

Singita Arumeti Reserves

Wildlife Journal
For the month of December 2011



Rainfall Records

Sasakwa	Month 183 mm,
Sabora	Month 251 mm,
Faru Faru	Month 204.8 mm,
Samaki	Month 341 mm,
Risiriba	Month 246 mm,
Samisami	Month 165 mm,

Temperature and Wind Recordings

Average Mean High Temperature	21.1° C
Average Mean Low Temperature	14.2° C
Average Mean Temperature	17.65° C
Average Wind Speed	2.9 km /h
Average High Wind Speed	33.8 km /h
Predominant Wind direction	WNW

War and Retribution

A war that has been raging through the ages, still continues, undecided. Battles are won by opposing forces from both sides but it still continues. One day one army wins, the next the other wins. It all comes down to who the combatants are and how many are fielded on the day. Size does not always matter.

There has been constant competition between lion and hyena and wherever these two large carnivores occur in the same area you can be assured that there will be a challenge thrown down at some point.



This large male lion stood up and immediately started marking territory when two hyenas walked past where he and the Sabora West pride were laying down in the long grass. On this occasion there was no physical altercation between the lion and hyena but only because the hyena kept their distance.



A hyena runs off with the remains of a topi killed and eaten by the Sabora West pride during the night. Before the hyena approached the kill she was very carefully checking to ensure there were no members of the pride laying close to the kill. Once she had grabbed the remaining bones she wasted no time in running for safety - much to the disgust of the attending vulture.



She did not go unnoticed though, a lioness from the pride watched the hyena from a few hundred meters away.

Hyena are not always so fortunate; the Butamtam Pride had killed and eaten a warthog on the plains below Sasakwa Lodge. After eating the warthog they were laying out in the open in the long grass when a hyena approached. It had obviously smelt or heard the kill and came over to look for a free meal. As she walked in amongst the pride one of the lionesses leapt out and grabbed her.



Immediately on tackling the hyena the lioness rolled it over and went for the throat. The hyena tucked her head in and the lioness settled for a grip on the back of the hyena's neck, which she held onto for just over twenty minutes.



The lioness then stood up and walked off a short distance before flopping down in the grass and going to sleep. The hyena lay unmoving for a while and we thought it had been killed, but then we noticed she was still breathing very faintly, twenty five minutes later she lifted her head and looked around, only to find herself lying with one of the lions.



She lay still for ten or fifteen minutes and then stood up and started walking off. Immediately the younger lions started following her but whenever they got too close the hyena turned and snarled at them. The adults watched for a short while as the cubs harassed the hyena but it got to be too much for the lioness that had tackled the hyena originally. She again attacked the hyena and held it clamped in jaws by the back of its neck and again we thought she had killed it but when one of the cubs approached, the hyena again lifted her head and snarled at it.



Again the hyena lay still as it recovered from the attack. Twenty minutes later it tried to walk away again; this time more of the lions followed her.



She managed to cover about fifty meters before the lioness brought her down again and the whole process was repeated.



After the third attack the hyena stood up and walked to a small waterhole that was nearby. She walked into it and sat down close to the edge. Initially the cubs followed her to the water and then two of the lionesses came over. All of them drank from the water as they stared at the hyena who sat watching them with blood dripping from her mouth and neck.



After drinking the lion slowly wandered off, leaving the hyena to drink slowly and recover from her ordeal. An hour after the last attack she left the water and walked away, without a limp and, seemingly, none the worse for her close encounter.



The teeth on a lion are fearsome weapons and it is amazing that the hyena was able to survive the attack and continuous mauling she received from the lioness. Looking at the hyena through binoculars we could see the wounds that had been inflicted and they were all pretty horrendous. The lioness that attacked the hyena is in her prime and she weighed far more than the hyena. Not many animals would be able to withstand three attacks, one after the other, and still walk away.



The End of the Year



Dawn on the 31st December 2011 at Sabora Plains

Another year has passed into the history books. At Singita Grumeti Reserves it was a very interesting year. For some people, guests and staff alike, it was the first time to see the Wildebeest Migration. It is hard to believe that the plains seen above were totally covered by hundreds of thousands of wildebeest in May and June.



The new additions to the Butamtam Pride have done well, and the pride is stronger than ever before. Once the cubs have grown a bit more they will be able to assist rather than hinder in the hunts that continuously force the pride to keep moving.



We look forward to 2012 - each year gets better and better in this haven created and looked after, for the wildlife and wilderness of Africa. Something that has attracted people to Africa from all countries of the world for hundreds of years, game reserves all over Africa show that man and animals can live together, even if both need to be managed.



The rains have been exceptionally good this season and the Grumeti River still flows powerfully - a good way to end the year.



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