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# **Human Wildlife Solutions**

## **Overstrand**

### **Monthly Report**

**DECEMBER 2020**

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

This monthly report covers the period from 1 to 31 December 2020. December is usually a peak season for holidaymakers in the Overstrand, so a large influx of visitors who are not baboon aware was anticipated. Despite the various lockdown measures in place during December, the influx of visitors had some notable effects on baboon management. These related particularly to increased levels of waste and other human-derived foods being available to baboons. The main effects of this were that there was a marked increase in the number of visits into the urban area by certain individuals from the Voëlklip Troop.

Furthermore, people walking dogs off the leash in the Fernkloof Nature Reserve and an increased presence of people within the reserve, most notably at the Three Dams, led to a general increase in disturbance to the natural movement and foraging patterns to the Voëlklip Troop.

For the fourth consecutive month, the Vogelgat Troop spent 100% of its time out of town. This troop continued to spend much of its time within the Vogelgat and Maanschynekop Nature reserves.

Despite an increase in the number of incursions into town by individuals this month, the Voëlklip Troop spent 100% of its time out of town for the second consecutive month. Time out of town for individuals decreased from 96.7% in November to 92.8% in December. The troop slept in the central and eastern sleep sites and did not make use of the western sleep sites this month.

The Pringle Bay Troop spent 100% time out of town this month, while time out of town for individuals increased to 99.9%. No incursions were recorded for the troop in December in comparison to 13 last month. Only seven incursions were recorded for individual baboons this month in comparison to 49 last month. The troop roosted and foraged in the northern part of their home range and interaction with neighbouring troops continued. PBM1 was deposed as alpha male by BRM1, a wild male natal to the Buffels River Troop.

## 2 VOËLKLIP TROOP

### 2.1 IN TOWN STATISTICS

- For the second month in a row, the Voëlklip Troop spent 100.0% of its time out of town.
- Time out of town for individuals decreased from 96.7% in November to 92.8% December.

## **2.2 NOTEWORTHY INCIDENTS**

### **2.2.1 HERMANUS HEIGHTS & GOLF COURSE**

- Two house incursions were reported in Fernkloof Village on 14 December.
- No bin raids were reported.

### **2.2.2 VOËLKLIP & FERNKLOOF**

- 14 House incursions were reported in Voëlklip suburb in December. Incursions occurred on 4<sup>th</sup> Street, 5<sup>th</sup> Street, 6<sup>th</sup> Street, 9<sup>th</sup> Street, 10<sup>th</sup> Street and 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The majority of these incursions occurred in the week between Christmas and New Year.
- An additional three house incursions were reported to the hotline, one on 18 and two on 21 December.
- Seven bin raids were reported in Voëlklip suburb on 4<sup>th</sup> Street, 5<sup>th</sup> Street, 8<sup>th</sup> Street, 9<sup>th</sup> Street and 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

### **2.2.3 GENERAL**

- On 23 December, visual of the troop was lost around midday as they moved on top of the mountain. The troop was not seen for the rest of the day and the sleeping site was unknown. The troop was however seen in 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue Kloof the following morning.
- Probably because of the regular absence of the Vogelgat Troop to the immediate east of Voëlklip suburb, the Voëlklip Troop utilised the opportunity to venture further east, past 17<sup>th</sup> avenue on 11 December. The troop, however, returned later in the afternoon and slept above Voëlklip suburb. Although this is not a regular occurrence, it is not unheard of and has been observed by field staff in the past.
- An unidentified troop was observed on one occasion above the waterfall, east of Kanonkop in Fernkloof Nature Reserve.
- Four incidents in which baboons encountered dogs in Fernkloof Nature Reserve were recorded during December. These encounters occurred at the Three Dams and the Zig Zag Footpath. Dog owners are encouraged to only use designated dog-friendly routes and always keep dogs on a lead when in the reserve. This ensures the safety of the pet as well as the safety of the wildlife.



## 2.3 BIRTHS, DEATHS & MIGRATIONS

- On 31 December 2020, a female was seen carrying a dead infant. The cause of death is unknown, but the infant was suspected to be stillborn.



Figure 2.1: GPS locations of the Voëlklip Troop as determined by the GPS collar during December 2020.

HWS: TROOP MONTHLY REPORT																																	
SECTOR		CLASSES OF BEHAVIOUR																															
OVERSTRAND		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	TOTAL
BABOON TROOP: VOËLKLIP		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	TOTAL
MONTH: December YEAR: 2020		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	TOTAL
Troop																																	
VKM2 ALPHA																																	
VGM1 BLUE TAG																																	
VKF4 YELLOW TAG																																	
VKF5 RED TAG																																	
VKF1 GREEN TAG																																	
UnID Male																																	
UnID Males																																	
UnID Female																																	
UnID Females																																	
UnID Individuals																																	
UnID Juvs																																	
Troop																																	
Individuals																																	
Roost:																																	
Roost:																																	
Roost Sites																																	
ID Features of Baboons																																	
General remarks																																	

Figure 2.2: The Voëlklip Troop incident sheet for December 2020.

### 3 VOGELGAT TROOP

The troop spent most of its time in the Vogelgat and Maanschynkop Nature Reserves and did not venture much further west than the Castle Sleep Site. The troop did not approach the town on a single occasion during December.

#### 3.1 IN TOWN STATISTICS

- Time out of town for the troop was 100% in December.
- Time out of town for individuals was 100% in December.
- No entries into town by the troop or individuals were recorded for December.

#### 3.2 NOTEWORTHY INCIDENTS

- The troop did not enter the buffer zone (a 200m wide zone running parallel to the urban edge) on a single occasion during December.
- No house incursions or bin raids were recorded for December.
- On 31 December a hotline call reported a single large baboon in the vicinity of 14th Avenue. Field staff responded to the call, but no baboon was observed in the area. Due to the location of the Voëlklip and Vogelgat Troop at the time, it did not seem likely to be a member of either of those troops. It is, however, possible that a lone dispersing male (possibly from Vogelgat troop) was present in the area, but no further sightings have been reported.
- On 31 December the Vogelgat Troop was chased by multiple dogs on the path heading east from the top of 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue along the powerline. The baboons retreated and the owners of the dogs restrained their pets. The public is encouraged to report feral and/or dogs not in control of their owners to the **Overstrand Law Enforcement Call Centre: 028 313 8111.**
- The troop spent considerably less time next to the R43 this month. Previous months indicated that the troop spent a considerable amount of time next to the R43. Due to the dangers associated with traffic on the R43, field staff have discouraged baboons from spending time next to the R43.

#### 3.3 VIRTUAL FENCE

- During December the Vogelgat Troop never approached the Virtual Fence line outside Hermanus, so there was never a need for the Virtual Fence to be deployed.
- No hotline calls were received for the Vogelgat Troop in December.

### 3.4 BIRTHS, DEATHS & MIGRATIONS

- No births or deaths were recorded for December.

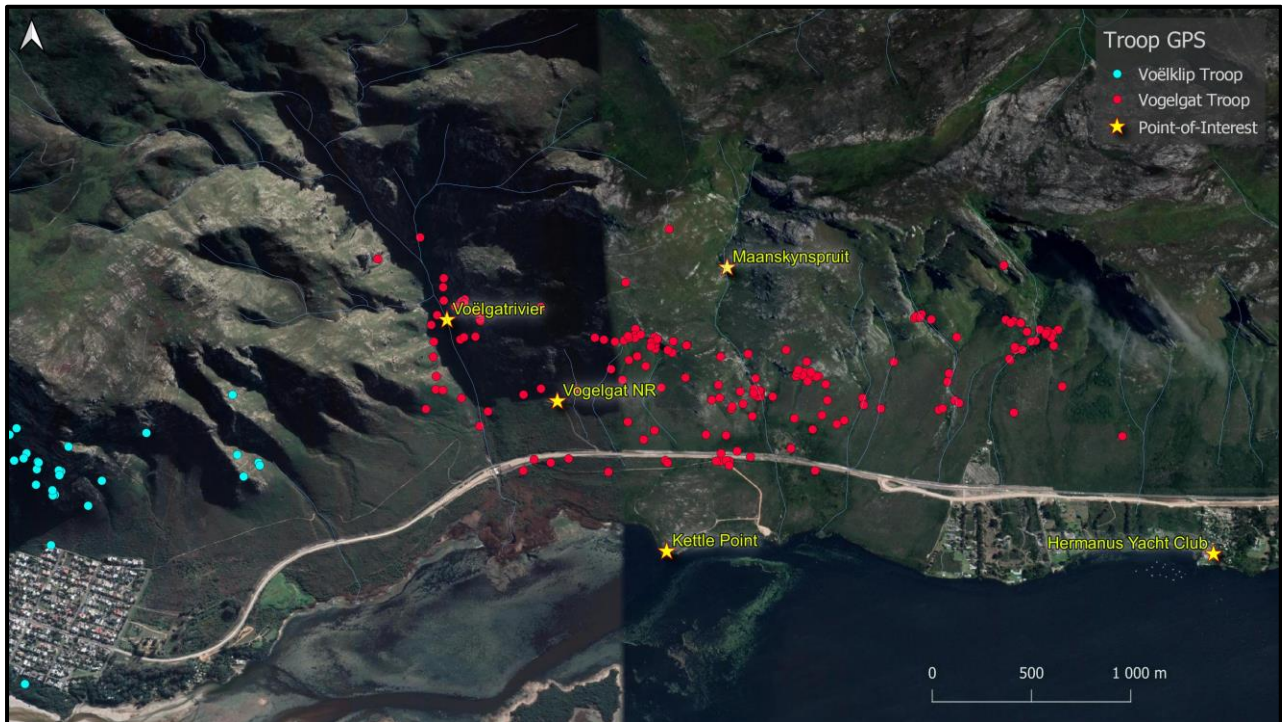


Figure 3.2: GPS locations of the Vogelgat Troop as determined by the GPS collar during December 2020.

HWS: TROOP MONTHLY REPORT																																
SECTOR		CLASSES OF BEHAVIOUR																														
OVERSTRAND		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	TOTAL
BABOON TROOP:	VOGELGAT																															
MONTH: December	YEAR: 2020																															
BABOON ID	Sex	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	TOTAL
Troop																																0
VGF1	F																															0
UnID Male	M																															0
UnID Males	M																															0
UnID Females	F																															0
UnID Female	F																															0
UnID Individuals																																0
UnID Juvs																																0
	%	TIME SPENT IN TOWN (Minutes)																														
Troop	0,0																															0,00
Individuals	0,0																															0,00
Roost:	AM																															
Roost:	PM																															
Roost Sites																																
		1	Baboon Castle				2	18th Ave Kloof				3	11th Ave Kloof				4	10th Ave Kloof				5	Uitkyk Punt									
		6	Vogelgat Nature Reserve				7	Halfway Ridge																								
ID Features of Baboons																																
General remarks																																

Figure 3.1: The Vogelgat Troop incident sheet for December 2020.

## 4 PRINGLE BAY TROOP

### 4.1 IN TOWN STATISTICS

- The Pringle Bay Troop spent 100% of its time out of town in December.
- Time out of town for individuals was 99.9%
- The troop occupied the northern part of their range this month, regularly roosting at the Buffelsriver Dam Sleep Sites and the Boulders Sleep Site.
- The troop did not enter town during December.
- PBF2 was the only individual baboon to enter town during December.

### 4.2 NOTEWORTHY INCIDENTS

- Four non-urban occupied house incursions were recorded on 8, 9, 14 and 22 December. The incursions took place at houses in the following locations: the R44, Porter Road, Buffels River Dam Road, and the Hottentot's Holland Mountain Catchment Area (HHMCA). These incursions can be attributed to human negligence by leaving a door or window open. On one occasion, five individual baboons were able to slide an unlocked window open.
- PBF2 moved away from the troop without its six-month-old infant on two occasions this month. PBF2 roosted at the Professor Sleep Site and returned to the troop the following day. The infant was observed being cared for by its older siblings.
- The Hangklip Troop was seen on the mountain above town on one occasion this month at the Punt Sleep Site. Concerningly, males from the Hangklip Troop entered town at Hangklip, High-level, Surf and Midway Roads on two occasions. Fortunately, the males display a healthy fear of humans and are reluctant to enter houses and venture deep into town. The males could be displaying natural dispersal behaviour.
- The Pringle Bay Troop spent December in the HHMCA moving near the Buffelsrivier Dam. The troop has been recorded foraging on a variety of plant species from sixteen families. The troop showed a high affinity for the abundant bergpalmiet (*Tetraria thermalis*). This plant is one of the first species to resprout after a fire and the fleshy basal parts of the foliage as well as the seeds were relished by the baboons. Geophytes are common and easily accessible in this area. The baboons were observed digging for hours while foraging on these underground storage organs. There are favourable sleep sites and an abundance of water in the HHMCA.



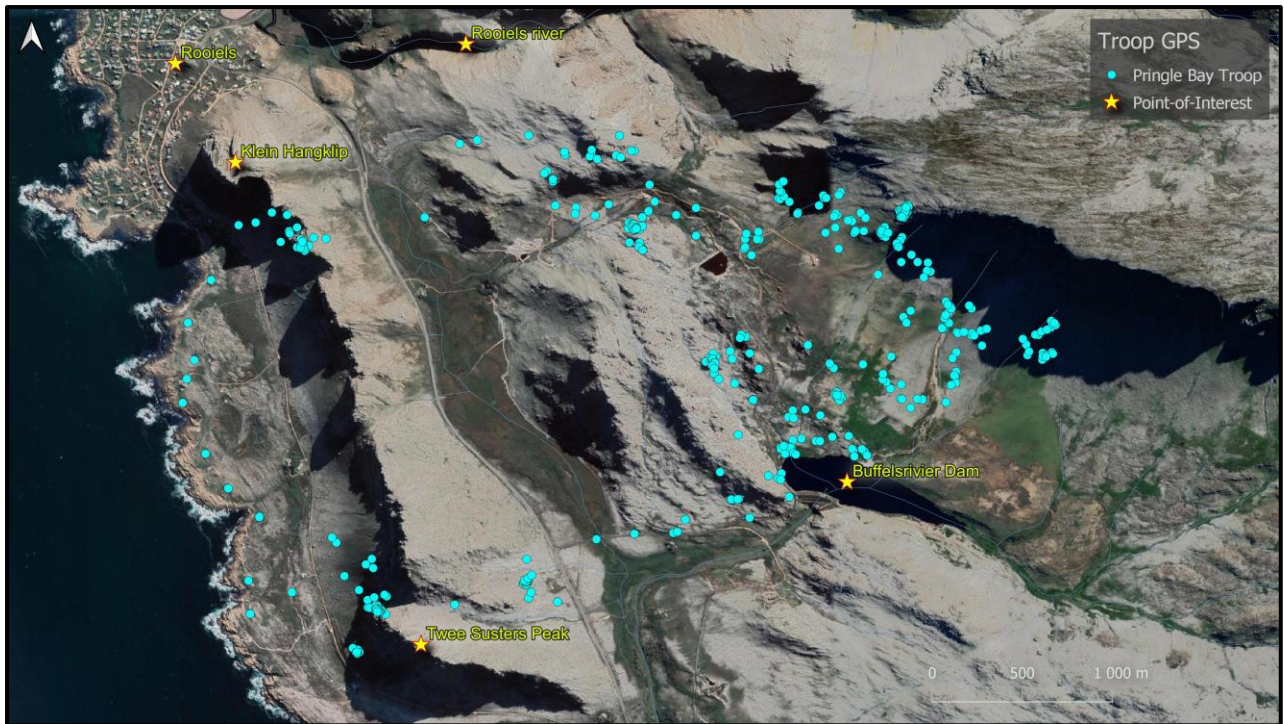
- The lone male (now assigned baboon ID BRM1) observed interacting with the Pringle Bay Troop last month has successfully integrated into the troop. Initially, PBM1 was observed chasing BRM1 from the troop but the alpha male displayed fatigue during these encounters because of its deformed back left foot. BRM1 inflicted a laceration to PBM1's left shoulder during the only observation of physical contact. BRM1 has been observed in open mouth displays directly next to PBM1. The troop has been observed grooming and presenting to BRM1, including PBF1, the alpha female. PBM1 has been deposited and spends more time on the periphery of the troop.
- The Buffelsriver Troop was encountered on 13 occasions this month. Generally, inter-troop conflict was limited to wahoo displays which resulted in both troops moving in opposite directions. Males from the Buffelsriver Troop mainly chased the Pringle Bay Troop if the troop moved north-west towards the Rooiels River. BRM1 and PBM1 have been observed defending the troop together during inter-troop conflict.
- On 25 December, PBM1 was observed turning over a rock at the Boulders Sleepsite, and something under the rock startled PBM1. This caused uneasiness and restlessness amongst the troop. The troop moved north-west during the day and were reluctant to change direction. In the evening, the baboons turned to the west, crossed the R44 and settled at a sleepsite close to Rooiels. On 26 December, the troop saw the Rooiels Troop which caused movement in a southerly direction. The Pringle Bay Troop spent the duration of the day foraging along the coast. There was no interaction with the Rooiels Troop.

### 4.3 BIRTHS, DEATHS & MIGRATIONS

- No births or deaths were recorded for December 2020.
- BRM1 immigrated to the Pringle Bay Troop this month.

HWS: TROOP MONTHLY REPORT																																				
SECTOR		CLASSES OF BEHAVIOUR																																		
OVERSTRAND		1	In urban area	4	Attacking pets	7	Threatening behaviour/attack/stealing food																													
BABOON TROOP:	PRINGLE BAY	2	Raid bins	5	Unoccupied house or vehicle incursion		8	Breaking & Entering/Damaging property																												
MONTH: DECEMBER	YEAR: 2020	3	Non malicious damage		6	Occupied house or vehicle incursion		9	Nocturnal incursion																											
BABOON ID	Sex	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	TOTAL			
Troop																																				
PBM1	M																																			
PBM2	M																																			
PBF1	F								6																								1			
PBF2	F								6															1									2			
PBF3	F																																			
UnID Male	M																																			
UnID Females	F																																			
UnID Female	F														6																		1			
UnID Individuals															6								6										2			
UnID Juveniles									6																								1			
	%	TIME SPENT IN TOWN (Minutes)																															HRS			
Troop	0,0																															0,00				
Individuals	0,1																						30									0,50				
Roost:	AM	10	12	12	14	14	14	14	14	16	12	12	14	13	17	14	12	12	12	15	15	15	15	15	10	12	12	19	10	16	17	18	18			
Roost:	PM	12	12	14	14	14	14	16	12	12	14	13	17	14	12	12	12	15	15	15	15	15	10	12	12	19	10	16	17	18	18	18				
Roost Sites		1	Professor				2	Hangklip				3	Axel Kop				4	Pringle Peak				5	Lemoenkop													
		6	Panelbeaters				7	Valley				8	Stink Kop				9	Waldo's Farm SS1				10	Waldo's Farm SS2													
		11	Pieter's				12	Boulders				13	Buffels River Dam 1				14	Buffels River Dam 2				15	Buffels River Dam 3													
		16	Panelbeaters				17	Concrete house				18	Gullies				19	Rooiels																		
ID Features of Baboons																																				
General remarks		Red Italics indicate a non-urban raid.																																		

Figure 4.1: The Pringle Bay Troop incident sheet for December 2020.



**Figure 4.2:** GPS locations of the Pringle Bay Troop as determined by the GPS collar during December 2020.

## 5 GENERAL COMMENTS

### 5.1 POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

One suspected stillbirth was observed this month in the Voëlklip Troop. One migration into the Pringle Bay troop by a dispersing male (suspected from the Buffels River Troop) was recorded this month. The population data of the three managed troops can be seen in Table 5.1 and 5.2 below.

TROOP	OCTOBER	JUNE	DECEMBER 2020			Total observed Births (1 July 2020 to Present)	Total observed Deaths (1 July 2020 to Present)	Total Migrations (1 July 2020 to Present)
	2019	2020	Births	Deaths	Emigration / Immigration			
Voëlklip	29	29	1	1	0	1	1	0
Vogelgat*	N/A	22	0	0	0	0	1	0
Pringle Bay	16	16	0	0	1	4	1	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>

**Table 5.1:** Population data for the three managed troops in the Overstrand in December 2020.

Emigration/Immigration figures show animal movements between troops and are accommodated in the troop population totals. \*Count of the Vogelgat Troop completed in December 2020.

Deaths	2019/20 (October - June)	2020/21 (June - July)	December 2020	TOTAL (since October 2019)
Management	3	0	0	3
Human Induced (HID)	1	2	0	3
<i>Direct **</i>	1	2	0	3
<i>Indirect ***</i>		0	0	0
Natural	2	1	1	3
Unknown		0	0	0
<b>TOTAL DEATHS</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>9</b>

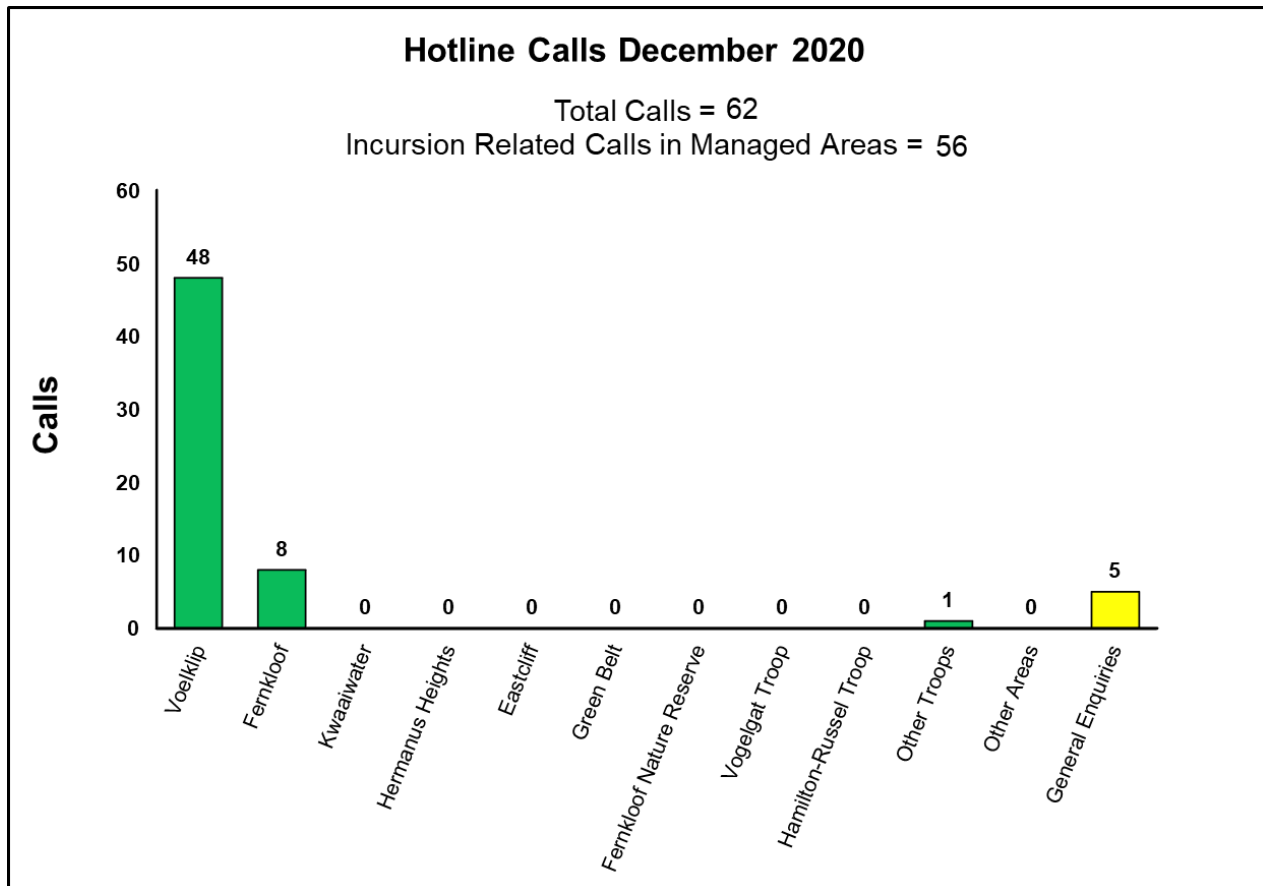
**Table 5.2:** Causes of baboon deaths since December 2019; \*\*Deaths caused directly by humans, such as motor vehicle accidents, shooting, poisoning and dogs. \*\*\*Deaths caused indirectly by humans such as electrocutions and fire.

## 5.2 HOTLINE DATA

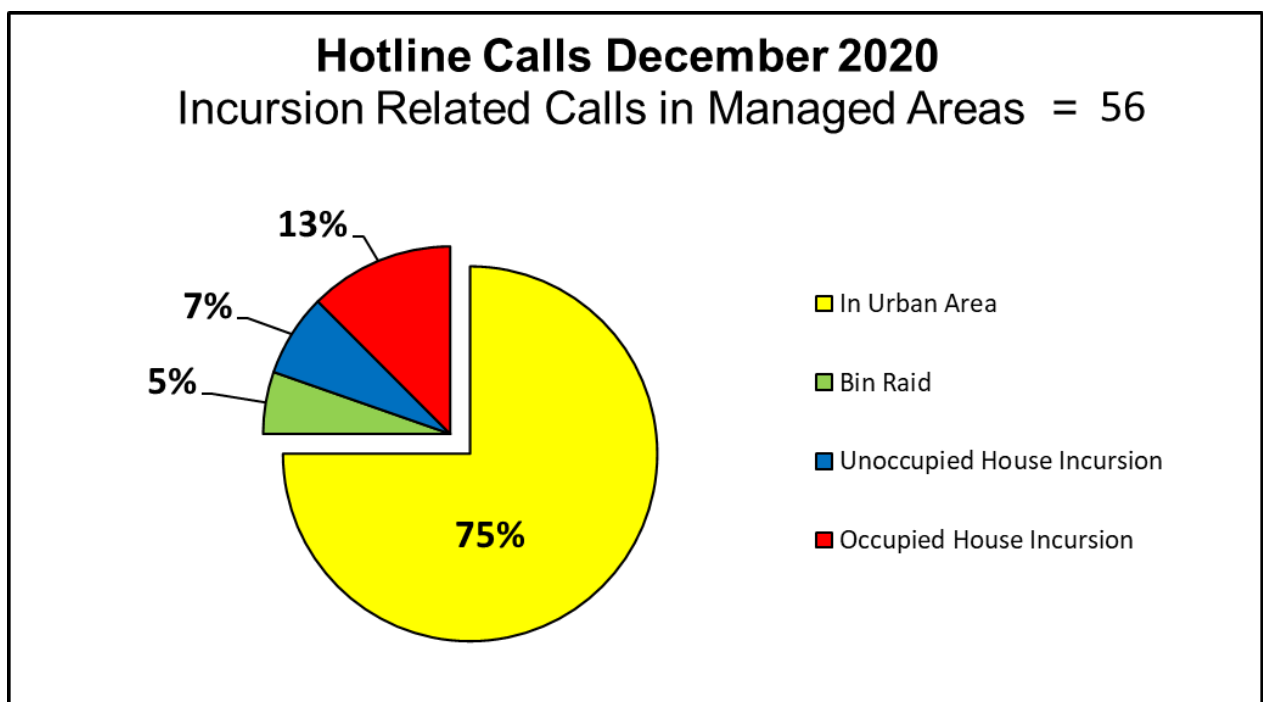
A total of 62 hotline calls were received this month. This was a significant increase (approximately double) the number received in November. This is most likely due to the arrival of large numbers of holidaymakers, who are often not baboon aware and create ample opportunities for baboons to obtain human-derived foods. However, hotline calls during December remained lower than the 2020 monthly average of 108. This is a positive indication of the success of the baboon management programme and bodes well for 2021.

Hotline calls are for the Hermanus area only, because the Pringle Bay residents operate using another system of reporting incursions. HWS requests that Pringle Bay residents start reporting the presence of baboons in the urban area to the Baboon Hotline (072 028 0008). Use of this number will ensure that the field manager on duty is made aware of the problem more timeously and therefore respond sooner.

The majority of hotline calls again reported baboons in the urban area (75%). Four unoccupied house incursions and seven occupied house incursions were reported to the hotline in December, up from just two occupied incursions reported in November. This is not unexpected as houses were more likely to be occupied during the day during the holiday period. However, it does also indicate that several individuals were prepared to enter occupied houses.



**Figure 5.1:** Hotline calls in baboon affected areas of Hermanus for December 2020. Incursion related hotline calls are calls reporting managed baboons in urban areas. Managed areas are those areas in which baboon troops are known to occur and are actively managed. Other Areas represent those areas beyond the urban edge or the range of managed baboons.



**Figure 5.2:** Composition of incursion-related hotline calls during December 2020. Note: this graph represents the composition of hotline calls, not the composition of known incursions by baboons.



### 5.3 PERCENTAGE TIME OUT OF TOWN

During December 2020, the average time out of town of every managed troop was 100%. This is the first time all the managed troops have been 100% out of town as troops. However, the average time out of town for individuals within the troops was 96.9%. Individual time in town is only counted if individuals or small groups of baboons enter the urban area alone. Apart from one incursion by one individual from the Pringle Bay Troop, all the incursions by managed baboons were from the Voëlklip Troop.

PERCENTAGE TIME OUT OF TOWN	TROOP	INDIVIDUAL
Voëlklip Troop	100.0	92.5
Vogelgat Troop	100.0	100.0
Pringle Bay Troop	100.0	99.9
Average Percentage Time Out of Town	100.0	97.5

**Table 5.3:** Percentage time the Voëlklip, Vogelgat and Pringle Bay Troops and individuals spent out of town during December 2020.

### 5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Waste and recycling collection should be prioritised** to take place in the early mornings in suburbs affected by baboons. This will reduce the attractant value of the waste to baboons. This is especially important for the area north of the Main Road in Voëlklip suburb, which is close to the mountainside. Here waste is currently collected at around midday.
- **Waste and recycling collection should be prioritised** to take place in the early morning in Pringle Bay. This will reduce the attractant value and accessibility of the waste to baboons.
- The **waste collection point (bin cage)** at the entrance to Pringle Bay should be sufficiently secured/enclosed to prevent baboons and other wildlife gaining access to the waste. This should be collected by solid waste regularly to prevent the waste from becoming unmanageable, particularly during the holiday season and long weekends. Waste should not be left outside this collection point (bin cage), because it is a major attractant to baboons.
- All bins used in baboon-affected areas should be **baboon-proof and locked**.
- **Refuse bags** should not be left lying open on the sidewalk, easily available to baboons.
- Ripening **fruit on fruit trees** in baboon-affected areas should be harvested to remove this attractant for baboons.

- **Open vegetable gardens** should be baboon-proofed. This will reduce baboon incursions into the suburbs.
- There are many **tall pine and bluegum trees** (alien invasive plants) on the Hermanus Golf Course that provide ideal sleep sites for baboons, particularly in winter. If many of these trees (particularly pines) could be removed it would greatly reduce the baboons' incentive to sleep in town.
- **Occupied house** incursions by the Pringle Bay Troop declined this month. Incursions occurred in non-urban areas because a door or window was left open. House owners left their **doors and windows open** by day and do not have burglar bars. Residents are encouraged to install **baboon-proof** burglar bars and **security gates** where possible.

## 6 CONCLUSION

December is generally a difficult month in baboon management in the Overstrand due to the large influx of visitors to the coastal towns in the area. More people equates to more waste as well as more opportunities for a highly opportunistic species to gain access to human-derived foods. Despite these challenges, December proved to be a successful month and none of the troops entered town.

The Voëlklip Troop only utilised the central and eastern sleep sites during December. A clear shift to the eastern sleep sites (above Voëlklip suburb) was observed during the second half of the month. Because these sleep sites are generally much closer to the urban edge, it meant access to urban incursions were increased. This may have been by design or just a side effect of human activities. The increased number of visitors to Fernkloof Nature Reserve (often accompanied by dogs) along with the regular presence of paragliders above Hermanus Heights, could have deterred the baboons from using the central and western areas of their normal range.

For the fourth consecutive month the Vogelgat Troop has not (nor have individuals) entered town. This clearly demonstrates the long term success of the Virtual Fence. The Virtual Fence was last activated on 10 October 2020, and has kept the Vogelgat Troop out of the urban area ever since. In addition to previous months, the troop did not enter the 200m wide (from the urban edge) buffer zone once this month. The troop continued to spend its time in the Vogelgat and Maanschynekop Nature Reserves.

During December the Pringle Bay Troop foraged exclusively in the northern part of their range. This is most probably because of the dominant influence of the new and wild alpha male, as well as the current abundance of forage, water, and sleepsites in the Hottentot's Holland Mountain Catchment Area.

Residents in suburbs affected by baboons are again asked to contribute towards keeping the baboons wild and safe by preventing the urban area from being attractive to baboons. This can be done by keeping doors and windows closed when the baboons are in town, not leaving food in locations visible to baboons, improving waste management, baboon-proofing vegetable gardens and removing fruit from fruit trees. Leaving plastic bags on the pavement before or on bin day is probably the greatest attractant one can provide for baboons. Once discovered, one is almost guaranteed of having a large number of baboons in town for a few hours.

### **Human Wildlife Solutions**