

Singita



WILDLIFE REPORT SINGITA GRUMETI & LAMAI, TANZANIA For the month of January, Two Thousand and Twenty Five

Temperature

Average minimum: 16°C (62.6°F)
Average maximum: 30°C (84.2°F)
Minimum recorded: 15°C (60.8°F)
Maximum recorded: 33°C (87.8°F)

Rainfall Recorded

Grumeti: 82.9 mm
Lamai: 116.0 mm

Sunrise & Sunset

Sunrise: 06:49
Sunset: 19:02

In January, the weather has generally been dry, except for the last few days of the month. After a brief rain in December, the heat and moisture on the ground helped create the perfect conditions for grass to grow quickly. This rapid growth has attracted herds of plains game, such as topi, eland, Thomson's gazelles and zebras, who are now seeking refuge in areas where the grass is shorter. These areas, located southwest and west of Sasakwa Hill, are part of a watershed. The land in these areas remains dry, but the grass stays short and green, making it a desirable spot for the animals. The combination of the dry ground and fresh, short grass provides the herds with the food they need, and they are drawn to these areas for better grazing conditions. The changing weather patterns and the quick growth of grass have created an interesting shift in where the animals are choosing to stay and feed.

A sightings snapshot for Grumeti and Lamai each, follows.

January sightings snapshot for Grumeti:

Lions

January has been an exciting month for lion sightings, with plenty of activity across the property as resident prides have been spotted in various areas.

- The Sabora Pride was primarily sighted west of Sabora Camp throughout January, stretching all the way to the Marula Bush Breakfast site. Their six cubs are healthy and growing well.
- The Momukomule Pride has mainly been seen within their territory, east of Sasakwa Lodge, although they occasionally ventured close to the community grazing boundary.
- The Ridge Pride was spotted a few times east of Ridge Hill. Their new cubs were rarely seen, as they were kept well-hidden on a hill. We believe the cubs are doing well, though it's difficult to access the area.
- The Nyasirori Pride spent most of the month along the boundary between the Serengeti and the Grumeti Concession, areas rich in prey availability.
- The Butamtam Pride has been moving around the Serengeti border south of Sasakwa Lodge, likely due to pressure from the males of the Momukomule Pride.

Leopards

Despite the tall grass this month, we had some incredible leopard sightings:

- The Momukomule male leopard was frequently seen south of the Momukomule drainage, east of Sasakwa Hill.
- The Raho female and her cub were sighted less often, mostly around the Raho drainage near the Serengeti border.
- The Boundary Pan female, with her subadult female cub, has been frequently spotted at the border of Serengeti National Park.
- The Mbogo drainage female and her two cubs were often seen east of Faru Faru Lodge.

Cheetahs

Due to the heavy rains and tall grass in some areas, the general game has moved to higher ground, which has also attracted the cheetahs to these spots.

- The well-known Junior Veteran was seen on the southern side of Sabora, patrolling the territory on the plains in search of food.
- A female cheetah and her nearly full-grown cub were spotted near the Serengeti boundary. The cub is almost as large as the mother and will soon be weaned.

Elephants

- January continued to bring large matriarchal herds roaming the vast plains in significant numbers throughout the reserve. It was common to spot herds of around 100 elephants at once. The plains of Sasakwa, west of Sabora Camp, and along the Grumeti River were especially alive with these majestic pachyderms.

Buffalo

- A large herd has been roaming Sasakwa Plain throughout January, and another sizable herd was seen north of Faru Faru Lodge.
- Further east of Sasakwa Plains, another large herd has been sighted in the marsh areas.
- Sabora Plain also had a large herd seen to the north and south of Sabora Camp.
- As usual, Kawanga Plain had the largest herd to the west of Balanitis Explore Camp.
- West of Faru Faru, another large herd has been roaming along the Grumeti River.

Rhinos

The male eastern black rhino has been frequently seen on his own on the south-eastern side of the sanctuary, roaming in good health.

January sightings snapshot for Lamai:

Lions

- The Kigelia Pride, the dominant pride in the area, was frequently sighted within their territory just south of the border between the Serengeti and Maasai Mara.
- The Mawe Meusi Pride was often seen near the northern side of the Triangle, close to the border.
- The Daraja Mbili Pride spent more time east of Daraja Mbili and was frequently spotted further upstream of the drainage.

Cheetahs

January has been excellent for cheetah sightings in the Lamai Triangle:

- The coalition of three brothers are still ruling the eastern side of the Lamai Triangle, between Korongo La Fisi and Korongo La Kigelia.
- Meanwhile, the coalition of two brothers has established territory west of Chaka La Masanja and east of the Daraja Mbili drainage.

Elephants

- Magnificent herds were sighted on nearly every game drive, often along the drainage lines and open plains near Kampikampi campsite.

Buffalo

With the migratory wildebeest quieter this month, herds of buffalo have established themselves on the plains of the Lamai wedges:

- One herd spent time along Korongo La Fisi, near the Maasai Mara border.
- Another herd was frequently seen along Korongo La Kigelia.
- A large herd also spent time along the Mara River, west of Mara River Tented Camp.

Plains game

- The plains were teeming with large herds of zebras, topis, elands, gazelles, and resident wildebeest - making it the best spot for game viewing.

Other interesting sightings

- Large flocks of wattled starlings were observed, with the males starting to wear their breeding plumage.

Some bush stories follow, as well as our January Gallery.

Cheetah clues

Sometimes the best way to find cheetahs is to let someone else do it for you! In both these cases that “someone” was a giraffe, their long necks and keen eyesight making them excellent spotters.



Scanning the grasslands for cheetahs. Picture by Saitoti Olekuwai

Story by Clinton Sengenge

It was an afternoon drive from Sabora with the goal of relocating a mother cheetah and her cub. We drove around the area where they had been left in the morning for about 30 minutes, but we had no luck. However, we did spot a journey of about 10 giraffes, roughly 200 metres away. They were all staring in one direction. I looked back at my guests and said, "I think the giraffes are looking at something. There might be something here, possibly what we're looking for."

As we got closer, we found the mother cheetah and her cub, both resting and looking for something to hunt. Little did we know, we would end up witnessing them hunt just 20 minutes later! They successfully took down an impala lamb, which was incredible to witness.

Story by Paul Kivuyo

We were on a drive looking for the grey-breasted spurfowl, which is an endemic bird of Tanzania. Luckily we managed to find it. As we watched the birds searching for food in elephant dung, we noticed a group of giraffes standing still, staring in one direction. Their alert posture meant a predator could be nearby.

So, we drove closer to see what was happening and soon we spotted two cheetahs – the mother with one cub, moving through the grass, searching for prey. As they reached Fisi Plain, they found plenty of gazelles, topi, eland and impalas. Among them was a mother gazelle nursing her baby.

The mother cheetah began to stalk, using termite mounds for cover. But the mother gazelle saw her and gave an alarm. She ran off, while the baby dropped down to hide. The cheetah walked to where the gazelle had been but couldn't see the fawn. She keeps scanning around the area and after a few minutes, the baby gazelle twitched its ears. The cheetah noticed it and immediately started to run towards it. The baby tried to escape, but the cheetah was too fast and caught it. She played with it for a while, and as she did, her cub made its way to her. The mother then let her cub take over, allowing it to practice hunting as a vital skill for survival. The mother gazelle stood at a distance, watching helplessly.

There is a Swahili saying: “Mtoto wa mwenzio ni wako” which means your neighbour’s child is your own. But in the wild, that rule does not apply.

In the heart of Grumeti Reserves, a majestic rhinoceros named Eric roams the hills covered with thorny bushes. Unlike other animals that graze on tender grasses, Eric has developed a taste for the thorny acacias dotting the landscape. His fascination with these uninviting trees comes from his ancestors, who skilfully tore down branches to reveal the sweet, succulent leaves hidden beneath the thorns.

One cloudy morning, while on a game drive, we were fortunate to spot Eric. While other herbivores munched on easier meals, he approached a towering acacia, its branches heavy with green foliage. As he reached out with his strong, flexible lips, he pondered the whispers from other animals: "Why choose thorns when there are so many easier meals?"

Eric smirked. "Because I'm not just any rhino. I'm a connoisseur!" he thought, carefully grasping a branch and tugging it down. The thorns pricked his tough skin, but years of practice made him a master at navigating the tree's defences. He knew that beneath the thorns lay a treasure trove of nutrition few dared to seek.

With each bite, he relished the unique flavour of the acacia leaves - sweet and rich, unlike anything else in the savanna. Other animals often stared in disbelief as he feasted, wondering why he would risk injury for such a daunting meal. For Eric, the thrill of the hunt was part of the experience, and his diet made him stronger and more resilient.

As the clouds began to clear, Eric felt a sense of pride. He had become the king of the acacias, a true gourmet in a world that often settled for the ordinary. While his friends called his meals "expensive," Eric knew they reflected his adventurous spirit.

That morning, as he lay in the shade, Eric realized that the most rewarding paths are often the hardest. The thorns were not just obstacles; they were what made his meals special—an expensive taste that set him apart. In the grand tapestry of Grumeti, he was not just a rhino but a pioneer, savouring the rich flavours of life, one thorny acacia at a time.



January Gallery



A black-backed jackal curious with the camera. Picture by Calson Luca.
Inquisitive young spotted hyena. Picture by Silas Shayo.



The two cubs of Mbogo drainage litter. Picture by Clinton Sengenge.





Nyasirori Pride male doing flehmen. Daniel Samwel.
West Pride members at Gardenia Pan. Pictured by Calson Luca.





Nyasirori pride female with her cub. Picture by Baraka Mtalo.
A lioness and her playful cub of Sabora Pride. Pictured by Paulo Kivuyo.





A tawny eagle taking off to search for another perch. Picture by Silas Shayo.
Two young elephant bulls establishing seniority on Sasakwa plains. Pictured by Calson Luka.

