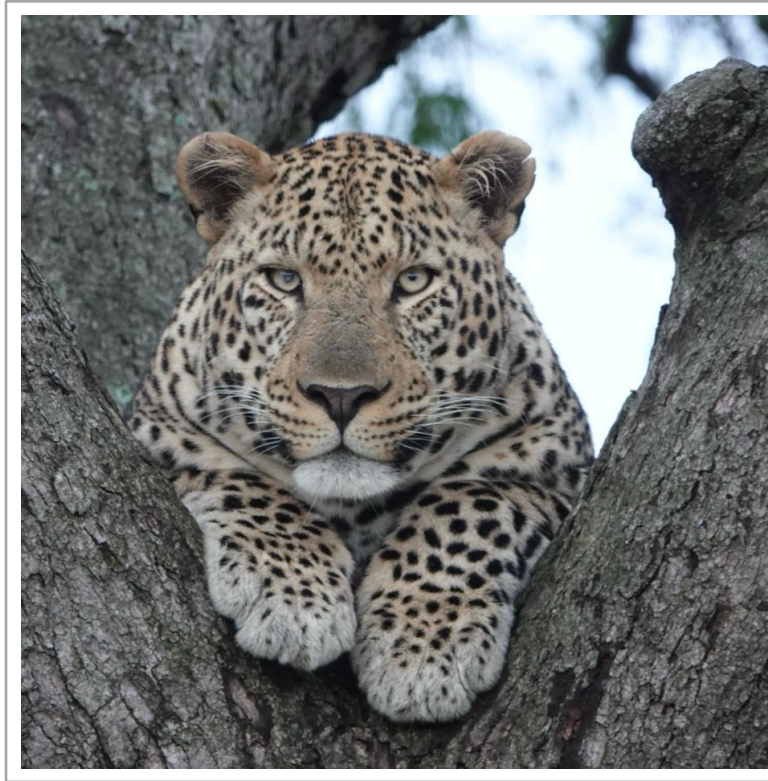


Singita



WILDLIFE REPORT **SINGITA GRUMETI & LAMAI, TANZANIA** **For the month of October, Two Thousand and Twenty Four**

Temperature

Average minimum: 20°C (68.0°F)
Average maximum: 32°C (89.6°F)
Minimum recorded: 19°C (66.2°F)
Maximum recorded: 36°C (96.8°F)

Rainfall Recorded

Grumeti 79.2 mm
Lamai 70.0 mm

Sunrise & Sunset

Sunrise 06:25
Sunset 18:33

October has been a month to remember here on the Grumeti Reserve. The landscape, which started the month looking dry and bare, transformed almost overnight. Early rains softened the earth, and soon, the plains burst into life, covered in fresh green grass, a clear invitation to grazers to come and feed. Vast herds of wildebeest, zebras, and other animals are making their journey southward. The reserve is alive with movement, and the migrating animals bring with them a heightened presence of predators.

Eland gathered in large herds for calving season. The area north of Faru Faru Lodge and Fort Ikoma airstrip were full of young calves staying close to their mothers. The little ones brought a lively energy, sometimes hopping and skipping along as they got used to their new surroundings.

At Lamai October was very popular for wildebeest crossings from north to south as the herds continue their journey to the southern Serengeti. A lot of the crossing were witnessed between Crossing Zero and Three, with numerous crocodile attacks. Guides and guests didn't need to go far to see crossings.

October sightings snapshot for Grumeti:

Lions

The lions this month were truly remarkable, and we experienced some fascinating encounters in the reserve. With the migration passing through all our lions are in very good condition.

- Butamtam Pride spent their time around Koroya Hill, Chui drainage, and Pundamilia Hill, rarely north of Fort Ikoma.
- Kombre Pride is getting stronger and stronger. They roamed along Kombre drainage, the rhino boma, and the open plains north of OP 2. Their 11 cubs are doing well and are healthy.
- Ridge Pride have extended their territory as they are seen at Sasakwa Dam area, Ridge Hill, Sabora Access, all the way to Old Rubana Link and Mak Link areas. Their cubs have grown to sub-adult stage.
- Nyasirori Pride are seen south of Nyasirori Ranger Post, Nyasirori high ground and along the Serengeti boundary line.
- Sabora Pride, recently formed with a coalition of four lions and six lionesses, was seen along Sabora drainage, the morum pit and Fisi plain, continue to do well as they establish their territory around Sabora area.
- Mkuyu Pride has split up and we keep seeing two to six individuals spending time in between Mbogo drainage, Grumeti River and Grumeti north drainage.

Leopards

Leopard sightings were extraordinary this month.

- Mbogo drainage female and her two cubs continue to be seen for the most part of the month along the drainage both upstream and downstream from Fort Ikoma. All three animals are doing well and cubs are relaxed.
- Mother and one cub were sighted along Raho drainage upstream of the Kigelia Crossing.
- We had great sightings of the big male at Arab Camp thicket. He is not seen often simply because of his unusual style of lying down in the grass or bushes.
- We had a full grown skittish male seen under the culvert west of Sasakwa, and at the end of the month he was seen feeding on a buffalo carcass along Farasi Road.
- The Serengeti Hill male was seen along the Den-site Road, and he entered an abandoned hyenas' burrow.

Cheetahs

With the green grass and gazelles filling up the open plains we experienced a lot more cheetah sightings.

- Junior Veteran was seen around Old School areas, Pundamilia areas, Nyati plain and Sabora plain.
- A new young female was seen south of marsh area, and north of OP 2. Another female was seen in the Albizia woodland.
- Various territorial adult males were out patrolling.
- The mother and one sub-adult female cub were seen west of Sabora Camp.

Elephants

- Sasakwa Dam is one of the best places to view large herds during the day as they come to drink, and we also had large herds up on Sasakwa Hill few times in the month.
- Good sightings were had elsewhere, especially around the permanent water sources.

Buffalos

- Large herds seen on the Sabora plain, Sasakwa plain, Gambaranyera plain, Romoti Triangle and along the river system.
- Relatively small herd around Faru areas mostly seen west of Faru Access.

Rhinos

- Eric and Laikipia were seen moving around together for more than a week, in the middle of the month, and Zaitun continues to grow in body size and strength.

Other interesting sightings

Grumeti Reserve was alive with Intra-African and Palearctic migrant birds this month. It was the best month for bird viewing on the open plains, woodland and the riverine areas. Some of the specials included: black cuckooshrike, African cuckoo, northern wheatear, European roller, European bee-eater, Steppe eagle, Wahlberg eagle, African golden oriole and pallid harrier.

October sightings snapshot for Lamai:

Wildebeest migration

There were two medium-sized herds, one seen along Kampikampi plain and the other one seen often near the Maasai Mara and Serengeti boundary.

Lions

- Kigelia Pride has been the highlight, consisting of 12 members - two adult males, seven adult females, and three cubs. They were mostly viewed for the whole month along Korongo la Kigelia and Korongo la Fisi.

Leopards

- The old male leopard known as “Kunta”, which means hard, is very popular for his resilience in the area because of his ability to survive around lions and hyenas. He was viewed often along Kenyangaga drainage, having established himself as a resident between Mara River Tented Camp and Daraja Jeusi.

Cheetahs

- There was single male cheetah seen near the Maasai Mara and Serengeti boundary.

Elephants

- Elephant sightings were abundant, with large herds passing through the camp and even crossing the river in front of the camp. Many elephants gathered along Daraja Mbili drainage and the Kampikampi plains.

Plains game

- There were some lovely herds of topis, gazelles, elands and giraffes observed scattered around Kenyangaga ranger post areas and Kampikampi plains.

Other interesting sightings

- A relaxed female serval was seen, making us to think she has a den around the area, and we hope to see her kittens soon.

Some short bush stories follow as well as the October Gallery.

Mating calls

By Adas Shemboko

On one of our morning game drives in October, we had an unforgettable encounter with a remarkable male cheetah known as Junior Veteran, who exhibited fascinating behaviour. It was early, around 6:30 am, when we first spotted him scanning the open plains in search of a receptive female. His meowing calls echoed as he moved steadily across the terrain, using termite mounds and trees to gain a better vantage point.

We followed him closely for several hours, captivated by his persistence, yet that morning, luck was not on his side as there was no female in sight. At one point, we even turned off the vehicle to listen carefully, hoping to catch any sound that might indicate a response from a female nearby, though perhaps it was beyond our range of hearing.



Junior Veteran cheetah up in a tree, looking for a receptive female cheetah.

As the morning wore on and brunch time approached, we decided to return to the lodge. However, the next day, our luck turned. We found Junior Veteran again, and this time, not far from him, there was a female. While we didn't witness the actual mating, we were confident it had taken place. Witnessing Junior Veteran's determined quest and vocalisations was an unforgettable experience. May he soon be the sire of a healthy litter of cubs.

Big bird bonuses



Martial eagle feeding on a Nile monitor lizard. Pictured by Peterlis Kibwana.

It was one cool October morning, we set off from Sasakwa to look for a pride of lions in the Kombre drainage. The early light made everything glow as we moved slowly along, searching for any sign of the big cats. Suddenly, we spotted a large bird, a martial eagle perched low on a branch, watching us closely.

We stopped the vehicle to see what the eagle was up to. For a few minutes, she stared right at us, her eyes sharp and focused. Then, without warning, she looked away, turning her attention to something on the ground below. We followed her gaze and saw a massive lizard, a Nile monitor, nearly as long as a person's arm.

Before we knew it, the eagle launched herself at the lizard, attacking with her strong legs and sharp talons. The lizard fought back, lashing out with its thick tail, but the eagle was too determined. She bit and kicked, refusing to give up. The battle went on and on for a long time, and finally, the lizard went still.

We thought the eagle would start eating right there, but she had a different plan. She grabbed the heavy lizard and flew to a nearby tree, showing off her strength. Once safely perched, she began her meal.

We were all amazed at the sight - the sheer power of that bird lifting such a big lizard was incredible! It was a reminder of just how strong and skilled raptors can be.



Pale morph Wahlberg's Eagle Pictured by Robert Kibwana

One sunny afternoon, deep in the Grumeti Reserve, we spotted something truly special. Perched high on a tall tree branch was a pale coloured bird of prey – a rarity in these parts. Thanks to binoculars and knowledge we identified it as a pale morph Wahlberg's eagle. The small crest on its head gives it a unique look.

Wahlberg's eagles are common travellers across Africa, usually seen in darker colours, but this pale one was extraordinary. For Grumeti, it was the first time anyone had ever seen one. In South Africa, pale morphs make up 5 to 13% of their population, but here, this one stood out as the only one ever recorded.

The pale morph Wahlberg's was busy, scanning the grasslands below. It was looking for a meal, whether a small reptile, bird, or even a big insect. It can hunt both from its perch and in flight, with incredible skill.

The sighting was a reminder of how unique and surprising the wild can be, with even familiar animals showing up in rare forms. The guides were thrilled, and news of the sighting spread like wildfire, bringing excitement to all who saw this remarkable bird of prey.

Struggle for survival: A night of mystery

By James Ikamba

It was a beautiful evening with everything bathed in a warm, golden light as I guided my guests along a quiet trail. Just as we were soaking up the peaceful surroundings, something caught my eye. It was a massive python, wrapped tightly around an impala. This was a rare sight indeed. I signalled for everyone to stay quiet, and we watched as the impala struggled one last time before it went still. The python then began the slow, steady work of trying to swallow its prey, stretching its jaws over the impala's body inch by inch.



We watched for nearly an hour and a half, completely absorbed in this raw moment of nature. Then, just when I thought it couldn't get any more intense, Paulo radioed in. He'd spotted a female leopard, about a hundred yards away, lying in a balanitis tree. She hadn't noticed the python, but her watchful gaze hinted she was vigilant and aware of her surroundings. Just then, we heard the chilling calls of a clan of hyenas, six of them, getting closer and ready for a meal.

The air was thick with suspense, but as night closed in, we decided it was time to go. On the drive back, my guests couldn't stop talking. Some thought the hyenas would take over and steal the impala, while others pictured the leopard swooping in for a double meal, the python and the impala.

The next morning, we couldn't resist returning to the scene to see what might've happened. To our surprise, the impala was gone, without any sign of a struggle. As I looked around, I noticed fresh paw prints, the unmistakable tracks of two male lions. They were lying down about 20 yards away, and we all guessed they might have taken an interest in the impala carcass.

Then, just as we were about to leave, I noticed a faint drag mark. I followed it and found the python again, belly noticeably full, struggling to pull itself toward a nearby bush. Somehow, despite all the hungry predators around, it had managed to keep its meal. Once again, the Grumeti had given us a glimpse of its secrets, a reminder of the delicate balance of survival and resilience that shapes life in the wild.

Twitter



Grey breasted spurfowl. Pictured by Paulo Kivuyo.



The vibrant lilac-breasted roller perches gracefully on a tree branch, its keen eyes scanning the ground below for potential prey. Pictured by Paulo Kivuyo.

October Gallery



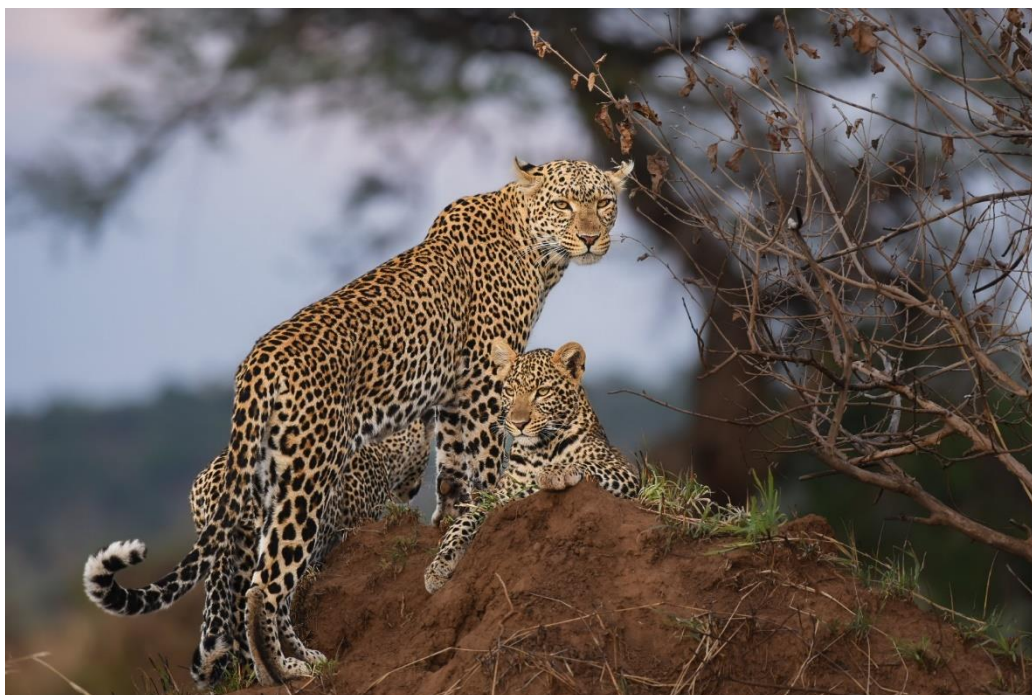
Elephants engage in playful activities like wrestling, chasing, and trunk-twisting, which strengthens family bonds and reinforces social cohesion within the herd. Pictured by Paulo Kivuyo.



Two lionesses from the Butamtam Pride were observed hunting wildebeest with focused intensity. Pictured by Paul Kivuyo.



One of the Ridge Pride lions captured walking across Sabora plains, with a hot air balloon floating silently above him. Pictured by John Ngowi.



Mbogo drainage female leopard and her cubs on a mound, north of Faru Faru Lodge. Pictured by Paulo Kivuyo.



Mbogo female leopard cubs up in a tree, taking a full view on their surroundings.
Pictured by Clinton Kilite



Mother and her sub-adult female cub cheetahs on the Sabora plain. Pictured by Adas Shemboko



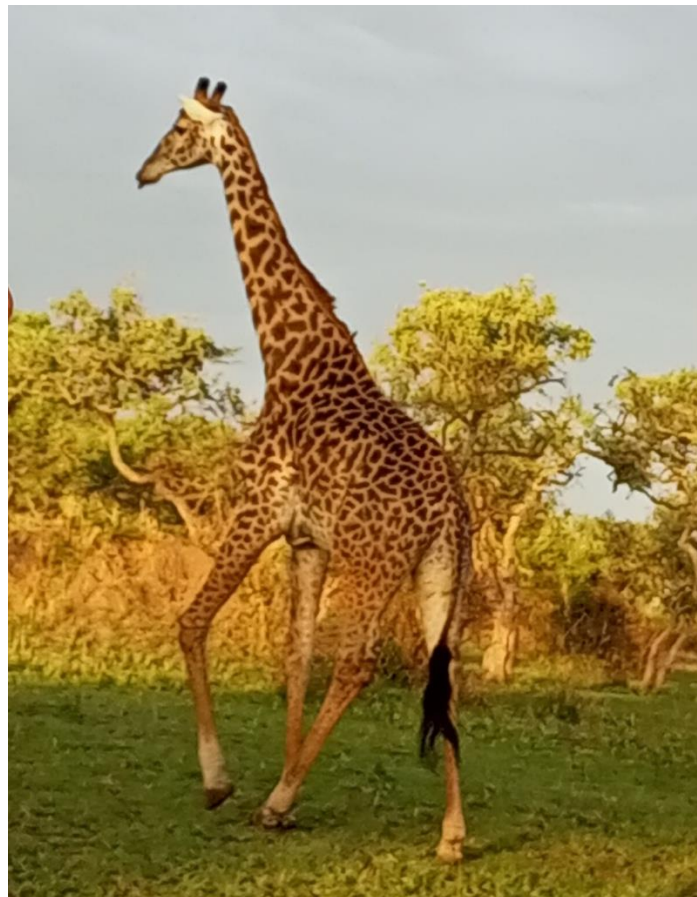
Single female cheetah captured a baby gazelle on the Sabora plain. Pictured by Paulo Kivuyo.



Male impala patrolling his territory with the beautiful blue sky in the background. Pictured by Paulo Kivuyo.



The zebras stand alert, all gazing in the same direction, as if they've spotted a lurking predator.
Pictured by Paulo Kivuyo.



A male giraffe moving in slow motion across the savannah. Pictured by John Ngowi.



Massive herds of wildebeest plunge into the Mara River near Mara River Tented Camp.
Pictured by Robert Kibwana.



The resident male leopard of the Mara River Tented Camp region. Pictured by Bernard Hosea.



Migratory wildebeests matching towards the Mara River, moving southwards. Pictured by Bernard Hosea.