

Singita



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

Temperature

Average minimum: 17°C
Average maximum: 30°C
Minimum recorded: 16°C
Maximum recorded: 31°C

Rainfall Recorded

Faru Faru 97 mm
Sabora 146 mm
Sasakwa 172 mm

Sunrise & Sunset

Sunrise 06:24
Sunset 18:36

November this year has been an unusually wet month. We have seen noticeable extensive movements, primarily within the plains wildlife species, as they shift to other favourable regions.

Elephant numbers have been impressive and towards the end of the month we observed great numbers moving into the Ikorongo region of the reserve. Much of the plains wildlife have drifted to the high ground on our southern boundary leaving lovely Giraffe herds on the central plains.

Many young are born during this month of plentiful food recourses and we have seen female Warthogs emerging from their furrows with little ones. Ostrich adults strut over their grassland ranges with youngsters only two feet tall in tow.

The Grumeti river has been flowing strong, bursting its banks on one occasion this month and spilling over onto the adjacent flood plains filling the seasonal pans and gullies.

A sightings snapshot for November:

Lion:

- Some fantastic Lion sightings this month.
- The Butamtam pride sightings have been on fire! Lots of active little cubs laying with their elders on top of Koroya hill. A back drop of nothing but rolling plains and woodlands.
- The six Butamtam male Lion coalition bonds remain strong.
- We have had some great sightings of the Nyasirori pride close to Sabora camp.
- The West pride have been observed on a number of occasions on the Raho drainage close to Marula Explore Camp.
- There has been some great Lion activity on Sasakwa hill especially at the beginning of the month when their were good Zebra numbers on the hill.
- Two impressive male Lions were seen on the northern base of Sasakwa hill one early morning.
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Leopard:

- Leopard sightings this month have been good.
- The Mbogo drainage male has popped up on a number of occasions close to FF lodge
- Sightings of a female just upstream of Mbega bridge have been reasonably common. She is new to the area and we are taking the time to get to know her.
- A young male was spotted on the Rhino Rocks this month with a Warthog kill in a Sausage tree. This is a shy individual that we have observed now for 14 months or so.
- The large shy male of Sabora drainage has been seen a handful of times this month on the Sabora drainage.
- The Grumeti North females daughter had been sighted on the Mbogo drainage this month.

Cheetah:

- Cheetah sightings this month have been a little challenging as the Cheetah move south in search of favourable prey. Many Gazelle can now be found on the high ground in the South of the reserve and Cheetah will follow this food source deep into the Serengeti national park from time to time.
- The male Cheetah of the Sasakwa plains (Opening Journal picture by Peter Chatama) has offered some lovely sightings here in the central area.
- A female had been sighted hunting Thompsons Gazelle on the Nyasirori high ground during the middle of the month. She is believed to have moved south now into the national park.
- Two young males were seen on the Gambaranyera plains at the beginning of the month.

Elephant:

- Elephant herds have been fantastic in the central regions. Later in the month huge aggregations sighted on the Pofu plain, northern Ikorongo.
- Large bulls sighted just north of Fort Ikoma hill.
- There have been some lovely Elephant numbers in the west, close to Marula Explore
- As the lower grassland areas become wetter and lushier the Elephants are making themselves at home and hold for many days at a time feeding comfortably.
- Many matriarchal herds sighted with lots of young individuals.
- Some reasonable Elephant activity on Sasakwa hill this month.

Buffalo:

- Large Buffalo herds sighted on the grasslands all over the reserve.
- A noticeable shift in some of the larger herds as they too move to higher ground in search of more favourable conditions and food availability.
- Some fantastic herds of Buffalo bulls sighted up to thirty individuals at times.
- Good Buffalo bull numbers in and around the Sasakwa hill.

Rhino:

- All Rhino are safe, in good health and accounted for.

Other Interesting Sightings:

- A Serval had been sighted south of Pundamilia Hill
- A Caracal sighted this month close to Sasakwa dam.
- Southern Ground Hornbills nesting on the Grumeti River
- Huge numbers of Open Bill Stork from sighted from the western plains through to the Ikorongo. Impressive
- Honey Badgers were sighted on two separate occasions. A mother and youngster close to Pimbi scout camp in the Ikorongo and an adult pair sighted on the spine road just south of Bangwezi.
- Bat eared Fox and three pups sighted at their burrow at the base of the southern side of Pundamilia hill.
- Oribi individuals sighted in various locations in the Ikorongo

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

“Nesting Southern Ground Hornbills on the Grumeti River” by George Tolchard

The Southern Ground Hornbill is a very special bird. Listed as vulnerable within its range, it is always interesting and worthwhile keeping up to date with movements and sightings. We have been incredibly lucky this last month to witness this incredible bird nesting on the Grumeti River.

The birds are utilising a large hollow in a sycamore fig tree on the banks of the river just downstream of Pelican Pan. The female has been incubating eggs now for almost a month and we are very excited with the possibility of a chick soon! The female sits quietly in the nest hole whilst the male and other family members forage. They return with food regularly and feed the female, keeping her strong and healthy. She is likely to stay in the nest with the chick for at least another 30 – 40 days. Only once the chick is a little older and stronger will she leave the nest hole for the first time in two months.

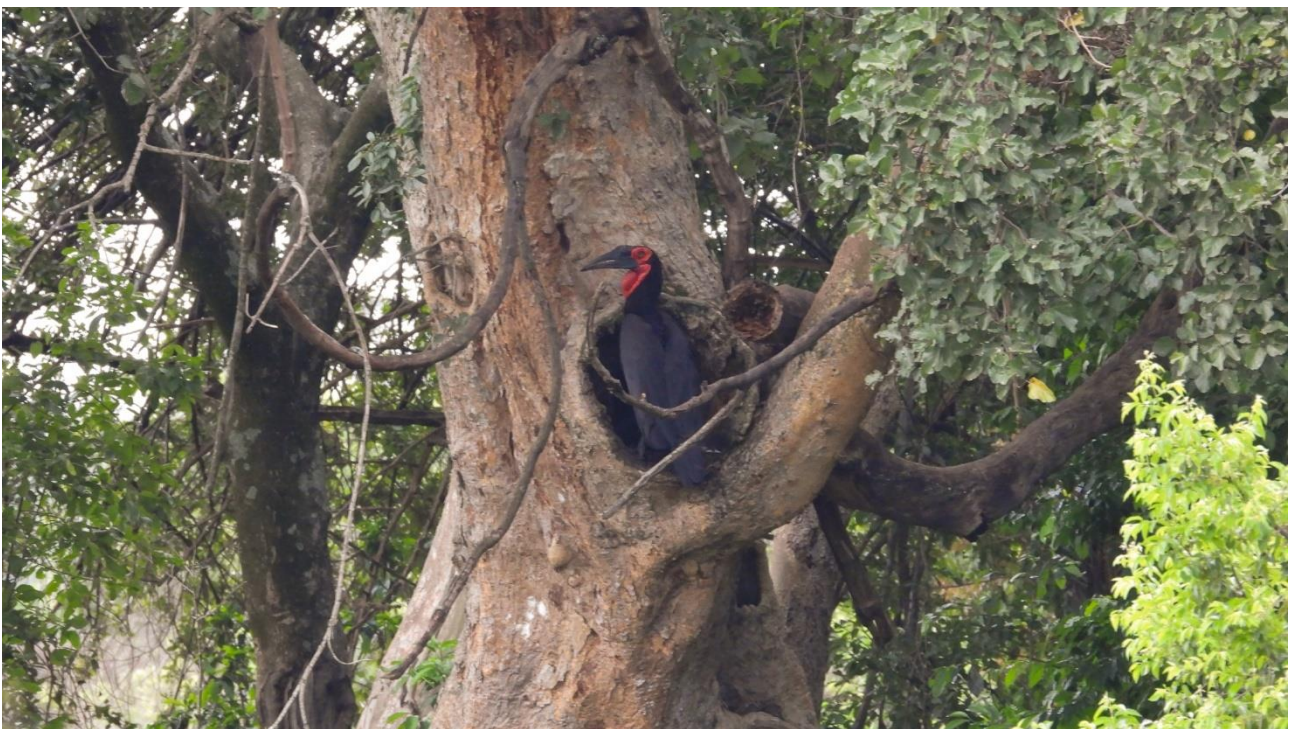
Southern Ground Hornbills are known as cooperative breeders, meaning that the entire family assist the breeding pair when it comes to nesting. The success of the breeding pair is largely due to this family cohesion and effort from all family members to help and support.

These fantastic birds can be seen out and about foraging on the ground during the day. Walking the grasslands and thickets their sharp eyes pick up food items such as lizards, snakes, large insects, and even small mammals from time to time.

They have incredibly powerful bills of which they are able to dispatch prey items quickly and efficiently.



The male returning to the nest with food items for the female. Look at those white primary feathers seen whilst in flight! Pictures captured by Emma Wilson



The male perched at the nest after delivering food to his lady friend.

The next month or so is going to be very interesting as we see the development of the chick. We anticipate, should they be successful, the chick fledging the nest towards the end of January. We will continue to observe, photograph and document and keep you all posted.

We are very excited and hope that this breeding pair are successful in rearing the youngster.

“Leopards & Others of the Lamai” by Silas Shayo

The Lamai Triangle has offered some fantastic Leopard sightings this month. Guides exploring the drainage line close to camp have often sighted Leopard in the area. The pictures below were captured by Silas Shayo. A young female that is resident in the area.



I watched her hunting for two hours one afternoon, as she descended from a Desert Date Tree. She was not successful and eventually climbed back up into a Shepards tree to rest. My guests and I watched her cover about a kilometre or so as she worked the drainage line looking for prey. She is a lovely relaxed individual who is not worried by our presence. A real privilege to observe!



A lone Topi gains a little height here on a Termite mound. Picture by Silas Shayo

Topi are well known for their Termite mound habits. By acquiring a height advantage, the animals are able to view the surrounding area that bit more efficiently and are able to gauge danger at a distance. Topi are often great indicators of predators in the area as they will noticeably stand to attention staring at the threat. When you see this behaviour out in the field, look closely, as there maybe some Lions close by!

During the breeding season Topi will advertise to one another and a Termite mound makes for a lovely, elevated stage to put on the show! Males will secure small territories and advertise to the females. If the females like what they see then they may just hang around within the males arena.

Topi congregate in huge herds and we are lucky enough to see resident Topi all through the year up in the Lamai Triangle. Many have youngsters currently of about two months old.

They are very powerful runners and exceptionally fast making them difficult prey to catch. Lions and Cheetah will hunt Topi, however, they are challenging prey species to catch.



An adult Martial Eagle perches on a Termite mound. Picture captured by Silas Shayo

If you look closely, you will see that there is a little blood on the right talon and the bird's crop is full. The bulge on the Eagle's throat is known as the crop. This is used as a pouch to store food before entering the digestive system. This allows the eagle to consume large amounts of food quickly and save a little for later!

The Martial Eagle is one of Africa's largest birds of prey, an incredibly powerful predator, able to bring down prey as large as young Impala. A favoured food source is Guinea Fowl and the Eagle can be seen hunting them from time to time out on the open plains.

November Gallery of Image



A lovely capture of a Buffalo bull out on the Sasakwa plains. Picture by Calson Luka



A playful bull mounts a young cow on the Sasakwa plains. Picture by Calson Luka



Butamtam youngsters photographed here by Calson Luka on Koroya hill



A lovely Blue – headed Tree Agama captured here at Mara River Tented Camp. Picture by George Tolchard



Two young Giraffe captured out in the Western region of the reserve.

Picture by Adas Shemboko



A beautiful Aerangis Orchid flowering here on the Nyabehu crossing. These pretty orchids only flower once a year and November is the month! Picture by George Tolchard

Report Compiled by George Tolchard