

# Singita



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

### Temperature

Average minimum: 18°C  
Average maximum: 32°C  
Minimum recorded: 17°C  
Maximum recorded: 33°C

### Rainfall Recorded

Faru Faru 0 mm  
Sabora 3 mm  
Sasakwa 3.1 mm

### Sunrise & Sunset

Sunrise 06:49  
Sunset 18:59

As we transition from July into August, we find ourselves reflecting on the arid landscapes of the Grumeti Reserve, a stark reminder of the dry season. Despite our hopes for a respite, the skies remained largely clear, offering only a brief shower following the ecological burning, which served to temper the dust rather than quench the land's thirst.

In contrast, the Sasakwa dam has blossomed into a veritable oasis amidst this parched expanse. It has evolved into a sanctuary for wildlife, a miniature paradise that has drawn a diverse array of animals. The sight has been so captivating that our guests have often compared it to a scene straight out of the Lion King, underscoring the dam's vital role during these dry spells.

As the end of July was the exodus of the crossings, their thunderous hooves in August kept a distant echo as they journeyed north, making dramatic crossings at the Mara River. The spectacle was particularly intense this year, with thousands of animals pouring into the river. Some of our guests and guides managed to capture stunning photographs and videos of this event, which were widely shared and appreciated on

our social platforms. In the wake of this migration, Zebra and Eland have taken over the plains of the central regions, their distinctive stripes and antlers adding a fresh dynamic to the reserve's tableau.

Wildlife viewing has been nothing short of extraordinary. The receding grasslands, a consequence of the dry season and the passage of numerous herd animals, have made sightings more frequent and rewarding. Elephants, in particular, have been a common sight throughout the reserve, their majestic presence contributing to the allure of the Grumeti.

The month also gifted us with several thrilling encounters with the big cats. Lions, Leopards, and Cheetahs have been spotted regularly, their stealthy movements and formidable hunting skills leaving our guests spellbound.

Wildebeest crossing was a spectacle to behold, a vivid testament to the relentless cycle of life and migration. As they continue their journey north towards through Mara - Lamai Triangle, their impressive numbers create a magnificent spectacle against the backdrop of the lush northern pastures.

As we anticipate what September might bring, we remain hopeful for rain. Until then, we continue to marvel at the resilience and adaptability of the wildlife that call the Grumeti Reserve home.

### **August Wildlife sightings for Grumeti.:**

#### **Lion:**

- Incredible lion sightings throughout the month and there were five prides sighted often namely West pride, Nyasirori pride, Ridge pride, Butamtam pride and Mkuyu pride.
- The West pride was seen often South, East and West of Marula Explore camp and with the wildebeest moving on, their main prey species were buffalo.
- Nyasirori pride lions were seen numerous times drinking at the waterhole in front of Sabora camp and there were a few hunting attempts witnessed. It was a very dry month and animals did not have many options for accessing water to drink, except these few points.
- The Ridge pride has been very stable and didn't move much out of their territory, they spent most of their time West of Mak link road.
- One lioness of the Ridge pride introduced her new three cubs of about 8 weeks into the pride.
- Butamtam pride were sighted along Chui drainage, WD waterhole and Koroya hill areas, and three lionesses have nine new cubs of about two months old.
- Mkuyu pride lionesses were seen hunting zebra also at the waterhole in front of Faru Faru Lodge and they spent most of their time along the Grumeti river just south of Faru.

#### **Leopard:**

- Leopard sightings were extraordinary again as always, and Faru areas specifically took the lead, with even a mating pair seen there one morning in front of the lodge.
- The Grumeti North female was sighted along Grumeti North drainage quite a few times during the month.
- A very relaxed female was sighted with a skittish sub adult male along Grumeti North drainage.
- There was a very relaxed male sighted West of Sabora camp and Nyasirori ranger post areas.
- The skittish male was also seen along Sabora drainage, and he seems to tolerate one vehicle at a time.

#### **Cheetah:**

- The "Veteran" male Cheetah was not seen for the whole of August, and we are not sure of his new movements.
- There is a new young male who seems to have mastered the area and he roams long distances across the central open plains. He was witnessed hunting wildebeest calves successfully.

- Morther and four sub adult cubs were seen often at the beginning of the month South of Nyasirori ranger post and West of Sabora camp. All five animals are in good condition.
- She has been moving between Nyuki bush breakfast site, Nyasirori boundary road and Serengeti National Park.

#### **Elephant:**

- Good herds were sighted along Grumeti river drinking and wallowing during the afternoons.
- They were also sighted drinking at Sasakwa dam every afternoon and seen occasionally in front of Sabora camp waterhole and Serengeti House pool for the same purpose.
- Faru had the best viewing of these magnificent creatures as they paid a visit twice or more every day.
- Marula Explore was also a great area for elephants viewing as they were seen in large herds moving between the Rubana and Raho drainage lines.

#### **Buffalo:**

- The largest herd was seen around German Bridge and rhino tree areas for the whole month.
- There was another large herd seen moving around Gambaranyera, Marula Explore and Fisi road areas.
- Two different herds were seen everyday congregating at Sasakwa dam in the morning and evening time, conquering their thirsts.
- Another herd was seen along Mbogo drainage and Faru access.

#### **Rhino:**

- The male Eastern black rhino was sighted many times on the Southern side and Eastern side of the Sanctuary.
- The female was occasionally seen on the Western and Northeastern side of the Sanctuary.
- The other Eastern black rhinos on the Eastern side of the concession are also doing well.

#### **Pangolin:**

One Pangolin was seen North of Koroya Hill, and it was an exciting moment as this was the first time one has been in the dry season - previous sightings were mostly during the wet season.

### **August Wildlife sighting updates for MRTC**

#### **Lions:**

- Great lion sightings have been witnessed on the open short grass plains of Lamai. There have been two major prides, one which comprises 3 lionesses, 5 cubs of about 6-8 months old and 2 big males, sighted often on the Eastern side of the Lamai triangle Eastward from Old kampi kampi campsite. The other pride was sighted often from Daraja Mbili Westward. This pride comprised of 3 females and 2 big males. All individuals are exceptionally large variants of the Serengeti lions. The animals were often seen feeding on Wildebeests kills.
- Audio of roaring lions has been heard at night South of the Mara River.

#### **Cheetah:**

- August has been great in terms of Cheetah sightings. The two males together with the mother with two sub adults have been seen many times along the boundary line, almost always hunting Wildebeest calves.

### Elephants:

- Great Elephant sightings along the tributary drainages of the Mara River. They were also found feeding along the main Mara River. They have been a highlight of game drives this month.

### Leopard:

- The Daraja mbili drainage has been very productive in terms of Leopard sightings. Mostly in the afternoons, leopards were sighted up on trees. All animals were relaxed, and visibility has been amazing...some afternoons have included up to 3 sightings a day.

### Migration:

- Hard to explain in words or with photos! Hundreds of thousands have been viewed, crossing the Mara River. Big crossings were often seen at crossing number four and all of them were from South to North in the first few days of the month and vice versa at the end of the month. Some crossings were estimated to have involved 10,000 animals at once.

- Some short bush stories to follow as well as the August Gallery of images.

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### "Survival and Sacrifice: A Cheetah Mother's Caution Amidst the Chase on the Lamai Plains"

By Peter Chatama

On August 3rd, 2023, we found ourselves captivated by an extraordinary spectacle on the Lamai plains. A mother cheetah was cautiously navigating the boundary road with her two sub-adult cubs, their youthful innocence a contrast to the raw wilderness around them.

Suddenly, the serenity was pierced by the sight of a lone wildebeest calf, its vulnerability palpable. The mother cheetah, an embodiment of predatory instinct, locked her gaze onto the calf. However, her eyes held a hint of caution - her cubs were her priority.

As the wildebeest calf sensed danger and bolted, the mother cheetah sprang into action. The plains became a stage for a high-speed chase, the dust kicked up by the wildebeest calf and the cheetah creating a dramatic backdrop. But the mother cheetah's pursuit was not reckless - she kept a wary eye on her cubs, ensuring they were safe.

The chase took an unexpected turn when the fleeing calf stumbled upon two male cheetahs, brothers, hidden in the grass. The calf, in a state of panic, attempted a sharp turn, but its hooves betrayed it, and it slipped onto the ground.

The mother cheetah, upon seeing the two males, made a split-second decision. Her maternal instincts overpowered her predatory ones. She veered away, her focus shifting from the hunt to the safety of her cubs. She led her cubs away, her eyes constantly darting back to the two males.

The brothers claimed their prize effortlessly, their feast a stark reminder of the unforgiving laws of the wild. The mother cheetah and her cubs, now safely perched on a high ground a hundred meters away, watched the scene unfold. They were silent spectators to the harsh realities of life in the wild, a lesson that the mother cheetah would use to prepare her cubs for their own survival.



The two brothers and mother with two sub adult cubs on the Lamai plains, both captured by Peter C

## Martial Eagle 3E update

By Grant Telfer

At the start of 2023 we first saw a Martial Eagle with a leg band that read 3E. The band is on the lower part of her left leg. It was seen in the vicinity of Serengeti House and only seen once. Seven months later we had the opportunity to see her again around Serengeti road junction Butamtam drainage line. She was looking very healthy but still appears to be moving around on her own and as yet has not been seen with a male. Seeing her again made us remember her story. She was banded as a fledgling in the Esero Sopia area of the Maasai Mara National Reserve - Kenya. That is quite a distance from her current location in the central parts of the Grumeti She hatched in July 2017, probably around the 20th of the month and thus her egg was most likely laid around June 1st, 2017.

That make her approx. 6 years, 1 month and a few weeks old.

Her parents' nest is unique in that it is in a *Afrocarpus Falcatus* tree (Yellowwood) which is a very rare tree, and this tree is the only Yellowwoods that they have in the Masai Mara.

There was a beehive below her nest, and she survived the hive being harvested by honey hunters during the first few months of her life.

This is the second resighting of her since she left the nesting area and the researchers from the Masai Mara think she must be trying to establish a territory on Grumeti now. We are on the look out to see if we can establish where exactly she is spending her time and if there is any sign of her finding a male yet.



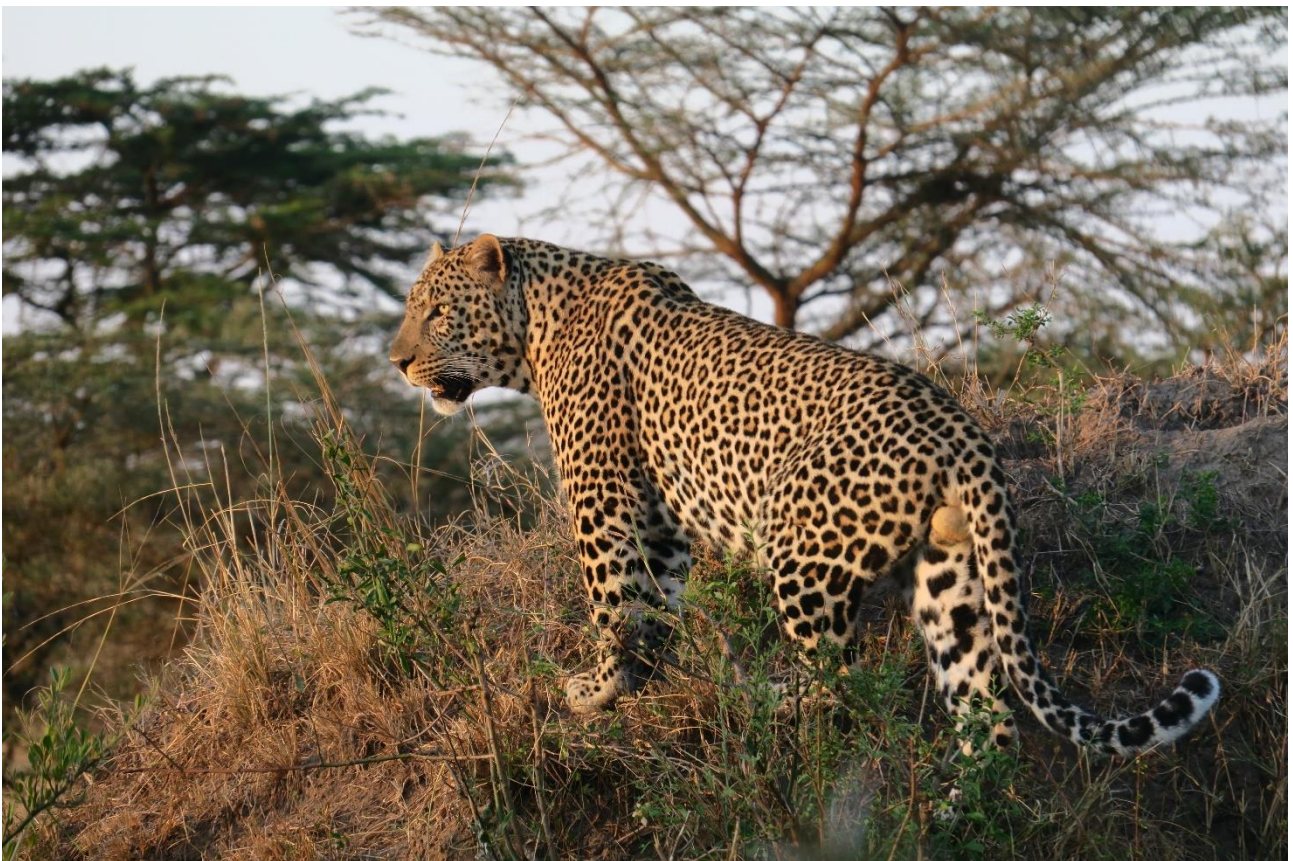




August Gallery of images



Male leopard seen along the Nyasirori boundary pan. Pictured by Bernard Hosea



Male leopard seen near daraja Jeusi North of MRTC. Pictured by Adas



Both pictures of the new male cheetah across Sasakwa plain. Pictured by Peterlis K



A breeding herd of elephants heading towards Grumeti river to quench their thirst. Pictured by Peterlis K.



Single tusker walking across the open plain. Pictured by Edward K



Four of the six Butamtam pride lions at Sasakwa dam wall. Pictured by Edward K



Butamtam pride lion glancing at the rest of the pride in a distance. Pictured by Edward K



Nyasirori pride male lion and a cub sighted along Raho drainage. Pictured by Silas



Wildebeests crossing the Mara River. Pictured by Peter C



Wildebeests crossing the Mara River. Pictured by Grant Telfer.



In one of the mornings baboons were observed at Sasakwa dam very playfully before they wonder around to forage. Pictured by Calson



Lappet faced Vulture descending to a kill. Pictured by Paulo Kivuyo.



African Jacana at Sasakwa dam. Pictured by Paulo Kivuyo.



**African Moustached Warbler. Pictured by Adas**

Report prepared and compiled by Edward K.