



Hermanus Baboon Action Group

Newsletter: October 2019

Background: The Hermanus Baboon Action Group was initiated by a small committee of residents, concerned about the negative impact caused by the Voelklip troop of baboons, habituated to high density suburbia. Over the past 5 years, decreasing property values, health and safety of small children, the elderly and domestic pets, the potential for the spread of disease, costly damage to property, inability for residents to experience a sense of freedom in their homes, a negative tourism image and the preservation of the baboon species, were all deeply concerning for thousands living in affected areas.

A Facebook page and website were established in April/May, by HBAG, thereafter a public information meeting was held 21st May, invited speakers being Dr. Phil Richardson, Human Wildlife Conflict specialist, and Prof. Justin O' Riain, UCT. An further urgent meeting took place with HBAG and the Overstrand Mayor and 'team' on 30th May 2019. The OM directed HBAG to Cape Nature, refusing to debate the issue further.

Media statements have been regularly issued in the local Village News, Hermanus Times and on the Facebook page, @hermanus baboons, to date reaching well over 25 000 viewers.

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The Mandate to Manage Baboons: After numerous attempts by the Municipality to abrogate their responsibility to ensure a safe and healthy environment for ratepayers, by refusing to address baboon management, and constant demands by thousands of residents from the most affected areas, to have the baboon monitors re-instated, HBAG appealed to Alan Winde, Premier, Western Cape; Dr. Ernst Baard, Cape Nature; Anton Bredell, Minister of Local Government, Environmental Affairs and Development Planning, Western Cape; Solly Fourie, Head, MEC, Economic Development and Tourism; Barbara Creecy, Minister of Environmental Affairs, Forestry and Fisheries, amongst others.

This led to a successful process where the mandate to manage baboons was finally confirmed as being a Municipal function. In so doing, HBAG ensured that no further legal fees (ratepayers' money) were incurred by the OM, as they had, for over a year threatened to declare a costly intergovernmental dispute. HBAG has always supported co-operation between authorities, rather than disputes and costly court action.

Budget up to end June 2020: The OM finally budgeted a somewhat inadequate amount for baboon management throughout the Overstrand, (stretching from Rooi Els to Pearly Beach) and has now appointed Human Wildlife Solutions to recruit, train and manage baboon monitors in the Hermanus area, and to supplement training of extra monitors in Pringle Bay, up to end of June 2020. It is hoped that the following years' budget will reflect a more substantial amount to allow for implementation of HWS services in all problem areas, for a sustained period of at least 3 more years.

Currently: Recruiting and training by HWS will proceed during November, and it is hoped the monitors will be active and effective by the fast approaching holiday season. As soon as a 'Baboon Hotline Number' is available, residents will be informed.

What can you do? The HBAG has received hundreds of incident reports, photos and records of damage caused by this particular Voelklip troop over the past 8 months. The change in the troops' pattern of behavior compared to previous years, is of deep concern. HBAG encourages residents to continue to report incidents, indicating time, date an address, accompanied by photos if possible. This plays an important role in recording the behavior patterns and changes in habits of

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the Hermanus troop. New babies, injuries, signs of aggression, roosting in suburbia overnight and unusual incidents will help the researchers from HWS identify solutions and procedures necessary to manage the troop. Email info@hermansbaboons.co.za

Progress: The HBAG's 3 Phase campaign to address baboon issues in Hermanus continues:

- 1) Educate and inform residents and visitors in affected areas about the dilemma of the baboon troop and the impact on high density suburbia and the troop itself.
- 2) Encourage the OM and residents to apply strict refuse management solutions to discourage the troop from raiding refuse bins and bags left on pavements or on private property.
- 3) To drive a campaign on behalf of residents in affected areas to have the baboon monitors re introduced back to the Hermanus area on a **long term permanent basis**.
- 4) HBAG will be part of the team meeting regularly to address baboon issues, together with Human Wildlife Solutions, Cape Nature and the O.M. Environmental Services Dept.

Flyers and posters: Collaboration was initiated by HBAG to work with OM Environmental Services, to design (and fund half of the printing) of education and awareness flyers and posters. These will be distributed regularly to visitors, residents, cleaning and property management companies, rental companies, schools, tourist offices, etc on an ongoing basis. Posters have been positioned in shops, centers and garages in affected areas, to maintain awareness. If you would like to circulate some flyers to neighbors who are still not aware of the bylaws regarding refuse, please contact info@hermanusbaboons.co.za to arrange delivery.

Waste Dept: The OM Waste Department has been co-operative and an ongoing reporting process together with law enforcement is underway in areas where residents and weekenders continue to ignore the bylaws regarding refuse management, locking of refuse bins and disposing of refuse bags at the Voelklip

refuse depo. Residents are encouraged to report refuse issues, dumped refuse bags or unlocked bins immediately to Francois Pretorius 0283138092 or email fpretorius@overstrand.gov.za.

Baboon proofing a bin is easy, contact Cristo at Bobby Bins 0762038144 for quick efficient onsite installation to your existing bin/s.

Please stay connected. Email info@hermanusbaboons.co.za for further information or to report incidents. Media statements have been regularly issued in the local Village News, Hermanus Times and on the Facebook page, @hermanusbaboons, to date reaching well over 25 000 viewers.

Thank you for your interest.

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