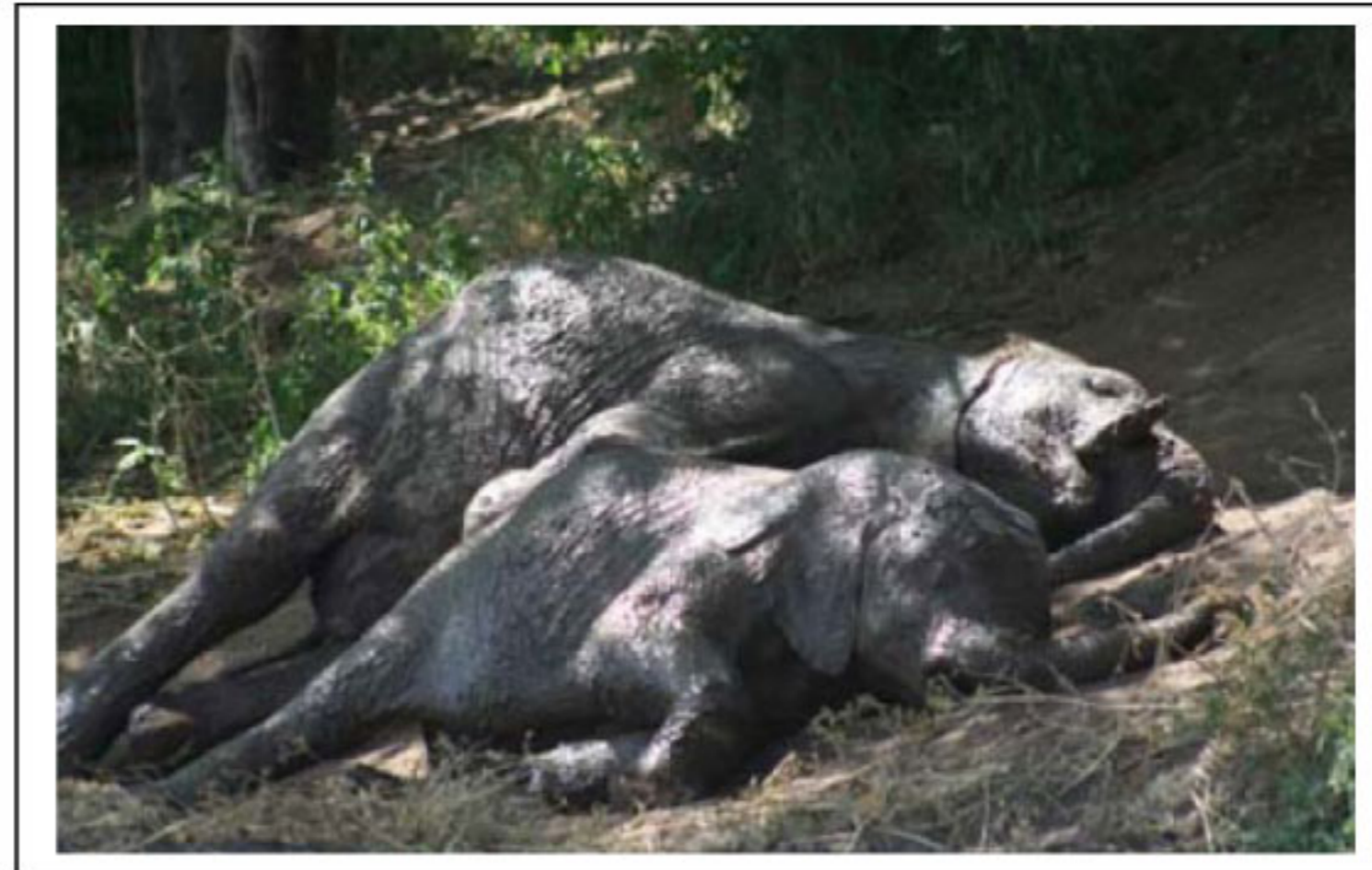




PREDATOR PROJECT UPDATE - FEB 08



Life is really tough when you a young elephant!

THE NORTHERN TULI PREDATOR PROJECT

Andrei Snyman

What a great month! Two of my female leopards have finally given birth and I was lucky enough to see the one female's cubs from very close. The two leopard cubs of Lesedi weren't even 2 days old. She has recently moved them to a better place, since the first place was very open and exposed. My other female leopard, Kgwedi, gave birth amongst the rocks at White cliffs and I had to walk up the cliffs to get a better view of the cub (the female obviously wasn't there and thus I took the opportunity to move closer). I could only see one cub, but there could have been more. What made that experience so amazing was the fact that while I was sitting on a rock on top of the cliffs, the adult female came back and I could see her tending to her cub. She did not see me, and watching a mother leopard with her cub, on foot, was truly a magnificent experience. Both the two litters of cubs are the offspring of the big male leopard, Skebengwa, I have collared. He recently caught two juvenile zebra's in a matter of one week. He seems to be doing very well and still moves rapidly from one boundary of his territory to the next.



Predator Drives

During all of these drives we found at least one of my collared leopards at night. On one particular night, after some intense tracking, we found the big male leopard – Skebengwa, on a freshly killed zebra fowl carcass. He took it straight up a Shepherd's tree, because only a few days earlier he lost almost his entire kill to a hyena. Soon after he was safely sitting in the tree feeding on his meal, a hyena pitch-up. We sat only a few meters away from the feeding leopard and with the hyena sniffing around for some fallen scraps. The full moon raised just behind the tree in which the leopard was, making it an unforgettable sighting of nature at its best.