

THE GREATEST LOSS YET...

Towards the end of 2009 Xinkovanyana Female had stopped her estrus cycle and calling and mating had ceased. This indicated that she had finally fallen pregnant and her behavior of marking territory on various koppies indicated that she was possibly searching for a den site to give birth. She began spending a huge amount of time on one mountainous range in particular and this was unusual as it was outside of her known territorial boundary. Interestingly she was not the only Leopard to begin using this hill, Honey-thorn Female also investigated the same place but only once indicating that the original female of the area had possibly been killed and a territory was thus vacant. At first this seemed like a good thing

and Yana claimed the hill and the area around it. On New Year she headed up the koppie and she stopped moving...this built great excitement as we thought she had finally given birth. But after a week she had still not moved and we feared the worst. We could not investigate immediately as

an incorrect assumption that something had happened to her would be very dangerous. When we finally walked up to look we found that her collar had been bitten clean off...distance between canines of the bite indicate that a lion had killed her. Possibly a lioness that had chosen to have cubs there..



The skull of Xinkovanyana Female and her collar which was bitten clean off.

YOUNG LEOPARDS SPOTTED...

An interesting change in Leopard movements was noticed in the late part of 2009 and the early half of 2010. Many young unidentified Leopards have been seen on the reserve moving around and the reason for this is as yet unknown.

One thing that is indicated by the presence of young Leopards all becoming independent at the same time is that there has been a peak in the birth rate, births coordinated all at approximately the same time. This is unusual as Leopards do not usually

have a birth season. It also indicates that young Leopards born in the past 2 years on the reserve are far less shy of vehicles as they are allowing game viewers to spot them before they disappear...this is excellent news for ecotourism & shows a new era

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INTERESTING LEOPARD FACTS:

- Female Leopards that are pregnant or that have cubs are far more aggressive and dangerous due to their protective mothering nature than other Leopards.
- The generations of Leopards living in a protected area are far more accepting of people and vehicles than those in a hunting area.
- A birthing peak has been noted in the Erindi Leopard population.

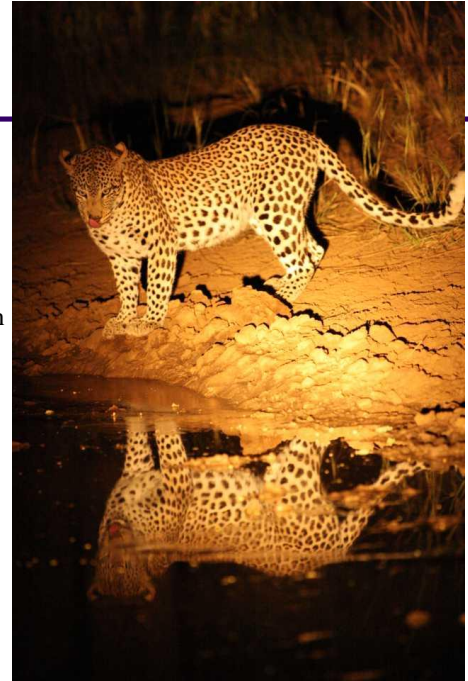
HONEY-THORN FEMALE

The only remaining cub of the second generation of Erindi Leopards is faring extremely well and she is supplying some of the most phenomenal data.

Honey-thorn female came into estrus for the very first time at the age of 22 months and since this time she has an average period of 42 days between mating. After 4 encounters with the same male she is still coming into estrus but interestingly the time period between mating has reduced to 22 days. The first 2 times that the Leopard pair coupled there was not a single successful mating and it is almost as if the young female must learn what signals to give the male for them to get it right. The Leopards also appear to spend a great deal of time getting to know each other. When Honey came into her first estrus it took more than 2 weeks for the male to re-

spond to her call...now that they know each other he responds in less than 4 days, possibly just the length of time it takes him to get to her.

During one estrus cycle Honey-thorn Female went in search of a male and on her route she found the fresh remains of a steenbuck kill that another Leopard had killed. She attempted to get a chemical message from the kill remains but there was a large puff-adder sitting on the plucked steenbuck fur...this did not deter Honey and she proceeded to hit the angry snake with her paw! We feared that she would be bitten but she seemed to know what she was doing and after she had acquired all the information she needed in between the snakes strikes she continued about her evening activity unharmed!



Honey-thorn Female drinking at a pan late at night.

GUINEA FEMALE

Guinea Female is still going strong although sightings are rare. We have no direct data gathered on her behavior but due to the fact that there is now a vulture restaurant at one end of her territory she is spotted from time to time by passing vehicles.

VHF collars only have a battery life of about 24 months and it is time to recapture Guinea Female to try and change her collar for a new one. This

we will attempt in the next few months but the ideal situation would be to have a GPS collar for her before we begin capture.

A young Leopard has been seen a number of times on the road that appears to be Guinea Females territorial boundary and as yet we are not certain if this is a grown cub

of hers that is going independent.

Capture in her area may bring us some luck and if the youngster can also be captured genetic analysis of blood and other samples will give us a little more information on this female and her relatedness to other Leopards in her area.

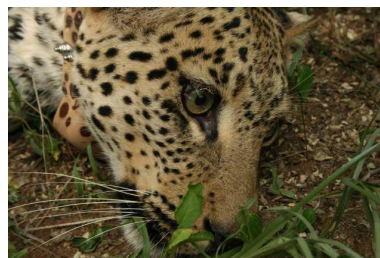
"The battery of a VHF collar lasts about 24 months after which time the collar must be replaced"

MICROLIGHT FEMALE

Microlight Female was the first Leopard to be captured on Erindi Game Reserve in 2007 and she was the first Leopard to become part of the Global Leopard Project. To make her life more comfortable in May 2008 when she was captured for a collar change her collar was replaced by a small implant in her neck as an experiment and alternative to the collar. Unfortunately the range on the implant was very poor and for 8 months we completely lost track of this female

Leopard.

The territorial movements of the other female Leopard of the project indicated that she still held her same area but we had no hard evidence at all that she was still alive until the young male was captured in October 2009.



She was sitting so calmly in the trap like she knew the drill!

We were almost certain that this was the independent young male of Microlight Female but until we have bloods analyzed we cannot be sure!

In February 2010 a female Leopard was sitting incredibly calmly in a cage trap...like she knew it!

CALDERA FEMALE & TOPAZ

Caldera Female holds her territory around Erindi Old Traders Camp, the main guest lodge on the reserve. Although she has never been seen properly she had a youngster that went independent in late 2008 and she has been spotted at sunrise from time to time drinking in front of the guest rooms.

In late 2009 her latest cub, a young female now called Topaz Female was spotted close to the cheetah and wild dog rehabilitation centre near the lodge.

The 7 month old youngster has possibly had a great deal of exposure to vehicles moving in and out of the lodge and she was very accepting of people and game viewers almost immediately.

Game viewers with guests spotted her a number of times before the 2010 rains began and there were many quality

sightings including one where Caldera had taken the youngster to an Impala kill.

We have religiously set traps for Caldera Female since the beginning of the year but sadly we have not as yet had any luck capturing her.

One early morning there was a female Leopard in the trap set for Caldera but the cat was unusually relaxed...upon closer inspection we realized that it was in fact Microlight Female!

Each trap in the territory of Caldera Female is care-



Topaz Female very relaxed with vehicles.

fully fitted with a long distance opening mechanism. This is in case the young female is captured. It will allow us to open the door from a distance without stressing her in any way so that she can be captured at a later stage when she is old enough to be fitted with a collar.

We hope she will be like Microlight Female with no fear of the cage traps making it easy to re-fit a collar at any time.

PHANTOM TREE FEMALE

Very sadly nothing much has changed with Phantom Tree Female. She still spends 99% of her time on the neighboring farm north of the protected area of Erindi Game Reserve and it is vital that she gets a new collar as soon as possible. Like with the situation of Guinea Female it would be ideal to get her a GPS collar so we are holding on just a little bit to see if we can make this possible.

Speculation is that Phantom Tree Female has had a new litter of cubs on the mountain north of the reserve. When she had the cubs (Honeythorn Female & Commiphora Male) inside the reserve, she never attempted to take them out of the fence. Perhaps it is the same in this case, that she has had cubs

"GPS collars will help us expand the research"

outside and she is not attempting to bring them in through the fence. Has she lost her territory within Erindi or does she come in to mark it and then she heads out again?

Many questions to be answered...

NEBULA FEMALE

Nebula Female is an un-collared Leopard that has been seen periodically from when she was still dependant on her mother in 2008. She was first photographed on the cattle farm south of Erindi Game Reserve with her mother (Callisto Female). Callisto Female's territory bordered on the western side of Xinkovanyana Female's territory and when Nebula went independent she struggled on the neighbors farm as there seemed to be no place to go. She began

hunting livestock and she was seen with a goat kill on a farm close to the Erindi fence.

When Xinkovanyana Female was killed it took about 3 weeks for Nebula to investigate her territory and I found her one morning lying beside the remains of Yana's carcass. She carefully checked the area and sat and listened before she stood up and began calling...an estrus call or territorial?



Nebula Female sitting above the carcass of Yana.

INFINITE MALE

For the past 2 month, guests and guides have been reporting un-collared Leopard which have allowed themselves to be viewed all over Erindi Game Reserve. It seems strange but it has led us to believe that there was a birth peak and all of these young Leopards have now reached independence.

There has been confirmation of 5 different young male Leopards of the same age within a small area and this is one of those youngsters.

He appeared to be around the age of 2 years and he was incredibly healthy. At first glance and because he was so relaxed with the vehicle we thought that he may have been Erindi Male but spots do not lie!

Each Leopard has a unique, quick and easy spot identification pattern above



The young male Leopard showed no reaction at all to the vehicle or the light.

the main whisker line on the face and from this we could immediately tell that this was a young male that we had neither seen nor photographed.

He in fact has no spots above his main whisker line which is how he received

his name...nothing being the potential for anything led us to call him Infinite!

The young male spent 2 weeks in the same area and a trap was set for him in a drainage line close by.

The lucky pot is a little empty in the project at the moment and sadly we have not managed to capture him.

Hi is a wonderful candidate as he is so relaxed and he is the perfect age for us to start following his movements.

We wish to know how far males like this travel, where they establish territory, how long it takes, what their survival rate is and much more.

REBEL MALE

The only reason the we know that this male even exists is because of Honey-thorn Female.

When Honey came into her first estrus it took more than 2 weeks for her to find him as he did not respond to her calls or scent trail. He was also very shy of the vehicle. By the second mating, he was unbelievably accepting of the research vehicle! We sat quietly listening to the Leopards and the sounds indicated that

the male was not interested in the female. He growled and lashed at her but there was no audio of a successful mating. When the scene was finally lit up the male was no more than 25m from the vehicle and he accepted the light!

Each time Honey approached him he jumped up and moved away from her. As we moved closer

each time with the vehicle, he did not seem to mind at all but he did not stick around to let Honey sit on him!

"The male Leopard has accepted the vehicle because we follow the female he is mating with"

The male has a distinctive tear in his right ear and again we have traps set for him...identification when we finally capture him will be easy!

HOUDINI MALE

The Houdini story is a story of frustration!!!!

This male seems to know when the traps are set and when they are pinned open! We have identified his new territorial boundary (which appears to change approximately every 3 months) and set the trap where he walks every week.

He now walks up to the trap and past it, turns less than a meter before it or when it is pinned open he eats the bait and

leaves!

This is incredible, how does he know?

In late February for the third time his tracks were inside the trap, the trap was closed and he was not inside! This is the third time since 2007 that Houdini has been in



Collars waiting for leopards to climb in!!

a trap and he has managed to get out. He was in the trap the first time and he was seen. While the vet was called he managed to escape and when the vet arrived the Leopard was no longer in the trap! Since then we are uncertain of what he

UNEXPECTED CAPTURES

Every day since Late September 2009 I have set the traps for Caldera Female. Every Leopard on Erindi is important but Caldera's youngster moves around the main lodge and she has already accepted the vehicle making her an excellent study and ecotourism individual. To follow the youngster and habituate her properly we must capture the mother and thus the traps have been set relentlessly.

In mid-February I could not believe my eyes...there was a finally a female Leopard in the trap and I was so hoping it was Caldera Female.

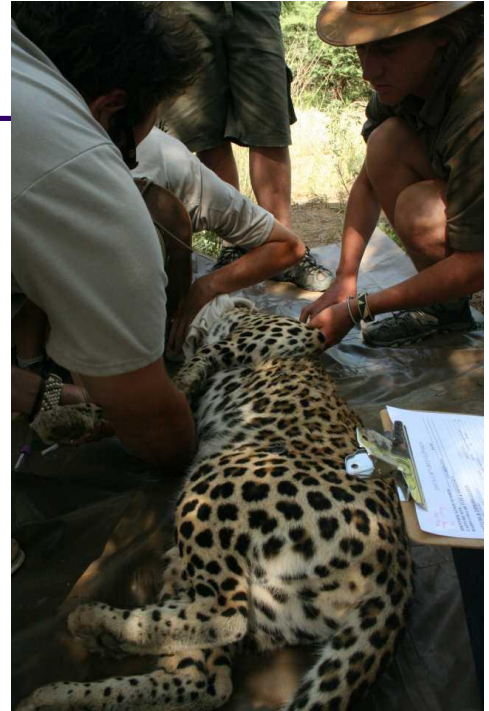
Strangely, the Leopard was very relaxed throughout the darting process and when she was immobilized she was lying upright with nose on her paws as if she was awake watching...there is

only one Leopard that we know that does this each time she is darted...Microlight Female. We carefully took her out of the trap and G.P Britz felt in her neck for the small implant tracking device. The implant was there and it was Microlight Female!

This would be the 4th time that this female has been captured in a cage trap on the reserve, what would be deemed a 'trap happy' Leopard!

Although we cannot follow her with a vehicle as she does not like it we have gathered amazing long-term data on this female.

She is not a young Leopard, possibly the oldest female of the project and interestingly her condition had improved between this capture and the previous one. We will begin to walk with her again.



Microlight Female captured for the 4th time.

PROJECT WORK

CAPTURE: Capture for 2010 so far has been slow. Honey-thorn Female was captured in a trap set for Rebel Male but this was a good opportunity to check her progress and growth over the past 8 months. Microlight Female was also recaptured and all growth and aging wear on her teeth etc noted. Prince, the Brown hyena captured and fitted with a collar in October 2009 was also recaptured and it was great to see how good

he was looking before he was released by means of the long distance opening mechanism on the cage trap.

CAMERA TRAP SURVEY: 2 Camera traps have been lent to the project for use and another 2 are on the way. As yet, no Leopards have been photographed but many more cameras are needed for a survey.

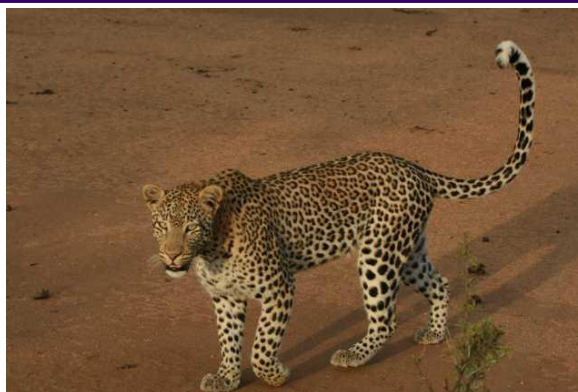


PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION

CONGRATULATIONS TO

G.P. BRITZ

Your prize is a night out with the Global Leopard Project!



Your photographs help us to build a record of un-collared Leopards and unusual behaviour. Please e-mail any Leopard photographs taken on Erindi Game Reserve or elsewhere in Namibia with your name, date and GPS co-ordinates if possible to:

tasha@globalleopard.com

Thank you to all that contribute



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The mission of the Global Leopard Project is to internationalize the plight of the leopard through communication and research.

We are dedicated to the gathering and sharing of data from wild leopard populations to aid in improving understanding of leopards as individuals and ultimately in the future holistically as a species.

We aim to improve awareness of the leopard through ecotourism and media, to contribute towards reduction of livestock/wildlife conflict and to help ensure that utilization of leopards occurs in a sustainable manner.

The Global Leopard Project is based at Erindi Private Game Reserve in the Central Western region of Namibia, truly one of the most amazing conservation areas on earth...

GLP SPONSORS, MEMBERS & FUTURE GOALS

FIELD SPONSORS

~ ERINDI GAME RESERVE: Home of the Global Leopard Project and the leopards.

~ CATCHCO AFRICA/DR DOUW GROBLER: Capture and training.

ONGOING SPONSORS

~ ERINDI GAME RESERVE: Monthly donation, accommodation, vehicle, fuel, capture and tracking equipment.

~ PULSE AFRICA: A contribution from every booking made with Pulse Africa is put towards the GLP.

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NS 50 000-00+

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GOLD GLOBE MEMBERS

NS 30 000-00+

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SPONSOR A LEOPARD/GPS COLLAR

~ FREDDIE HERTZBERG: GPS Collar

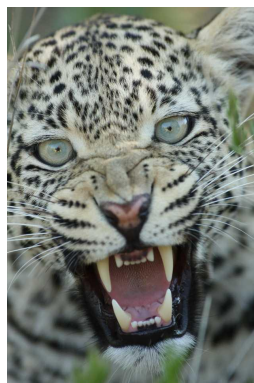
~ KAREN BUCHANAN & DEREK JONES: GPS Collar for Erindi Male

~ BEV LEWIS & ANDRZEJ JANDZIOL: GPS Collar downloading equipment

TULLIANA FIELD MEMBERS

NS 1 500-00

~ Dr Andrzej Jandziol & Dr Bev Lewis



Honey-thorn Female has grown up into an adult Leopard and she expresses herself to us...

We are currently trying to raise funding to improve and expand the research work on Erindi Game Reserve and to begin aiding farms that have conflict with leopards. In order to do this we are currently working towards acquiring the following equipment:

~ DIGITAL CAMERA TRAPS

+/- US\$ 500-00 EACH

~ SATELLITE/GPS COLLARS

þ 2 500-00 EACH

FOUNDERS OF THE GLP

N. de Woronin

Dr Douw Grobler

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Ruan Cloete

G.P. Britz

Pieters Horaseb

Reinhardt Ngarinombe

Erindi Private Game Reserve

There are daily running costs that we are able to fund through guest experiences and leopard viewing trips at Erindi Private Game Reserve.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you would like to know more about the project or the Leopard Experience trips.