



Hermanus Baboon Action Group

Newsletter June 2020

This newsletter represents part of the Hermanus Baboon Action Groups' awareness campaign, to keep residents informed and up to date with baboon issues in baboon affected areas of Hermanus.

Human Wildlife Solutions (HWS) have sent HBAG a brief report regarding the current status of the **Voelklip** troop. This is the troop they have been contracted to manage, in terms of the arrangement with the OM.

It is great to hear that the constant baboon raids of the previous years, have now reduced significantly. The structure of the troop is evolving too, as per the report from Nick, HWS Area Manager who advised the following:

"Here is an update on the recent movements and changes in the Voëlklip Troop:

The troop has spent the last few weeks in the area of Hermanus Heights, sleeping on a number of sleep sites along the mountain edge. During this time a new male had joined the troop, believed to have come from the Vogelgat troop. The new male has since then partially taken over the troop, but it is unclear at this point which male is the alpha.

With this, one of the Sub-Adult males had also dispersed from the Voëlklip Troop and joined the Hamilton Russel Troop. On a positive note, since the new male joined the troop, the troop has been spending the better part of their days foraging on top of the mountain towards the farms and raids into town have greatly decreased."

HBAG have received numerous positive comments regarding the HWS monitors, their polite, calm and helpful approach. Many residents in affected areas are appreciative of the reduced presence of the troop in suburbia and grateful that the program seems to be succeeding in the objective of keeping the baboons out of the area most of the time.

Remember winter months do tend to escalate the baboons' desire for easy food, and they will still be eyeing suburbia for easy treats in the next month or so. It has also been noted that over many years, during the colder months, the troops tended to make their way towards the seafront to forage on limpets and mussels and shark pods. These are particularly nutritious and an instinctive way to increase the baboons intake of rich nutritious foods during the winter season. This may mean a sojourn from time to time down to Mussel River along the river edges, but hopefully guided and monitored by the attentive HWS team.

Reminder: Please make your property as undesirable for baboons as possible (pack away bird feeders, suet balls, sugar water bottles, keep dog bowls inside or in garage, secure bins, no refuse bags outside ever, cover vegie gardens with a wooden frame and mesh, etc.

See the attached article reminding residents of how to reduce the attraction of suburbia for baboons. For more tips please visit our website or Facebook page.

FYI: Some residents have expressed concern that the monitors are enduring awful weather conditions. HWS has assured us that should the conditions escalate, due to rain, low temperatures and poor visibility, the team revert to monitoring the baboons from the vehicles, using binos. Should the troop edge towards suburbia, the team will leave the vehicle to manage the troop back towards Fernkloof Nature Reserve.

The program followed by the team is one of consistent monitoring, and the minute a routine is disrupted, or low visibility covers an area, the troop is agile and innovative enough to sneak into the area under cover of mist or rain. They are, after all, opportunists in every way.

This means the monitors have to be present on site 7 days a week. The teams are well equipped by HWS with weather proof jackets, boots, good socks, jerseys, etc. HWS is familiar and experienced with challenging weather conditions, they have been on site in many mountainous areas of the Cape Peninsula over more than 10 years.

Random Acts of kindness: Some residents have offered coffee or food to monitors when weather is miserable. This is kind, **but may distract the team from performing their duties.** It has been suggested that a few energy bars would be a better option as they can be safely zipped into the monitor's pockets for a snack later.

The monitors are not allowed to eat or carry food in the presence or close to the baboons, so they can only eat in their vehicles well away from the monitoring sites. HBAG has provided energy bars to the Area Manager for distribution to the monitors. If you would like to contribute some bars, please email info@hermanusbaboons.co.za to arrange collection.

Please direct all enquiries to info@hermanusbaboons.co.za or visit our website or Facebook page for tips and updates.

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