

Singita



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

November's weather was often cloudy and rainy. By the second week of the month, the Mara River had risen significantly and the Kogatende Bridge became uncrossable.

Thankfully, the cooler weather that comes with the rainy season puts a spring in the step of the wildlife, and so game viewing was still very exciting.

These two zebras engaged in some mutual grooming in the rain, while other species revealed all sorts of behaviour.

Here's a snapshot of the month:



Lions:

Lion sightings at Lamai were very good in November. Highlights included a mating pair (photo below), a lioness with three little cubs, and a lioness hunting but just missing a zebra.



Leopards:

The majority of leopard sightings were of a beautiful young female. Here she's seen gnawing on a piece of dried out hide.



Cheetahs:



Cheetah sightings were consistent and all of the sightings were made up of the usual suspects: the female with two cubs, the female with four sub-adults, and the two brother cheetahs. The brothers were spotted each time in their well-defined territory of the northern plains close to the Kenyan border.

Elephants:

November is in the middle of the short rains, and during the rainy season elephants tend to disperse. The availability of water points increase and elephants no longer need to rely on year-round water sources, in our case the Mara River.



(Photo by Adas Anthony)

Special sightings of elephants this month included two separate occasions of breeding herds of over 100 animals.

Standing tall

There are few birds that one is likely to see on safari as striking as the saddle-billed stork (*Ephippiorhynchus senegalensis*), and luckily for our guests, there are many of them in the Lamai area.

These are huge tall birds, standing around 1.5 meters or close to 5 feet tall.

They are most likely to be found foraging in pairs in marshy areas and along watercourses where they feed mainly on fish, frogs and crabs, but also on small birds, reptiles and invertebrates.

There is little sexual dimorphism present in these birds (a common trait with birds that form lifelong bonds) and the easiest way to sex them is by looking at the eye. Males have a dark iris while the females have a vivid yellow iris.



Legend has it that in numerous wetland areas of Africa there have been historical reports of a large pterosaur-like creature, that has the habit of attacking boats and people along the rivers that they frequent. There has never been a confirmed sighting or photograph of these bird-like creatures but numerous researchers, explorers and villagers have claimed to have been attacked and even injured in encounters with these mystical animals in the last light of day...

It is claimed by detractors that these mythical birds are more than likely to be misidentified saddle-billed storks that are trying to protect their active nesting sites.



Saddle-billed storks have long been revered, and are represented in this Ancient Egyptian hieroglyph that had the phonetic value "ba":



(Photo by Adas Anthony)

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