

Singita



WILDLIFE REPORT SINGITA GRUMETI TANZANIA For the month of January, Two Thousand and Twenty-Two

Temperature

Average minimum: 18°C (64.4°F)
Average maximum: 31°C (87.8°F)
Minimum recorded: 16°C (60.8°F)
Maximum recorded: 34°C (93.2°F)

Rainfall Recorded

Faru Faru	36 mm
Sabora	30 mm
Sasakwa	68 mm

Sunrise & Sunset

Sunrise	06:50
Sunset	19:01

January has been a phenomenal month, a great start to the year, with the sheer volume of wildlife being astounding. We've enjoyed lovely herds of zebra and topi, along with great herds of eland. The giraffe numbers across the Singita Grumeti have been very impressive too with many youngsters at this time of year.

The Grumeti River has continued to flow, although very low, throughout the month. When the river is low like this it offers so many opportunities to explore the river's magic, whether it be by foot or stopping on the sandy islands for refreshments and watching a scene unveil.

Here's a sightings snapshot for January:

Lion:

- Incredible lion sightings this month with prides hunting in the Grumeti River, prides taking down adult buffalo, and prides of up to 30 individuals lying together on the grasslands. Spectacular!
- The Kawanga Pride in the western reaches of the reserve were observed with 36 members on one occasion.
- The Butamtam Pride have provided great sightings this month, as usual. The many youngsters are doing very well which is fantastic to see.
- Other prides hunting along the Grumeti River have offered great viewing as they ambush wildebeest and zebra as they come down to drink.
- Lion prides in the Ikorongo have shown impressive interactions on the Pofu plains and the Bangwezi Hill region. They have also been spending much time on the banks and sandbars of the river.

Leopard:

- The Grumeti North female is doing very well. And we've had some lovely sightings of her daughter close to the Grumeti River.
- Mbogo drainage, just north of Faru Faru has been particularly productive for leopard viewing this month as we have seen prey species returning to the area. Sabora drainage has also offered some great sightings.
- The large, somewhat shy male leopard is beginning to relax allowing for some great observation.

Cheetah:

- Some great cheetah sightings this month on the central Sasakwa plains and in the Sabora region.
- A mother and her five-months-old cub are doing incredibly well and we have had some really fantastic viewing from these two.
- The Sasakwa male has been hunting actively on the plains south east of Sasakwa Hill and guests have been lucky enough to witness this powerful cheetah bringing down wildebeest and warthog.

Elephant:

- Elephant numbers on the property this month have been awesome as they feed in the vicinity of the Grumeti River, dropping onto the golden sands during the heat of the day to drink.
- Huge aggregations of up to 200 individuals have been seen drinking during the heat of the day at Sasakwa Dam.
- Ikorongo region has seen some incredible herds in the area once again.

Hyena:

- The spotted hyena clans have been well fed this month with the sheer quantity of prey species utilising the area. We often see hyenas hunting together methodically as they single out the weak and injured and proceed to split them from the herds. It's always very interesting to watch them hunting as they really are experts at their game.
- Great hyena interactions have been had with guests in the field this month.
- Very good numbers of hyenas in the marsh area, out west, and on the central plains.

Buffalo:

- The buffalo herds here on the Grumeti Reserve are always impressive.
- The Ikorongo region has seen fantastic buffalo herd movements this month as well as many buffalo bulls along the Grumeti River and the Manchira drainage.

Rhino:

- Rhinos continue to disperse. The majority of individuals have remained in the Serengeti National Park. 30% of the population remains within the Singita Grumeti Reserve.

Bush stories follow as well as the January Gallery of images.

Mating traded for a buffalo meal

By Peter Chatama

On the morning of the 11th we witnessed a fantastic sunrise. We started our morning game drive from Sasakwa Lodge and made our way down onto the Sasakwa plains. We were lucky enough to encounter a mating pair of lions from the Butamtam Pride. We spent about 10 minutes watching them and witnessed copulatory activity. Then, about 15 minutes later, the male lion got up and the female readied herself for a repeat. However, as the male got on top of the female, a bellowing sound was heard from our east side. The lions froze and listened.



The sound came back up again, this time carrying on a little longer. The male lion jumped off the back of the female and the female started running towards where the sound was heard. The two game viewers on site then followed the lions as we could not accurately establish the direction of the sound. The mating pair reached the scene where a fully grown buffalo cow was being suffocated by 5 lionesses of the Butamtam Pride. The mating pair then joined the feast.

Racing stripes

By George Tolchard

We see some incredible markings seen on zebra individuals. The stallion in the top picture overleaf was particularly impressive. We observed both of these animals on the central Sasakwa plains on the same day, towards the end of the month.

It is largely genetics that determine these unusual markings in a zebra's coat, and these genetic mutations that alter the production of melanin are normally rather rare.

Are these incredible differences in markings just by chance or is there something else at work here, affecting the genetic build-up of individuals in particular areas? There have been some fascinating studies on this topic recently, which are very interesting.





A pair of black-and-white-casqued hornbills sighted on the Grumeti River, just north of Bangwezi Hill, Ikorongo.

Photo by George Tolchard

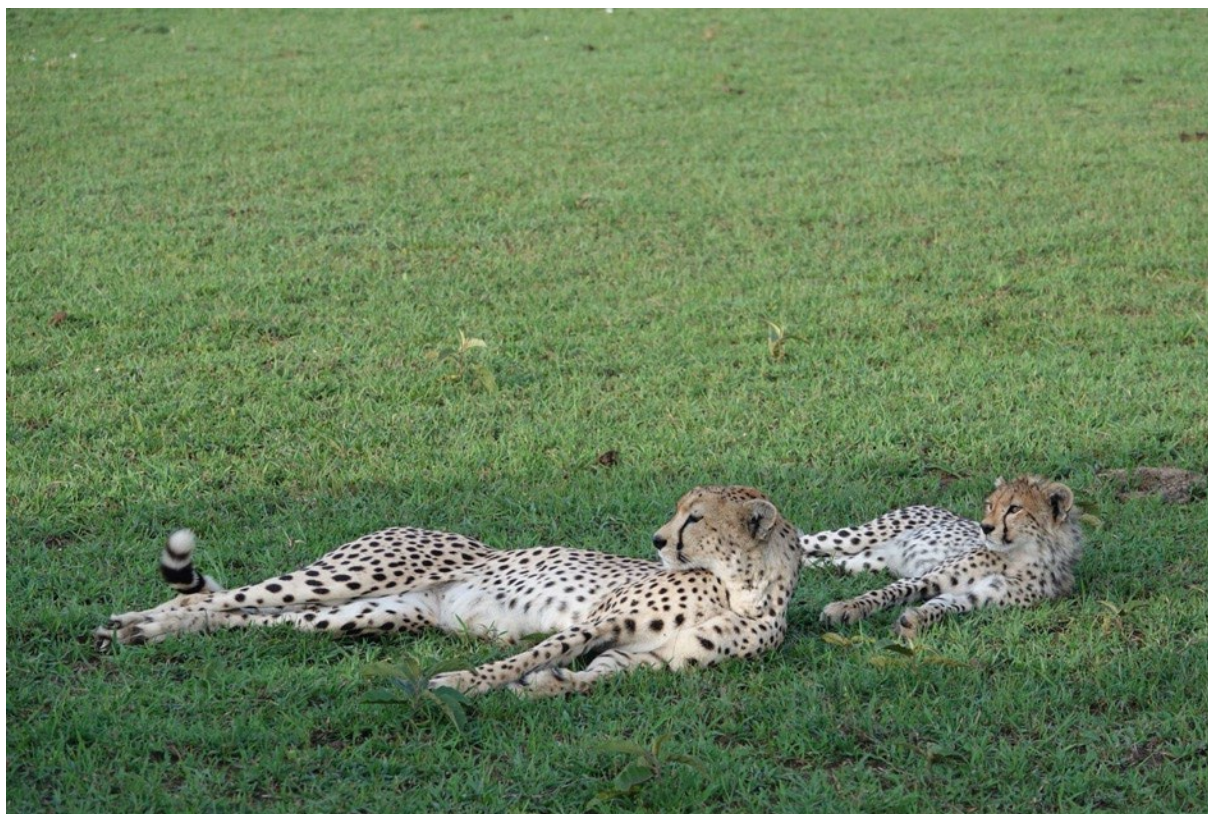
This was quite a discovery as we have never seen these birds quite this far east. The usual distribution for this species is west of Lake Victoria and into the thick forests of Rwanda and Uganda. Another amazing example of how productive the Grumeti River can be, allowing for the movement of species into the Serengeti ecosystem that would perhaps normally not be found here.

A black-and-white-casqued hornbill is a very impressive hornbill, one of the larger species with magnificent white plumage that is really highlighted when the birds are in flight. Notice the huge casque on the male, seen here on the left of the picture.

These casques are probably most commonly used in breeding and when advertising and communicating to each other. The large casque on the upper mandible is certainly striking and may be a sign of male dominance. The casque may be formed from hollow chambers that help to amplify the bird's call through the dense forested environment where the birds live.

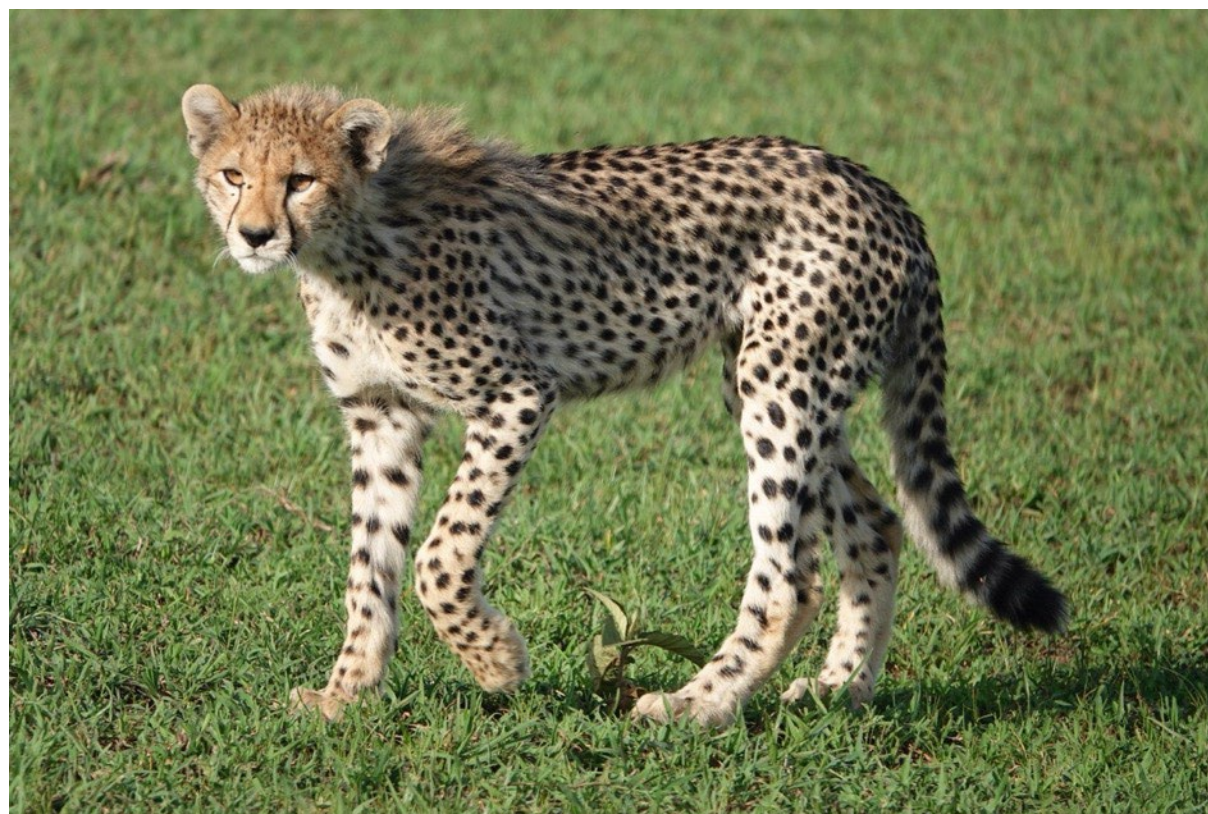
We shall be keeping a very close eye on this species as there are currently no breeding records of this bird here in Tanzania. A really exciting find! The Grumeti River is always full of surprises.

January Gallery



Mother and youngster sighted on the Sasakwa plains in the early afternoon.

Pictures by Bernard Hosea.



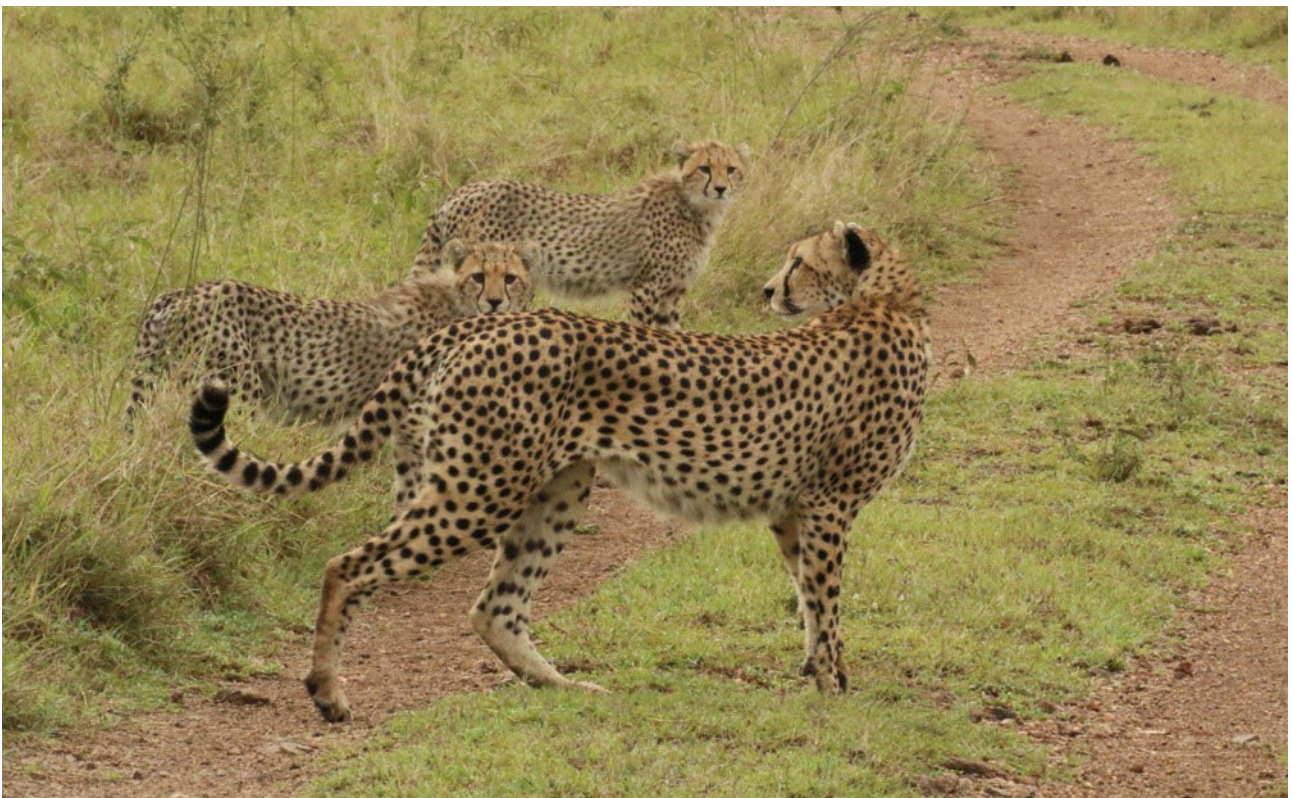


A male cheetah hops up into a fig tree for a better view of the surrounding area.

Picture by Bernard Hosea.

The mother and her youngsters in the Koroya Hill region.

Pictures by Emma Wilson.





An Ikorongo lion pride lying on a sandbar, and lying up on the banks of the Grumeti River.

Picture by George Tolchard.





A Butamtam mating pair on the SSK plain. Picture by Bernard Hosea.
Young lions of the Bangwezi Pride. Picture by George Tolchard.





Top: The Grumeti North female's daughter relaxes in a rain tree close to the German Bridge.
Above: The Mbogo drainage female.

Pictures by Bernard Hosea.



Top Left: Black-winged kite (juvenile)

Top Right: Broad-billed roller

Bottom: Western banded snake eagle
Pictures by George Tolchard