

Singita



WILDLIFE REPORT
SINGITA LAMAI, TANZANIA
For the month of December, Two Thousand and Fifteen

December's month of weather was fairly calm, but punctuated by several incredibly heavy thunderstorms. We received 54 mm on two consecutive nights, which created havoc with the roads and the localized drainage crossings - some of the daily game drives began to look like a muddy 4x4 jamboree! The river rose perilously high in just a few days, almost threatening to come over its bank at times and the accompanying roar at night replicated a turbulent ocean.

Regardless of the wet conditions wildlife sightings were incredibly productive. All of our guests witnessed some extraordinary sights and returned each day in very high spirits, elated with what they had witnessed out there on the vast open landscape. What many guests commented on and loved was that it felt like theirs was the only vehicle on the entire concession, and they had the whole park seemingly to themselves whilst watching wildlife uninterrupted and without any other noise element.

Here are some sighting snippets for December:

Lions

Lion sightings were an almost daily occurrence on the Lamai plains, ranging from apparently lone unsociable individuals to some nice prides... even a 'honeymoon couple' who were incredibly cooperative for three or four days, putting on daily displays of affection, frolicking and the odd domestic altercation.

One set of guests were very fortunate to find a recently dispatched zebra with two lionesses in close attendance on vulture watch, plus a male leopard in a balanites tree watching over the saga unfurling directly below him! Very special indeed for all there - possibly not the leopard though who appeared rather tense and agitated. A cheeky opportunistic hyena darted in and grabbed a zebra leg before running off, very pleased with his efforts.



Cheetahs

Several guests were lucky enough to witness three separate cheetah kills over a two-week period, from the stalk to the actual take down, a first for all of the guests.

On one occasion a lone hyena, who happened to be lurking with intent in the area, managed to grab the hapless Thompson gazelle from the cheetah soon after the takedown, much to the dismay of the guests watching the whole episode. Needless to say, the hyena has since dropped further down their 'fair play' list after that display of non-sportsmanship.

The cheetahs in the area appear very habituated and will approach the vehicles closely, maybe deliberating to possibly utilise them as a vantage point.



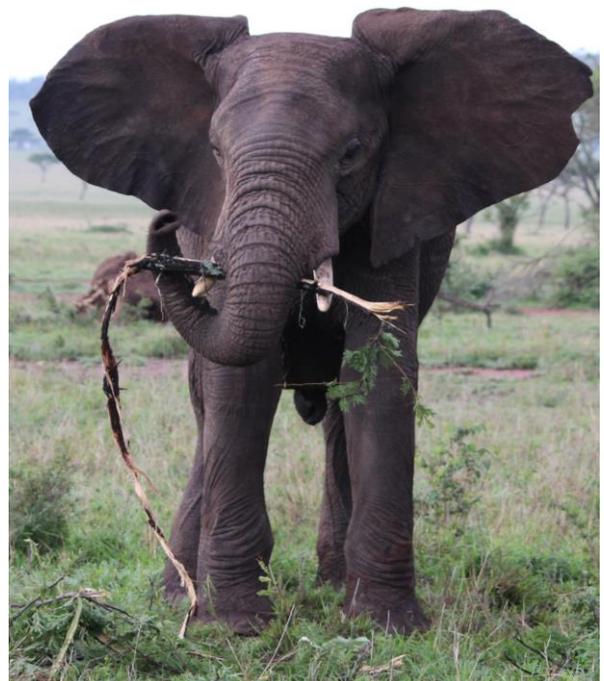
Elephants

Elephants have been very obliging too during the recent guest occupancies here in Lamai. Almost all of the guests have seen breeding herds and the odd bull here and there, one or two with very nice tusks. One guest, whilst being massaged at Tent No.2, had a bull walk right past him during the treatment, something his wife caught on camera!

We have had several bulls loitering in the vicinity of the camp, strolling along the riverbank, relishing the soft, green grass there after the water subsided. Guests were lucky enough to watch some of the bulls crossing the river and happily splashing themselves with mud and water.

Plains game

Plains game love this area because of its openness and good grazing. Giraffe too have proved plentiful and equally obliging, both on drives and in front of the camp. It amazes guests watching how these large mammals along with the elephants just apparently disappear behind the smallest bits of vegetation at times.



Birdlife

A pair of pygmy falcons (*Polihierax semitorquatus*) is becoming quite a regular sighting around the camp. These take the title of the smallest raptor in Africa, and are becoming a bit of a headache and annoyance for the resident Mara Camp agamas (nicknamed the 'Spider-man agama' – Agama Mwanzea) who were very used to sunbathing, relaxing and lying exposed on the rocks or decking here and soaking up the sun during their stress-free days.

At least twice now we have witnessed one of these mini raptors grabbing a super-chilled agama, and then taking the dazed reptile off to a distant tree, followed by the mate in close attendance, eager to share the lizard lunch.



By Rich Vaughan
Singita Lamai
Serengeti
Tanzania
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