







## Happy Elephant: Calf Was Saved From The Water By Its Parents And The Whole Herd

We know elephants are capable of [amazing](#) teamwork when one of their own is in [trouble](#), but not all herds cope well in a [crisis](#). When a young calf had a mishap in the mud recently at a waterhole in South Africa's Madikwe Game Reserve, the rest of its herd [didn't](#) an equally [important](#) mission.

The youngster's ordeal was [filmed](#) on camera by the general manager of a nearby game lodge, Nico Verster. "We were watching a breeding herd of elephants drinking at the waterhole when the small calf toppled over and landed in the water," he recalls.

Having watched other elephant herds successfully pull off similar rescues, Verster was [surprised](#) by this group's apparent [lack](#) of cohesion and know-how. "The mother seemed [frustrated](#) and immediately attempted to [lift](#) the baby [up](#), holding him by his trunk, and once flipping him by his back leg. As she [struggled](#), she became rather [frustrated](#), unable [to](#) a proper [lift](#)."



With the mother elephant trying [unsuccessfully](#) to scoop her calf to safety, most of the other herd members stood by without coming to her aid. "They were very [calm](#) in this situation and didn't really offer any help as breeding herds would normally do," he notes.

Wildlife rehabilitator Karen Trendler, [who](#) has also witnessed similar scenarios, agrees that inexperience seems to [be](#) here. "There is surprisingly little communication. The mother doesn't give distress calls that would have alerted other females for assistance. This could be due to inexperience, age or position within herd hierarchy," she explains.

With the herd adopting a back-and-forth [pattern](#) of retreat and hapless milling around, the calf's fate looked increasingly [grim](#). [Eventually](#) to free itself from the slippery mud, it became agitated and [struggled](#) — and the ordeal clearly had an effect on the other

