

Press Release

For Immediate Release

29 November 2024

Starvation and Death of Elephants in Madikwe Game Reserve Expose Ecological Crisis



Photo: Ryan Davy

The True Green Alliance (TGA) is gravely concerned about reports of widespread ecological degradation and the devastating loss of wildlife, particularly elephants, in the Madikwe Game Reserve, North West Province. This unfolding crisis threatens not only the welfare of the animals but also the livelihoods of those reliant on the reserve for employment and tourism revenue.

***True Green Alliance** – Promoting sustainable wildlife management for the benefit of all.*

Alarming accounts from visitors and conservation journalists describe Madikwe as a "barren wasteland, struck by a nuclear bomb" where vegetation has been decimated, biodiversity is collapsing, and animals are perishing due to starvation. It has been reported that between 35 and 75 elephants, alongside other species, have already succumbed to these dire conditions. Observations from a conservation journalist on-site revealed at least 15 carcasses, many of them elephants, scattered across the reserve – a haunting indication of an ecosystem on the brink of collapse.



Photo: Ryan Davy

The situation is further compounded by overpopulation. With approximately 1,600 to 1,700 elephants in the reserve, the carrying capacity of Madikwe's habitat has been overwhelmed, exacerbating the degradation of vegetation and threatening the survival of all species within the ecosystem.

A Call for Accountability and Action

TGA demands immediate transparency and action from all responsible parties, including the North West Parks and Tourism Board, the Department of Forestry, Fisheries, and the Environment (DFFE), the Minister and for the National Council of Societies for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (NSPCA) to intervene. Despite the existence of an Elephant Management Plan and a General Management Plan for Madikwe, it is unclear

whether any meaningful interventions, such as translocation, contraception, or population control, have been implemented.



Photo: Ryan Davy



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The ecological collapse in Madikwe not only endangers wildlife but also poses a severe threat to the local economy. Visitors have expressed their unwillingness to return to the

reserve, signaling a looming decline in tourism – a critical economic driver for the region. Job losses are inevitable if the current trajectory continues unchecked.

Urgent Demand for Investigation and Intervention

TGA has formally issued a letter of demand to all relevant authorities, citing their constitutional duty to manage public reserves effectively and protect the welfare of the animals. The letter calls for:

1. Confirmation of the measures implemented under the reserve's management plans.
2. Immediate steps to address overpopulation and habitat degradation.
3. A comprehensive investigation into the failures that led to this crisis.



Photo: Ryan Davy

The degradation of Madikwe is a national disgrace and demands immediate attention. The lack of decisive action is not only a dereliction of duty but a threat to South Africa's global reputation as a leader in conservation.

A Way Forward

TGA stands ready to collaborate with the authorities and stakeholders to find sustainable solutions to this crisis. However, time is running out, and the window to prevent further ecological and economic collapse is rapidly closing.



Photo: Ryan Davy

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Join the Cause: Save Madikwe Game Reserve

Madikwe Game Reserve faces an urgent crisis, and your support can make a difference. By contributing to the **TGA**, you'll help preserve this vital wildlife sanctuary and support our efforts to resolve the challenges it faces.

Every voluntary donation, no matter the size, brings us closer to protecting Madikwe's incredible biodiversity and ensuring its future for generations to come.

Together, we can make an impact. Stand with the TGA and be a part of the solution.

Save Madikwe Game Reserve! #SaveMadikwe

