eyes! A striking bird of prey



A Topi watches the surroundings carefully for approaching Lions. Picture by Calson Luka



A lovely portrait shot here of a male Kirk's Dikdik captured by Paulo Kivuyo.

A great opportunity to get to grips with the physiological detail of this dwarf antelope. What do you see when you look at this little chap?

I see huge eyes! I would say they are quite active at night and their night vision is pretty good! I see well developed glands in front and beneath the eyes. These glands are used to communicate with one another through chemical messages. A secretion left on a nearby stick oozing a scent that tells a story, even after the animal is long gone..... how very clever! I like to call these little air traffic control towers, continually sending out messages.

I see the coat is grizzled salt & pepper grey with warm hints of ochre, quite distinctive of this small antelope species. Look at the white lining to the mouth, eyes and ears almost helping to highlight these features! Perhaps used for visual communication... small, sharp little horns and a little crest on the top of the head.

The little extended snout moves from side to side in the breeze as it detects scents wisping on by. A monogamous pair will occupy a small territory and defend this against other Dikdik individuals.... quite the little character, I think you will agree!



The Lilac – breasted Roller captured here by Baraka Mtalo.

The bird has quite the prize, dropping from its perch to dispatch a large grass hopper!

Report Compiled by George Tolchard