Singita

(Photo by George Tolchard)

WILDLIFE REPORT
SINGITA GRUMETI, TANZANIA
For the month of September, 2017

Temperature		**Rainfall Recorded**		**Sunrise & Sunset**
Average minimum:	16.4˚C	Sasakwa	34mm	Sunrise 06:30
Average maximum:	30.9˚C	Sabora	31.3mm	Sunset 18:36
Minimum recorded:	16 ˚C	Faru Faru	36mm	
Maximum recorded:	32.9 ˚C			

This year, September has seen reasonable rainfall. During the first half of the month we witnessed good localized convectional rainfall on various parts of the reserve which has encouraged a phenomenal green flush out upon much of the grasslands. Heavy rains on the reserve and to the north east has seen many of our drainage lines flowing at times, as you will see from the picture of the perennial Grumeti River at the beginning of the month.

The resident wildlife has continued to enjoy the tranquillity of the reserve with the migratory wildebeest dispersed over the northern reaches of the national park on the Mara River. Never-the-less we have seen lovely herds of resident wildebeest, topi and zebra. Towards the end of the month we have seen a huge influx of zebra, topi and eland moving in from the east.

The Grumeti River in early September.

Buffalo
Buffalo have been a given on a daily basis with large breeding herds occupying all corners of the reserve, with some herds in the region of hundreds.

Lion
Lion sightings on the reserve this month continue to be phenomenal with 58 individually recorded sightings. With at least eight different prides throughout the Grumeti Reserve, we have experienced some fantastic interactions. Prides that are usually seen on a day-to-day basis include the Nyasirori, Butamtam, Sabora West, Mkuyu and Colobus.

Lion populations here on the reserve continue to do very well with numbers really being quite remarkable. At least two lionesses from the Butamtam pride were sighted with young up on Sasakwa hill where they had broken away from the other pride members. Other lionesses from the same pride gave birth on the Chui drainage.

Again, this month, I should imagine the most viewed prides have been the Butamtam and Nyasirori. These prides having a fairly central and accessible range to all lodges and camps.

The Butamtam pride has been spending the majority of the time in the vicinity of the Sasakwa Plains, Chui drainage and Mkomure drainage. With many youngsters of differing ages the pride is working hard to ensure enough food to sustain its members. The Butamtam were seen making kills and feeding mainly upon wildebeest, topi and zebra, but on two occasions successfully brought down and killed buffalo.

The Nyasirori pride, occupying the Raho drainage, continues to do very well. The nucleus of the social unit of females and young seem never to stray too far from this optimal location on the Raho. The animals often patrol up and down the drainage line from East to West and vice versa, stalking prey species descending to drink. Generally pride members are in great condition, looking strong and well. The current number within the Nyasirori Pride is 18, accompanied by a coalition of 5 dominant males.

Butamtam Males (Photo by Adas Anthony)

Butamtam Youngsters (Photo by Adas Anthony)

Two of the Nyasirori Males (Photo by Adas Anthony)

The Sabora West Pride continues to do well, holding their grasp on the western reaches of the Raho drainage. The young cubs born in August are fit and well, making the pride numbers now 20. The two dominant lions can be heard roaring most nights from Singita Explore as guests gather for an evening drink at the fire.

The Colobus Pride are sighted regularly, also on the banks of the Grumeti River, south of the old German Bridge.

Cheetahs

Despite the ever growing lion population the cheetah continue to co-exist in favourable areas. A total of 33 individual sightings were recorded this month. Cheetahs are well known for suffering at the expense of other large predators however, it is clear that our slender sprinters here on the Grumeti Reserve are holding their own.

Again this month, we were lucky enough to witness another active mating pair which was fantastic. Sightings were pretty constant with the mother and her cub - the cub is certainly looking stronger each day. The Arab Camp Thicket is still a very productive cheetah area where the balance of medium length grass and broken thickets allows for perfect hunting habitat.

This lovely female cheetah is see quite regularly on the Sasakwa Plains, hunting Thompsons gazelles.

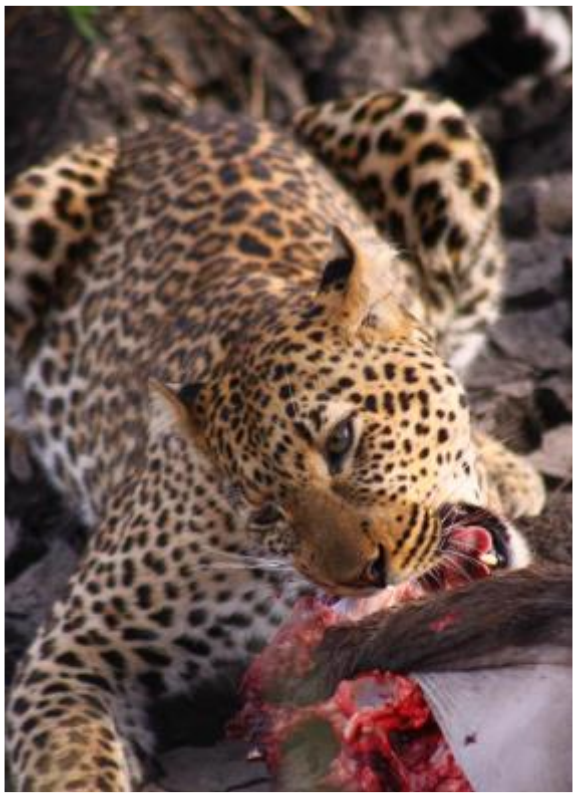
(Photos by Anicet Phillip)

Leopards
There have been a total of 38 individual interactions sighted this month, which is really fantastic. Again, the Mkomure female and 11-month-old daughter have been at the top of the sightings lists with her close proximity to Sasakwa Hill. This female had been seen by guests on numerous occasions this month hunting reedbuck along the drainage line. Sometimes successful, other times not so. Her daughter is strong and well, utilizing the thick vegetation along the Mkomure for cover.

Earlier on in the month the Mkomure female was sighted approximately 2 km south of the drainage, east of Arab Camp Hill. She had killed a young zebra and managed to pull it up to the top of a desert date tree. This spectacle provided some guests with some absolutely fabulous viewing. Later she descended to fetch her daughter hidden in the thickets.

We have experienced great leopard sightings also on the Raho Drainage line, close to Sabora Tented Camp and Mbogo drainage, just North of Faru Faru. A heavily pregnant female was also recorded in the Koroya Hill area last month and has not been seen since.

A mother with a sub-adult has been sighted a number of times on the Mbogo Drainage. Single males on the reserve have been enthralling guests on the Raho drainage as well as the Koroya Hill area. Some guests were lucky enough to see one of these males hunt and kill a baboon.



The Mkomure female and her daughter on a young wildebeest kill. (Photos by George Tolchard)

This lovely young male, one of Tulia's offspring (Photo by Adas Anthony)

Tulia and her two cubs are doing very well on the Sabora drainage area. The cubs are now around 8 months old and have offered some fantastic sightings for guests only a stone's throw from Sabora Tented Camp.

Elephants

Elephant sightings this month have just gotten better and better with increasing numbers on the reserve as September progressed. We have experienced many interactions from breeding herds on the Mkomure drainage line, close to Sasakwa hill. Another elephant hot spot, as usual is the Grumeti River with again, some lovely bond groups occupying the banks of the river. Towards the end of the month breeding herds flooding into the adjacent areas of Faru Faru and along the nearby drainage lines. We witnessed an aggregation of many herds together on the Raho drainage line between Sabora Camp and Explore. The elephants were pouring in from the south, and in a slow wave-like motion in their hundreds. It was amazing to see and guests that were lucky enough to see this were simply blown away.

(Photos by George Tolchard)

Migratory Wildlife

From the 25th September we began to see an incredible influx of wildlife from the national park. Huge numbers of zebra and topi have moved in to occupy our rich grazing lands. Just a little later they were followed by huge columns of wildebeest coming in from. The migratory animals are expected to hold on the reserve a while, exploiting the lush grazing we have currently, before moving on back to the short grass plains at the foot of the Ngorongoro Highlands to give birth.

The pictures below are of the wildebeest arriving on the 27th September. A truly magical spectacle!

Photos by George Tolchard

Wildlife numbers on the reserve this month have truly been sensational and the return of the migration at the end of this month was a fantastic end to an already inspiring four weeks of wildlife viewing.