Singita

WILDLIFE REPORT
SINGITA GRUMETI, TANZANIA
For the month of October, Two Thousand and Fifteen

Temperature
Average maximum: 31˚C (89˚F)
Average minimum: 19˚C (64,4˚F)

Rainfall Recorded
Sasakwa: 145 mm
Faru Faru: 78,5 mm
Samaki: 175,6 mm
Risiriba: 72 mm

Sunset & Sunrise
Sunrise: 06:25
Sunset: 18:35

Lions:
Lots of lion activity in October with 77 separate sightings for the month.

The Butamtam pride, its territory now spanning from Sasakwa to Faru Faru, dominated the majority of the sightings. All of the Butamtam lions were 'fat and happy' in October, as a lack of water sources combined with large amounts of game provided excellent hunting conditions. Rare was the sighting reported where the lions didn't have a kill with them. The two newest members of the Butamtam pride, three-month-old

cubs, were seen often accompanied by two adult lionesses on the Sasakwa hill helicopter pad.

There were also many sightings of the Nyasirori and Ridge prides around Sabora in the west.

Leopards:
Leopard activity was good in October, with sightings evenly spread out throughout the property. Leopards also benefitted from the good numbers of game on the concession and were seen often with carcasses up trees.

Cheetahs:

The mother cheetah and her two young cubs were spotted regularly in October. They mainly stayed in the Arab Camp, Rhino Rocks, and Marsh areas in between Sasakwa and Faru Faru.

Elephants:
Elephant sightings stayed consistent for the month. The majority of sightings were in the Faru Faru area and along the Grumeti River.

Migration:
Herds of zebra and wildebeest, in their thousands, were scattered throughout the concession, providing ample general game food resources for the local predators.

Life and death at Sasakwa Dam

The dry season continued into the first three weeks of October and water sources decreased. The thousands of migratory herds of wildebeest and zebra moving through Singita Grumeti on their journey back south, flocked to one of the only few water points left on the property – Sasakwa Dam.

Wildebeest and zebra drink, on average, about 10 to 15 litres of water per day and, as mentioned before, there were thousands of them at Sasakwa Dam. With all the thirsty mouths to quench the water level of the dam decreased significantly. The three resident Sasakwa Dam hippos had a hard time staying fully submerged under the dropping water level and soon exiled themselves to the south-western corner, the only area where the water was still deep enough for them to be content.

The concentration of animals around the dam made for some exciting, albeit sad, game viewing. The area became a location of contradiction: one of the few places that provided life-giving water yet an increased risk of death. The Butamtam pride waited on the banks for animals to come drink, leaving chaos in its wake.

The zebras and wildebeests had to drink out of the dam or risk dying of thirst. The lions had to do little more than sit and wait, and the rest was easy. Guide Braya witnessed the pride make six kills before 10 AM one morning! At one point more than ten wildebeest carcasses, all killed by the pride, lay in different locations around the dam. Some of the carcasses were left untouched as the lions were already too full to eat anymore - so the vultures were able to feed in peace for once.

Multiple orphaned zebra foals were also a daily sight, most likely separated from their mothers in the chaos of the chase.

Hoglets!

October is the time for baby warthogs at Singita Grumeti. This is the time when we see them out and about, tails up following behind mom in single file. We had to include this photo taken by Adas this month - these three little piggies that stayed at home were far more fortunate than the one that found itself in the jaws of a lioness (see cover photo).

By Elizabeth Hamrick
Singita Grumeti
Serengeti
Tanzania
Thirty-first of October 2015