

Singita



(Photo by Anthony Nyambacha)

WILDLIFE REPORT SINGITA GRUMETI, TANZANIA For the month of August, Two Thousand and Sixteen

Temperature

Average minimum: 16.2°C (61.2°F)
Average maximum: 30.7°C (87.3°F)
Minimum recorded: 14.4°C (57.9°F)
Maximum recorded: 32.4°C (90.3°F)

Rainfall Recorded

Faru-Faru 0.0mm
Sasakwa 61mm
Sabora 38.4mm

Sunrise & Sunset

Sunrise 06:47
Sunset 18:50

As with the last few days in July, large numbers of resident wildlife occupied the areas along the fast drying pools in the many drainage lines on the concession and in the Grumeti River. We noticed a large influx of zebra at the beginning of the month, and then later on a substantial incursion of migratory wildebeest entering Ikorongo and steadily moving south and west. The effects of El Niño continued, benefitting the predators enormously both with the incredible numbers of plains game gathering in and around Sasakwa Dam on a daily basis, and then the conditioning of the grazers as they continually weakened over the month allowing all of the predators fairly easy hunts...



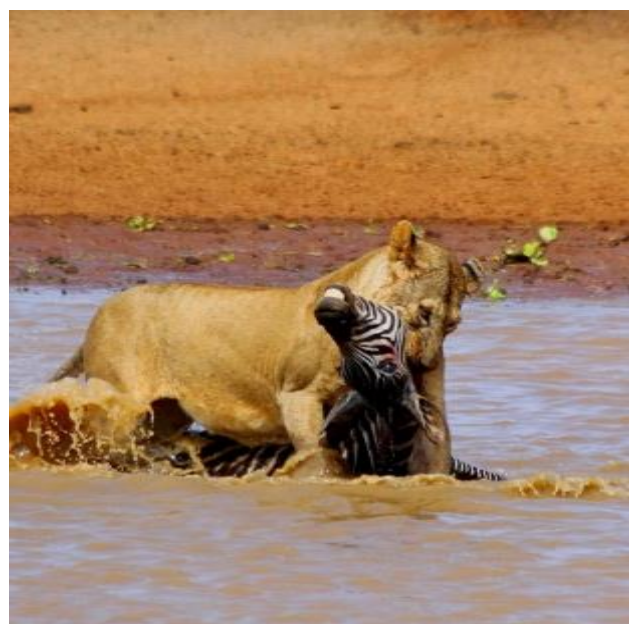
(Photo by Edward Kaaya)

Looking back over the month of August 2016, I think it will be best remembered for the incredible number of kills witnessed at Sasakwa Dam, and the daily stream of thousands of plains game rushing in and out of the dam throughout the day. It was live theatre every morning, starting at first light when we could see activity at the dam through the giant telescope at Sasakwa Lodge. Members of the extended Butamtam pride would congregate daily and feast on the smorgasbord presented to them at the best water source on the concession. What an experience for the many guests that got to witness the mayhem first-hand.

Lions

As mentioned above the latter parts of this month were a boon for not only the Butamtam Pride, but all the lions that frequent the Singita Grumeti haven. It was almost guaranteed that lions would be found feasting on either zebra or wildebeest. The numbers speak for themselves, at the end of August we tallied a total of 138 individual sightings of lions.

Take a look at this sequence of photos by Mark Nicholson, and see if you can spot the predator in the first.



Leopards

August provided great leopard sightings consistently throughout the month. We managed an impressive 47 sightings over the 31 days. On a number of days we had multiple sightings and on a couple of occasions there were four different sightings. Included among the 'special' leopard sightings, we managed to witness mating leopards and a leopard kill too.



(Photo by Anthony Nyambacha)

Cheetahs

The cheetah sightings did seem a little on the slow side this month, with a total of 26 sightings. They really are one of the flagship species for the Serengeti as the habitat is perfect for them to hunt and survive in.



(Photo by Stuart Levine)

For the most part we had a female cheetah with her single cub making up the majority of the sightings, and on occasion we had single females as well as a pair of males being seen.

Elephants

Due to the dry season exacerbated by El Niño, elephant herds became a daily fixture at Sasakwa Dam along with many others. There is nothing better than watching elephants frolicking about at the water, (it's hard to imagine elephant frolicking, but they do!), and making all the other inhabitants uncomfortable.



(Photo by Stuart Levine)



(Photo by Anthony Nyambacha)

The Grumeti River is another magnet for the elephant herds. Even though there may not be flowing water in the river at this time, there is some standing water left in pools. Elephants also have a great little trick, they dig through the sandy riverbed to get to water that is located just below the surface - clever beasts!



(Photo by Ryan Schmitt)

We closed the month with a total of 76 elephant sightings.

Special sightings

Towards the end of the month the guides managed to find a pangolin. Last year there were two pangolin sightings recorded through the year. This pangolin is the first sighting we have had in 2016.

There were a number of porcupine sightings throughout the month as well as a few servals.



(Photo by Edward Kaaya)

There is an African wild cat that has been seen on a number of occasions in the vicinity of Nyasirori and Sabora Camp. It is always nice to see the lesser known creatures that occur in this ecosystem.

A new bird record for Tanzania

On the morning of 7 August, Anthony Nyambacha and his guests headed out for their morning excursion from Faru-Faru. They decided to work the Grumeti River upstream of the camp. At around 7.30 am Anthony noticed a group of little bee-eaters flitting around catching their breakfast, and he also noticed a strange bird hanging around with them. After consulting his bird book, he came to the conclusion that it was a red-throated bee-eater.



(Photos by Ryan Schmitt)

Birds that are found way out of their normal ranges are referred to as vagrant. This particular vagrant naturally occurs further north and to the west of Grumeti, the closest area it is found from here is in the northwest of Uganda. From there its range extends into the Democratic Republic of Congo, through southern Chad and all the way to the west coast of Senegal.



(Photos by Ryan Schmitt)

The sighting was reported to the Tanzanian Bird Atlas who maintains records of bird species encountered in the region. It was also reported to the East African Rarities Committee for review. After having been seen on a number of occasions over the month it eventually decided to hopefully try and get back to where it belongs. While it was here though, this colourful little bird caused great excitement with the guides and other keen birders alike.

By Ryan Schmitt
Singita Grumeti
Serengeti
Tanzania
Thirty-first of August 2016