



## THE NORTHERN TULI PREDATOR PROJECT

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For the month of June it was back to tracking leopards on almost a daily basis. Apart from spending some time working on my PC, I did however start with an interesting new 'field-work assignment'. It is called CSI Mashatu! Basically, from the GPS data I am now receiving from some of my leopards, I can now determine where they either made a kill or only rested. Those sights, defined as clusters of GPS points on my GIS

map, allows me to see where the individual leopard spent hours in one area, suppose to walking and hunting. By going to these 'clusters' I look for any signs of feeding or remains from a kill. One of the frequent 'evidence' found at those sights, are tufts of hair from the animal killed - leopards tend to pluck the hair of their prey before eating. Other more obvious signs are hooves and if I'm lucky, the skull of the animal. After some investigating, it becomes almost second nature to determine what species, age and sex the leopard caught and killed. Some sight, however, only leaves me with claw marks in the bark of the tree and nothing else. Hyena's tracks indicate that whatever fell out of the tree, they took it and I will never know what the leopard killed. All hard work, but extremely exciting.



### Predator drives

For the month of June I had a total of 37 guests joining me on 10 predator drives. On all the drives did we manage to radio track some of them and the big male leopard - Skebengwa, was the star of the month. Although he does not like to be 'bothered' during the day, at night we could follow him closely for kilometres as he scent marked his territory. On one particular night we manage to find him lying on a cliff, but what made the sight so much more stunning, was the fact that he had a female leopard with him and we could watch how they walked and frequently mated! The female was fairly shy, but the big male could not care less.

