Singita

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

Temperature	
Average minimum:	17°C
Average maximum:	32°C
Minimum recorded:	16°C
Maximum recorded:	33°C

Rainfall Recorded	
Faru Faru	51 mm
Sabora	27 mm
Sasakwa	44 mm

Sunrise & Sunset	
Sunrise	06:45
Sunset	18:44

June has been an incredible month with the arrival of thousands upon thousands of wildebeest. The migrating animals flooded into the Grumeti Reserve from the east and slowly filled the central and western plains. Grazing and trampling the grass as they go, dropping huge amounts of manure, they open and aerate the soils and grasslands. Some species of grass actually explode into new green shoot only as they are crushed by thundering hooves. A whole chain reaction of events unfold in nature as the masses move through.

Zebra, eland and gazelle arrive in great herds too as conditions become more favourable for them. The sounds of the plains erupt as wildebeest bulls charge the great lines and usher their cows away from competing males. The sounds of horns colliding and plumes of dust on collision are continuous as brave wildebeest bulls compete for breeding opportunities.

Generally, the month has been dry, however, some small rain showers mid-month have helped anchor the huge wildebeest numbers on the Grumeti's grass plains for just a little longer.

Here's a sightings snapshot for June:

Lions:
Great lion sightings as one would expect here on the Grumeti. Cool, cloudy mornings have seen lions active well into the day with some fantastic vocals in the early hours as lions contact call and announce their presence. The great hunting opportunities in the area have attracted other lions from the margins as often we spot unknown individuals hunting alone or on a kill well hidden in the thickets.

- The Butamtam Pride have been successful in the central region hunting wildebeest and zebra. The animals are well fed and the young are looking fit and strong. The three new editions to the pride continue to do well and move from strength to strength.
- Nyasirori Pride sightings have been steady in the Sabora region with some great action from the territorial males.
- The West Pride continue to utilise the area on the Rahu drainage, close to Marula Explore site. They too are revelling in the abundance of prey this month has offered.

Leopards:
We have had some wonderful Leopard sightings this month. Some new individuals have been observed, which is always interesting, as the guiding team capture portrait images of these new cats so that we may be able to identify them as best we can.

- An unknown male has been sighted on the Grumeti North drainage. This male appears to be quite comfortable with the game viewing vehicles and so observations have been relatively successful.
- A young male leopard has been sighted on the western boundary of the rhino IPZ. This individual is shy, however, and requires careful approach and viewing from 100m or so with binoculars.
- The Sabora male leopard has been sighted on a number of times on the drainage line just south west of Sabora.
- The Mbuni male has provided some great sightings this month, close to the Grumeti River, downstream of Faru Faru.
- The Mazingira mother was sighted with her two 10-month-old cubs at the base of Sasakwa Hill, close to the airstrip.
- The Mbogo drainage female with two young cubs has not been seen for a while now. There is a possibility that she may have lost the cubs to lions.

Cheetahs:
Cheetah sightings this month have been very good. We have seen a number of new individuals in the central Grumeti Reserve.

- Two young males have been observed between Koroya Hill and the marsh area. The animals have been seen hunting successfully from time to time.
- The veteran male cheetah continues to provide some lovely sightings in the Punda Milia Hill region.
- The mother and four youngsters have been observed on a number of occasions from the Nyasirori high ground through to the Kawanga plain in the west. These animals have been successfully hunting wildebeest calves and seem to be doing very well.

Elephants:
With the great number of wildebeest flooding the concession it is normal to see the elephants give way and move to quieter areas. However, good sightings have been a regular occurrence here on the Grumeti and in the Lamai Triangle.

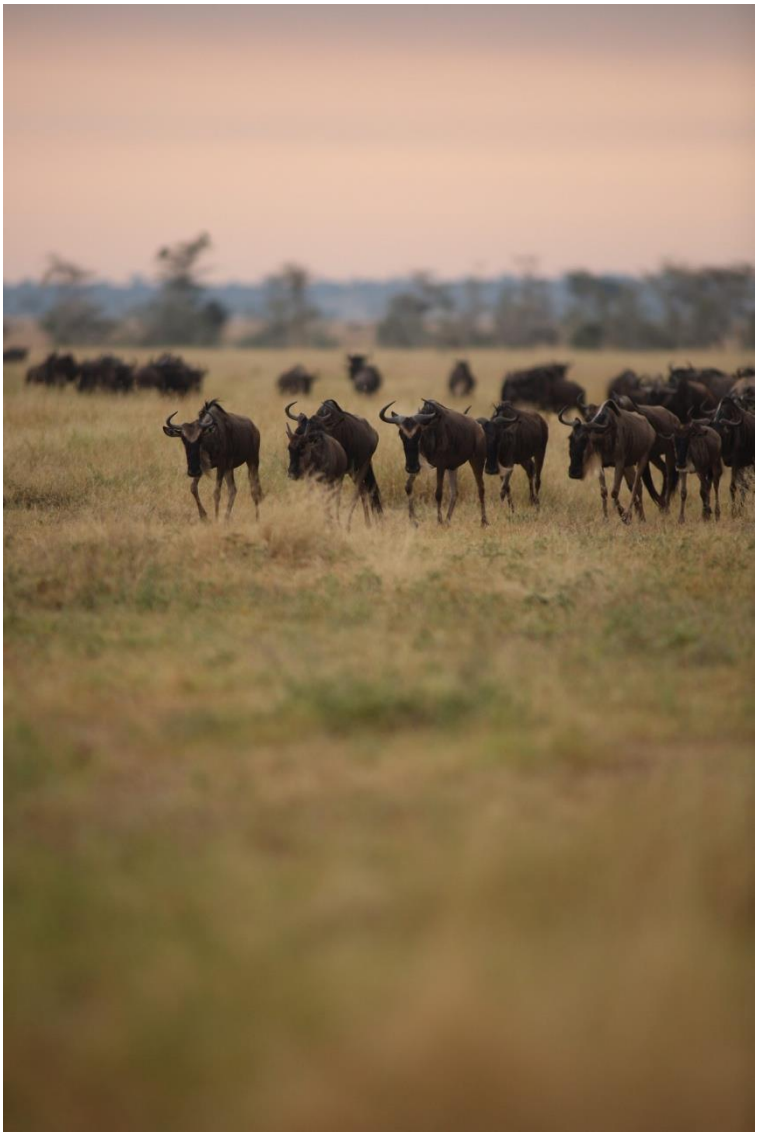
- The huge tusker "Zito" graced us with his presence for a short while before continuing his march north-east and on into the Ikorongo.
- Some lovely matriarchal herds were sighed close to Sasakwa Hill.

Buffalos:
Buffalo herds have been interesting to watch as they too shift with the many wildebeest pushing through the reserve. Again, like the elephants, they too prefer to create a little space for themselves rather than intermingling with the noisy herds of wildebeest.

- The buffalo herd are looking very healthy currently and the young calves born during the rains are well and strong.

Rhinos:
All rhinos are accounted for and in good shape.

- There have been some lovely sightings of the large bull on the southern boundary of the intensive protection zone.
- It has been a very successful month for the black rhino on the reserve.



Weary travellers with heads hung a little lower than perhaps is usual. The numbers of Wildebeest marching through the Grumeti reserve this month have simply been phenomenal.
A lovely capture here by Grant Telfer.

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

The Great Wildebeest Migration: **By James (Jimmy) Ikamba**
Witness the thrilling rutting season on the Grumeti plains

As the sun begins to rise over the vast savannah of east Africa, a low rumbling sound can be heard in the distance. It grows louder and louder until it becomes a deafening roar, as thousands upon thousands of wildebeest make their way across the plains in a seemingly endless column. This is the Great Wildebeest Migration, one of the most awe-inspiring natural spectacles on the planet.

In the month of June, the wildebeest herds arrive at the Singita Grumeti reserve, following an age-old route that has been traversed for generations. They come at the peak of their rutting season, when the males are at their most aggressive and the battles for dominance are fierce.

As I stood on the edge of the reserve, watching the wildebeest arrive in their thousands, I couldn't help but feel a sense of awe. These magnificent creatures, with their shaggy manes and powerful bodies, were on a mission. They were here to mate, to reproduce, and to continue the cycle of life.

The rutting season is a time of great drama and intensity. The males engage in elaborate displays of dominance, locking horns and bellowing loudly to attract females. It's a brutal and sometimes deadly contest, but it's also a vital part of the wildebeest's life cycle.

The role of the Great Wildebeest Migration in the ecosystem cannot be overstated. As the wildebeest move through the reserve, they leave behind a trail of dung and trampled grass, which enriches the soil and provides nutrients for other plants to grow. This, in turn, attracts other herbivores to the area. The migration is not only a vital part of the natural balance of the ecosystem, but it's also a major draw for our guests from all over the world.

Picture captured by George Tolchard

As the wildebeest herds move through the reserve, the predators begin to stir. Lions, cheetahs, and hyenas are all drawn to the area by the presence of so much food. They prowl the edges of the herds, waiting for an opportunity to strike.

I was lucky enough to witness one such attack. A mother cheetah of a litter of four had been stalking a small herd of wildebeest for hours, waiting for the perfect moment to pounce. Suddenly, one of the wildebeest calves broke away from the group and started to run. The mother cheetah sprang into action, racing after her prey with incredible speed.

The wildebeest tried to outrun her, but it was no use. Within seconds, it had caught up with the calf and brought it down in a cloud of dust and chaos. It was a brutal and violent scene, but it was also a reminder of the harsh realities of life in the wild. Another day for the mother and the four one-year-old youngsters in the Grumeti Reserves.

Later that week, I watched as a herd of wildebeest attempted to cross the Grumeti River. The river was a little higher compared to the beginning of the month due to the late rains, and the wildebeest were hesitant to make the crossing. They milled around on the banks of the river for a while, trying to summon the courage to take the plunge.

Finally, one brave wildebeest stepped forward and started to make its way across. The others followed in a rush, their hooves splashing through the water as they struggled to maintain their footing. It was a heart-stopping moment, as the wildebeest battled against the fear of the water to reach the other side.

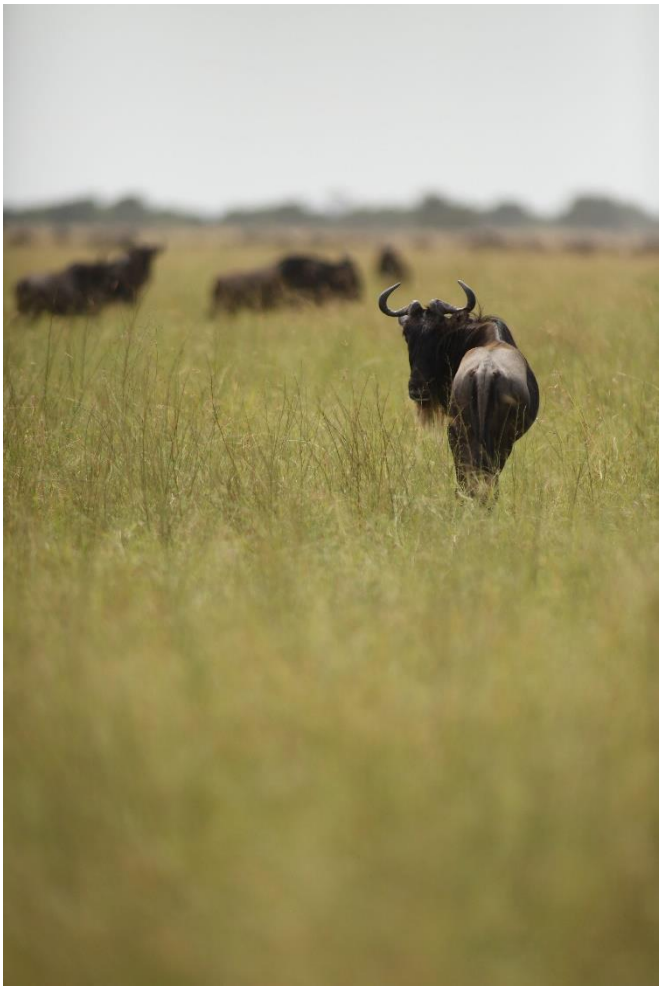
Picture captured by George Tolchard

As I watched the wildebeest make their way across the river, I couldn't help but feel a profound sense of respect for these incredible animals.

The cycle of life is never more apparent than during the Great Wildebeest Migration. It's a time of intense drama and beauty, as the wildebeest make their way across the savannah.

Thanks to the efforts of the Grumeti Fund and Singita, the Grumeti Reserve has truly become a place of miracles. Our guests can witness the Great Wildebeest Migration in exclusivity, surrounded by the stunning natural beauty of the savannah. It's a truly once-in-a-lifetime experience that will stay with you forever.

Pictures captured by Grant Telfer



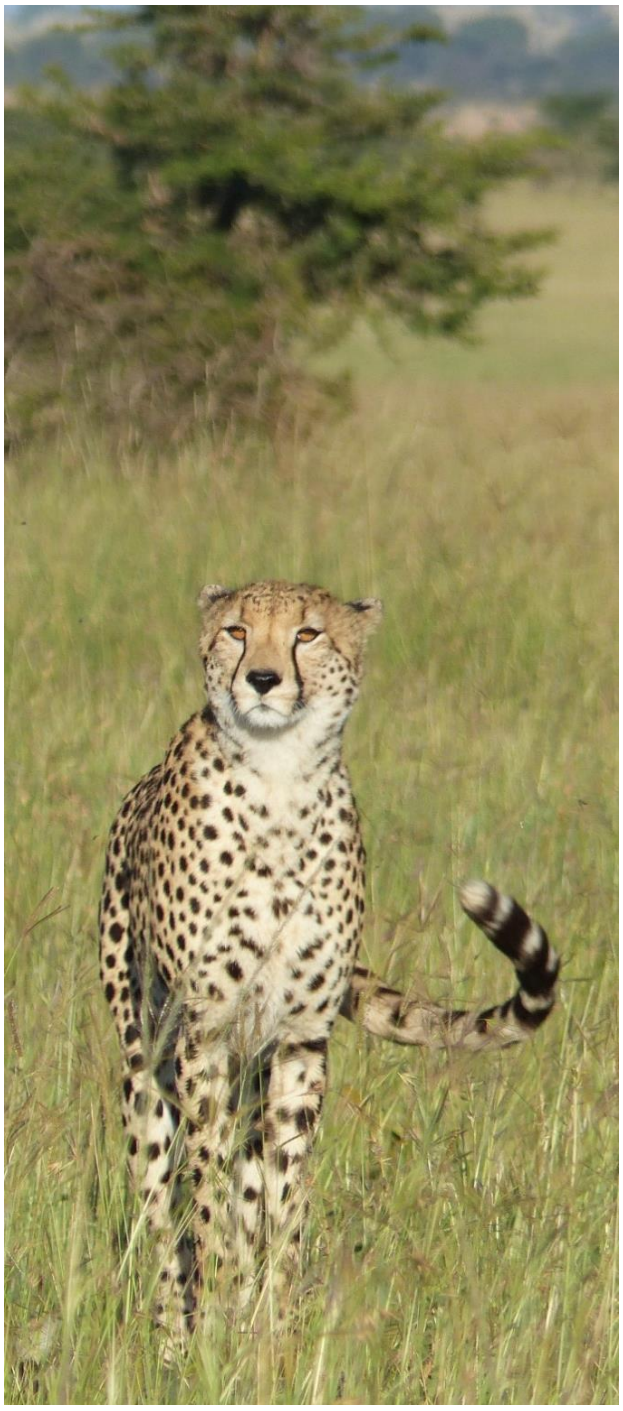
News from the Lamai Triangle and the mighty Mara River **Story and photos by Godson Nyiti**

The mighty Mara River has been flowing more than usual this month as heavy rains persist in the region. The wildlife viewing never the less has been fantastic. Some lovely crocodile and hippo viewing on the river itself, and great resident herds of topi, wildebeest, zebra and Thompson's gazelle on the higher ground, north of the Mara River.

The land is vibrant and green, the grasses long and the colours explosive. This picture above boasts the contrast in beautiful colours as the two giraffe watch over a passing young male cheetah. This cheetah is not alone, however, his two brothers are laid not too far away. A lovely coalition of three that the guests have been enjoying these last weeks.

The three brothers have been utilising the area between the river, just east of camp, and towards Alex Walker woodlands. The brothers have been successfully hunting Thompsons' gazelle and young wildebeest calves.

There have been some fantastic leopard sightings in the area recently with a resident female observed on Walker's Plain. We were very lucky to see her successfully hunt a gazelle and then drag the animal up into a tree away from other large predators, where she could relax and feed without worrying about her meal being stolen. This female leopard is photographed with her kill in a desert date tree. Notice that this gazelle is a male and a very reasonable size. Look at the powerful forearms and large paws on this leopardess… there is incredible power in this animal to successfully pull this gazelle up into the tree.



What an incredible sighting! We were incredible fortunate to witness this incredible show of strength and agility.

The lion sightings have been pretty good too this month despite the challenging long grasses. The male lion captured overleaf is one of the territorial males that roams the Chaka La Kigelia Valley. He is one of two, and his brother and he are the dominant lions in the area.

We were very pleased to see them this month as they can disappear in these long grasses without trace. If you're lucky, as you scan, a head may rise or you may see a flick of a tail which may just give their presence away.

Elephant sightings have also been good in the area with some impressive bulls observed from time to time. Matriarchal herds have been seen along the river and up on the high ground. Many of the water holes on the high ground are full with much rainfall and so animals have dispersed to a certain extent and are not reliant on the river.

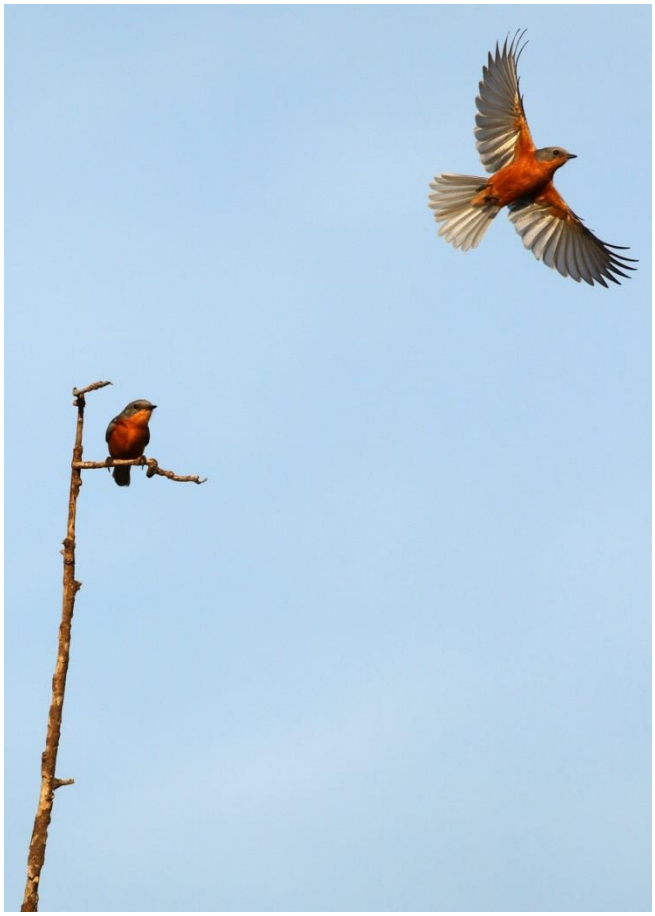
June Gallery

The Butamtam Pride photographed by Calson Luka.

A Nyasirori male lion watches and listens closely as the light evening rain begins to fall. Not too far away there is a familiar lioness vocalising gently. Picture by George Tolchard

A great picture here of the Mbuni male leopard in the early evening light. Picture by Peter Chatama

A buffalo herd out on the Sasakwa plain captured here by Abu Ngua.



A pair of silver birds were particularly active one evening as they escorted other birds away from their nest.

A marabou stork making life difficult for a terrapin close to Sasakwa Dam. Fortunately for the terrapin, the stork dropped its quarry and the terrapin made its escape.

Pictures by George Tolchard.

The spectacular “Zito” (which is Kiswahili for heavy – referring to his tusks) joins us once more this month for a fleeting moment. This wonderful Elephant bull is very noticeable with his huge tusks, hole in his left ear and pizza slice triangle tear in his right. His head is twice the size of a Land Cruiser engine block, his body enormous and yet, just like that he can disappear from sight, like a ghost ship upon the open ocean.

This creature has 40 – 50 years of wisdom and experience within the Serengeti ecosystem and when he wants to disappear, he will do just that… What a privilege.
Picture by Silas Shayo

A lovely herd of Eland captured here by assistant head guide Edward Kaaya

Report Compiled by George Tolchard