

Singita



WILDLIFE REPORT SINGITA GRUMETI TANZANIA For the month of February, Two Thousand and Twenty Three

Temperature

Average minimum: 19°C (66°F)
Average maximum: 34°C (93°F)
Minimum recorded: 17°C (62°F)
Maximum recorded: 36°C (96°F)

Rainfall Recorded

Faru Faru 59 mm
Sabora 55 mm
Sasakwa 60 mm

Sunrise & Sunset

Sunrise 06:52
Sunset 19:01

February has been a lovely month, albeit rather dry. This is not uncommon for this time of year as we proceed into the dryer window between the two rain cycles. The grassland waterholes have all but disappeared this month and the Grumeti River has dropped significantly. The water is but a slither of crystal-clear magic, pulling in wildlife from afar. The plains are dryer now and taking on a different tone of golden yellow. The air is hot, still and anchored with a purple haze. Magnificent colours can be seen from sunrise to sunset allowing for some powerful photographic captures.

At a distance, animals appear on the grasslands as a wavering mirage. Great plains wildlife can be seen on the banks of the river along with awesome herds of elephants. Lions and leopards hunt close to the river, looking for opportunities as wildlife come to drink. It is an incredible time to be out on safari and appreciating the vast landscapes and endless shimmering horizons.

A sightings snapshot for February:

Lions:

Lion sightings have been as good as always with many fantastic interactions.

- The Butamtam Pride have allowed for some great sightings including a buffalo kill where 29 members were seen feeding on the carcass at a single moment in time. You can just imagine the squabbles and quarrels between pride members, the sounds of the lions as they fight amongst themselves for a morsel of the prize.
- A Butamtam lioness emerged from the thickets in the rhino boma with a single young cub halfway through the month, and was again sighted close to Sasakwa Dam a week later.
- Sightings of the Nyasirori male lions have been frequent in the central/west regions of the Grumeti Reserve.
- Lions have been active on Sasakwa Hill from time to time, however, sightings have been rare and more often than not their presence is revealed with deep, penetrating roars in the still of an evening.

Leopards:

Leopard activity has been lovely this February and our guests have experienced some great sightings.

- A mother and her two young cubs were sighted a number of times close to Faru Faru on the Grumeti River. The cubs are approximately three months old and after close observation we were able to deduce one male and one female.
- A fairly shy female had been spotted on Chui Link, close to the base of Sasakwa Hill on a number of occasions.
- The Sabora Drainage male has offered some good sightings as this once very shy male is really beginning to relax in the company of the game viewers.

Cheetahs:

- The mother and four cubs of the Sabora region have been observed this month on a number of occasions. She was seen hunting impala close to the Sasakwa airstrip and the following day she was on the Rahu Drainage close to Sabora. This is considerable movement as she bounces between lion prides, keeping herself and youngsters safe.
- Another female with two sub-adults was sighted on the watershed in the central region.
- The Sasakwa male continues to hunt his territory, close to Koroya Hill, central Grumeti Reserve.

Elephants:

Great elephant viewing this month with good sightings all over the reserve.

- Very good matriarchal herd numbers in the Ridge Hills and over the Sabora plains.
- The Rubana Drainage has been a popular area for the breeding herds towards the end of the month.
- Great elephant sightings on the Grumeti River too as waterholes dry up elsewhere, pulling the elephants back to the surrounding Faru Faru region.
- We have seen some large bulls in musth this month, roaming the plains alone, working the wind for breeding herds and receptive females.

Buffalos:

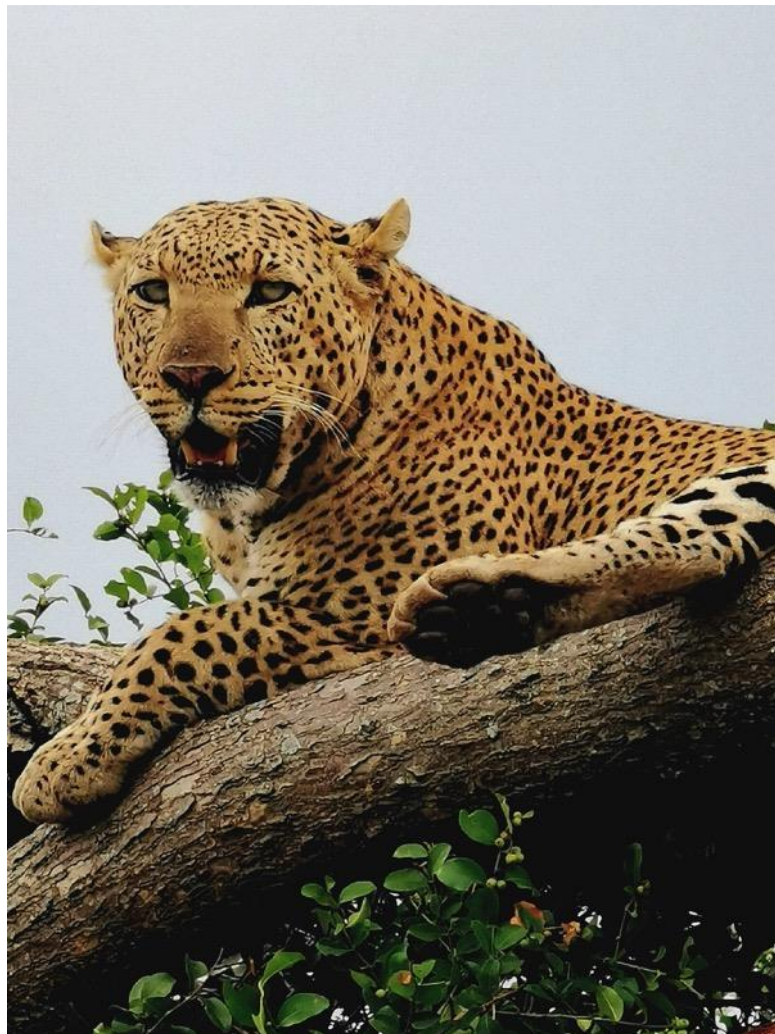
- We have seen some shifting taking place in some of our resident buffalo herds this month as pressure from the lion prides increases.
- We have also noticed a peak in mating activity and tension between bulls in the breeding herds as they jostle and compete for receptive cows.
- Batchelor herds of healthy bulls both young and old follow the breeding herds gently, pretending to pose no threat but always watching for opportunity to slip into the herd and perhaps displace another bull.

- Large herds can be seen all over the reserve as you would expect. Often the great black masses are accompanied by the striking white of the cattle egrets that join them during the days. These birds will feed alongside the buffalo on insects disturbed in the grass as the buffalo move.

Rhinos:

- All rhino are well and accounted for. There have been some lovely sightings of Eric on the eastern side of the boma. At the end of the month the Grumeti Fund Conservation Team began a programme to replace all transmitters in the rhinos. We wish them the best of luck.

Bush stories follow as well as the February Gallery of images.



The Mbogo male leopard rests after feeding. Picture by Medard Fundi

A “mother & two” in the golden grass

By Godson Birdi

It has been a while since we spotted a stranger in the form of a female leopard close to the Mbogo Drainage, just north of Faru Faru. We have been unable to identify this individual through our current leopard profile, and believe that she is a newcomer to the area. At the beginning of the month, she revealed herself with two young cubs of approximately three months old.

One evening game drive, I came across her up in a grewia bush with her two cubs - they were feeding on a grey duiker kill. As soon as I was able to bring my binoculars up to have a closer look at her spot patterns, I realized immediately that she was new to this area of the reserve. I then encouraged my guests to look closely at her facial and ear markings. Together we collected details to build information towards a new profile of the Singita Grumeti female leopards. What a fantastic opportunity! We enjoyed it together.

We, as the guiding team will continue to update information on her condition and the status of her young cubs with each and every sighting. I have included here some lovey pictures of her and her cubs walking along the Rhino Rocks Road searching for water after feeding.



Protective mother



This incredible picture by Medard Fundi shows three lionesses surrounding a giraffe cow and her calf. The lionesses tried to separate the youngster from its mother. For half an hour, the desperate mother fought off the lionesses with her long powerful legs - kicking and stomping at the lionesses. She kept her calf close to her, between her front legs and beneath her, and incredibly ensured its survival. The lionesses eventually gave up and moved away.

A new resident guest

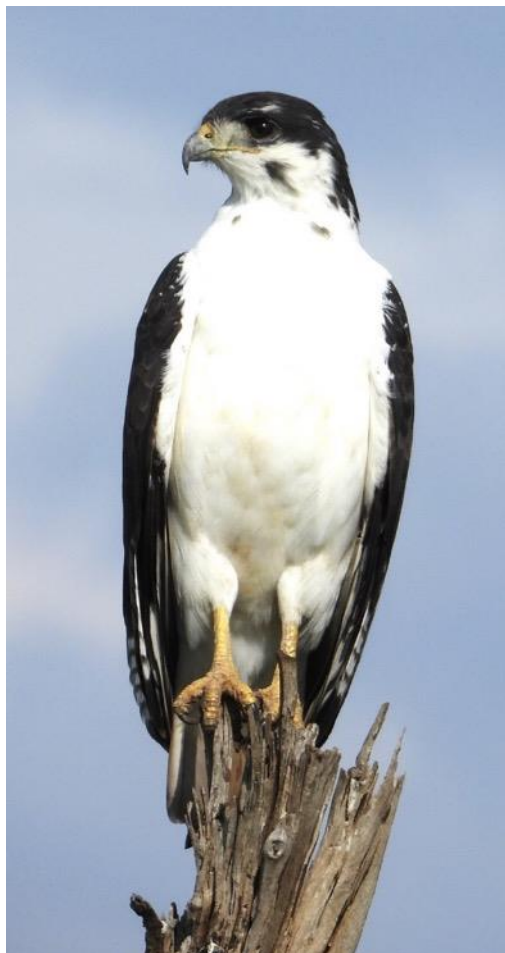
A great capture here of a rather rare long-tailed skink (*Trachylepis megalura*) at Faru Faru Lodge. This picture was taken by the lodge manager, Guy Tatham. It's really nice to know that they are around as this is the first confirmed record here in the Grumeti. Although it was seen on the rocks, these skinks are very fond of living in grass clumps and use their long tails to wrap around tall grass stems and slide down them very efficiently.



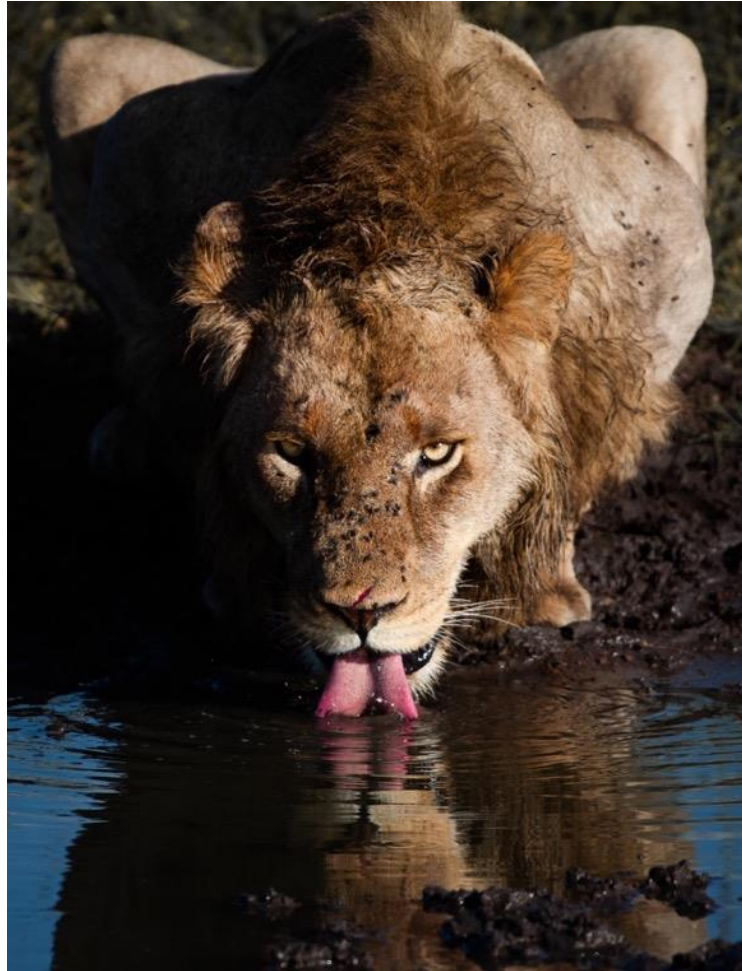
Twitter



Secretary birds brave the heat of the day in their nest just south of Arab Camp woodland.
The lovely Augur buzzard captured below. Pictures by Mishi Mtili



February Gallery



One of the young lions of the coalition of six, drinks at the waterhole. Picture by Calson Luka
The female cheetah of the Sabora region. Picture by Godson Birdi

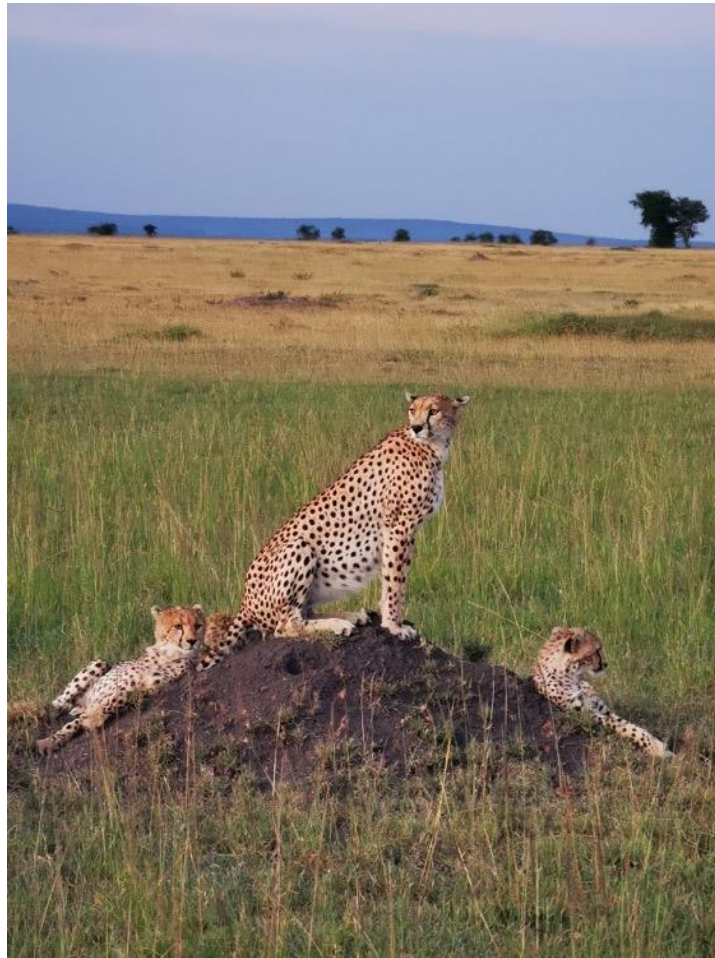




Giraffe on the southern plains. Picture by Calson Luka

A Butamtam lioness with her two very young cubs. Picture by Assistant Head Guide Edward Kaaya





Mother cheetah and her four cubs. Pictures by Godson Birdi and Calson Luka





A mother and her two almost fully grown daughters, in the central Grumeti Reserve. Picture by Trainee Guide, Clinton Sengenge. Below is the Sasakwa veteran male cheetah. Picture by Edward Kaaya





A black mamba, very much at home in the trees close to Sasakwa Dam.
Picture captured by Godson Birdi

Best mates at the mud wallow. Picture by Adas Shemboko





The Mbogo male leopard rests on a fallen tree. Picture by Edward Kaaya.
An inquisitive, intrigued and aware young elephant. Picture by Bernard Hosea





Peter Chatama and guests watch the Butamtam territory holders casually cruise on by.
Picture by Calson Luka