

## Singita Grumeti

Sasakwa & Faru Faru Lodges  
Serengeti House & Sabora Tented Camp  
Explore Mobile Tented Camp  
Tanzania

Singita



(Photo by Saitoti Ole Kuwai)

## Wildlife Report

For the month of December, Two Thousand and Thirteen

### Temperature and Wind

Average maximum

Average minimum

Average wind speed

### Rainfall Recorded

Sasakwa

Sabora

Faru Faru

Samaki

Risiriba

In our October Journal we covered what we were sure was the final time we would see the migration until their return in about June or July. The herds entered our property for about a week, then exited making their way back south. What we never predicted was that they would unexpectedly loop back around. At some point after they left us in October, the bulk of the herds turned back north. In late November, hundreds of thousands were in the northern Serengeti at our Singita Mara River Tented Camp (see our Singita Lamai: Mara River Tented Camp [November Journal](#)).

By the first day of December they were back at Singita Grumeti again, on Sasakwa plains, Sabora plains, and continuing onto the plains West of Sabora Tented Camp. They soon covered the entire property spreading from Sabora to Sasakwa to Faru Faru and further.

Usually in December the wildebeest should be nearing Ndutu in the southern Serengeti, some 85 kilometres south of Singita Grumeti. The best explanation for their postponed journey most likely has to do with the rains, which arrived later than usual in the southern half of the Serengeti and, in turn, delayed the growth of suitable grass for the wildebeest. The herds moved on by the middle of the month, but their time with us produced a variety of exciting spectacles - the stories follow...



(Photo by Ryan Schmitt)



(Photo by Saitoti Ole Kuwai)



(Photo by Ryan Schmitt)



(Above and below photos by Ryan Schmitt)



(Photo by Ryan Schmitt)

## Early arrivals

We mentioned above that normally by early to mid December, the migratory herds should be nearing the short grass plains of Ndutu in the southern-most part of the Serengeti. Ndutu is the calving site for the wildebeest and they will typically spend a few months in the area, giving time for the new babies to build up their strength before they begin their arduous journey north.



(Photo by Ryan Schmitt)

Calves can be expected anywhere from late December to early February, but, like with all things, some babies come earlier! Two early babies were spotted amongst the herds here, and it's hard to say at such a young age whether they will survive the southern trek to Ndutu.



(Photo by Saitoti Ole Kuwai)

Crossings  
(Photos by Ryan Schmitt)

We were lucky enough to see lots of migration crossings on the Grumeti River, which is always a great spectacle!







A gruesome death  
(Photos by Saitoti Ole Kuwai)



Guide Saitoti and his guests were enjoying an afternoon game drive amongst the herds, viewing in awe the amazing spectacle of uncountable wildebeest spreading as far as the eye could see. Saitoti soon noticed commotion amongst the animals not far away, and by the way they were behaving it was clear that something had spooked them.

He drove to the scene of the action to find a hyena had attacked a wildebeest and was beginning to feast.

Unlike most other large African predators (lion, leopard, cheetah), which typically try to kill their prey first, hyenas often start eating their victim alive. No exception was made with this wildebeest, and the hyena was biting into its side while it was still standing!

Luckily the victim goes into shock very early during this process, so it isn't quite as torturous as it looks.

The lone hyena was soon joined by other clan members, who helped finish the job.





## Pangolin

(Photos by Saitoti Ole Kuwai)

Saitoti and guests were lucky enough to experience a truly amazing sighting when they found a pangolin on game drive.



Pangolins are very rare, shy nocturnal creatures and these factors make pangolin sightings arguably the rarest safari goes ever get to see.

Saitoti has been guiding for 11 years. That means two game drives per day for 250 days a year, give or take a few, so Saitoti has guided about 5 500 safari game drives. He has seen a pangolin only three times. No further maths is needed to understand how rare it is to see these interesting creatures!

Pangolins are also referred to as scaly ant-eaters. They have no teeth and their tongue is the same length as from their head to the end of their body (not including the tail).

The name pangolin is a Malay word meaning 'one that rolls up' which they do when threatened, so that only their scaly armour is exposed. A prime example of this is in the photos taken by Saitoti, the perceived threat being the game drive vehicle.

The pangolins native to Singita Grumeti and most of eastern and southern Africa are called long-tailed pangolins.

Even playing field  
(Photos by Ryan Schmitt)

Mutual Assured Destruction or MAD: the widely accepted Cold War nuclear policy of the late 1970s and early 1980s. The idea behind MAD was that nuclear disarmament was not necessary because even though the USA and USSR had lots of nuclear weapons, neither side would use them (attack) for fear of retaliation from the other.



The lionesses and buffalos in these photos have definitely adopted a very similar thought process.

This unlikely group was spotted early one morning behind Sasakwa Lodge, hanging around abnormally close to one another.

The lions lounged in the grass while the buffalo chewed on their cud, both parties aware of the other, but seemingly OK with the situation. The lions would never attempt to take down one of these buffalo as their numbers were too small and they could get seriously injured. The buffalo did not feel the need to charge the lions because they would also run the risk of an uncomfortable war wound. Perhaps this was the reason for their acceptance of each other's close presence?





## Sightings report



(Photo by Saitoti Ole Kuwai)

Lion:	55
Leopard:	18
Cheetah:	25
Elephant:	46
Rhino:	3
Buffalo:	Multiple sightings daily

### Special sightings:

- One civet on Sand Road.
- Multiple crossings of migratory herds across the Grumeti River.
- A hyena killed a wildebeest on WD Road.
- One pangolin on Farasi Road.
- One porcupine on Farasi Road.

By Lizzie Hamrick  
Singita Grumeti  
Serengeti  
Tanzania  
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