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Human Wildlife Solutions

Overstrand

Monthly Report

April 2021

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1 INTRODUCTION

This monthly report covers the period from 1 to 30 April 2021. This month, at the request of the Overstrand Municipality, HWS has introduced new formats for the graphical presentation of 'Time out of Town' and incursions by individuals (formerly known as raid sheets). It is hoped that these new graphs present a more readable and understandable format for the public.

Time in town for the Voëlklip Troop increased this month as individual or small groups of baboons managed to enter the urban space on multiple occasions. Despite the troop only utilising the sleepsites above Voëlklip suburb on a single occasion, the troop spent multiple nights at sleepsites near to the suburb which gave individuals the opportunity to break away from the troop and enter the urban space.

The Vogelgat Troop spent the majority of its time in the eastern reaches of its home range and only spent three nights above the urban space. The Virtual Fence was used to keep the troop out of the urban space 100% of the time.

The Virtual Fence was used to deter the Onrus Troop when it returned to Berghof Estates for the first time since the Virtual Fence was activated there in March. The Hamilton Russel Troop was observed less frequently this month compared to March and was observed above Hermanus Heights on a single occasion.

The Pringle Bay Troop spent 100% time out of town this month and continued to utilise the Buffelstal Nature Reserve. BRM1 was observed associating with the dominant females in the troop and is now definitely the alpha male. The previous alpha male, PBM1, associated mostly with juvenile baboons and has started to spend more time on the periphery of the troop.

Management of the Betty's Bay Troop officially commenced on 19 April 2021. This troop is very different from any other known troop in the western Cape. Not only is it much more habituated to the presence of humans, but at least three males have acquired the ability to break into houses by breaking sliding doors or windows. Furthermore, as a result of being so habituated to humans (lost their natural fear of humans), this troop has also acquired the habit of splitting up into many small units when they get into the urban area. The advantage of this trait for baboons, is that low ranking individuals can forage alone or in small groups and therefore not lose any choice items to the larger dominant adults if they find any. It was therefore a totally new experience for HWS when starting to manage this troop. Nevertheless, over a twelve day period this month, the troop and individual baboons both spent over 90% of their time out of town.

2 OVERSTRAND EAST TROOPS

2.1 VOËLKLIP TROOP

2.1.1 IN TOWN STATISTICS

- Time out of town for the troop decreased from 100% in March to 99.1% in April.
- Time out of town for individuals decreased from 97.7% in March to 90.2% in April.

2.1.2 NOTEWORTHY INCIDENTS

2.1.2.1 HERMANUS HEIGHTS & GOLF COURSE

- No house incursions were reported in April.
- On 15 April, a single bin raid was reported on Fernkloof drive, while on 23 April, multiple bin raids were reported on Fernkloof Drive, Raed na Gael Street, Selkirk Street.
- On 16 and 21 April, individuals managed to enter the Golf course.

2.1.2.2 VOËLKLIP & FERNKLOOF

- Six occupied house incursions and one unoccupied house incursion were reported in April. These occurred on 2nd Street, 4th Street, 5th Street, 10th Street, Contour Road and Riverside Road.
- Four bin raids were reported. These all occurred on 4th Street.

2.1.2.3 GENERAL

- Multiple conflicts were observed between the males in the troop with physical contact observed during two of the conflicts. No injuries were observed.
- On 16 April 2021, a conflict was observed between VKM2 and UNKM1 after an aggressive interaction was observed between UNKM1 and an unidentified female.
- The troop entered town on a single occasion in April. Thick mist on the cliffs above Voëlklip gave individuals the opportunity to sneak past the ranger line unnoticed. The majority of the troop managed to enter the urban space.

- Individual or small groups of baboons entered the urban space on multiple occasions in April. In such events limited resources are dedicated to moving these baboons out of the urban space as the focus remains on keeping the troop out of the urban space. This along with the ability of small groups or individual baboons to hide more easily in the urban space, leads to these individuals spending extended periods of time in the urban space.
- On 23 April, an unidentified troop was observed above Erica close. The Voëlklip Troop was nearby, and vocalisations were exchanged between the two troops. The troops moved in opposite directions shortly thereafter, with the unidentified troop moving west and the Voëlklip Troop moving east.

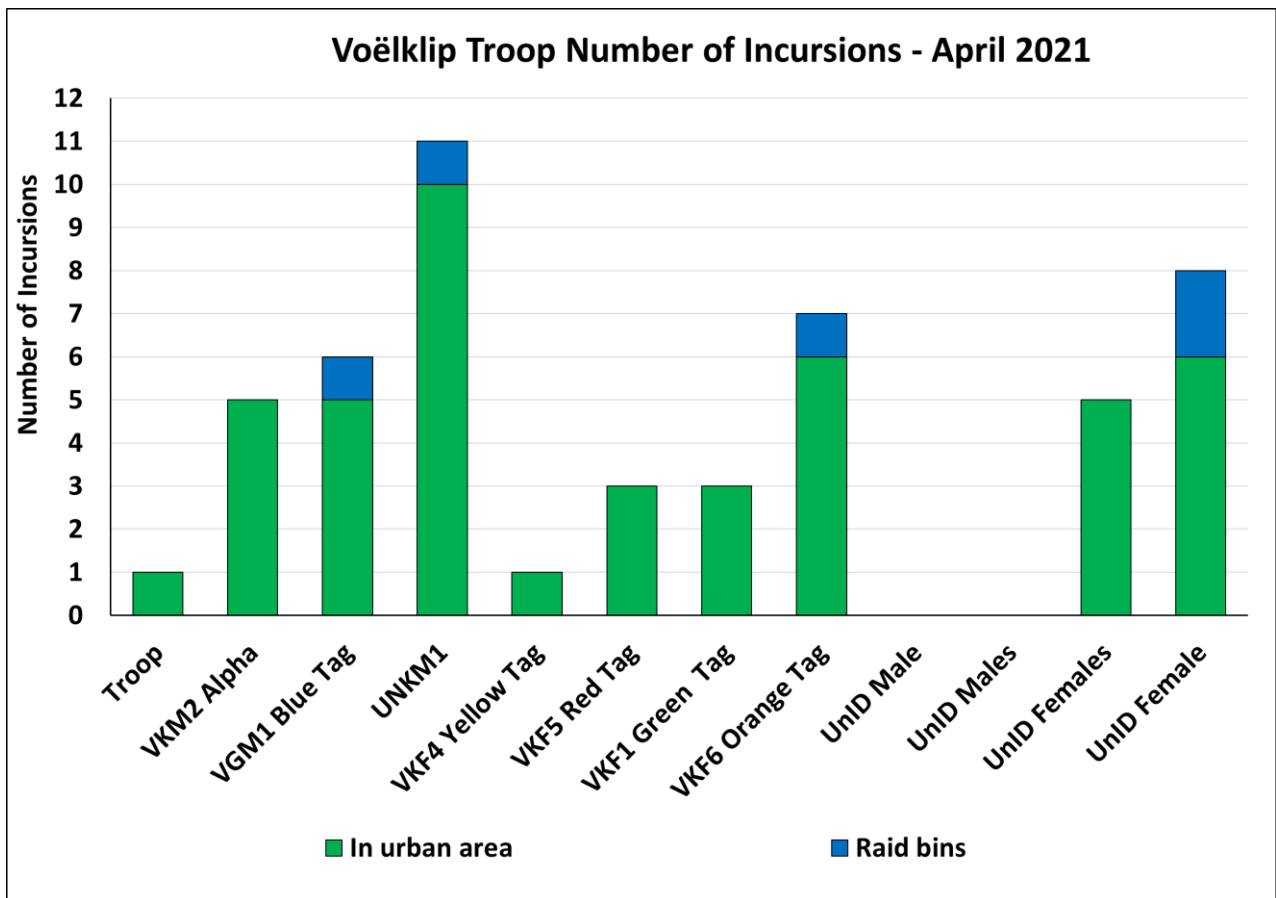


Figure 2.1: Incursions by the Voëlklip Troop and individuals during April 2021.

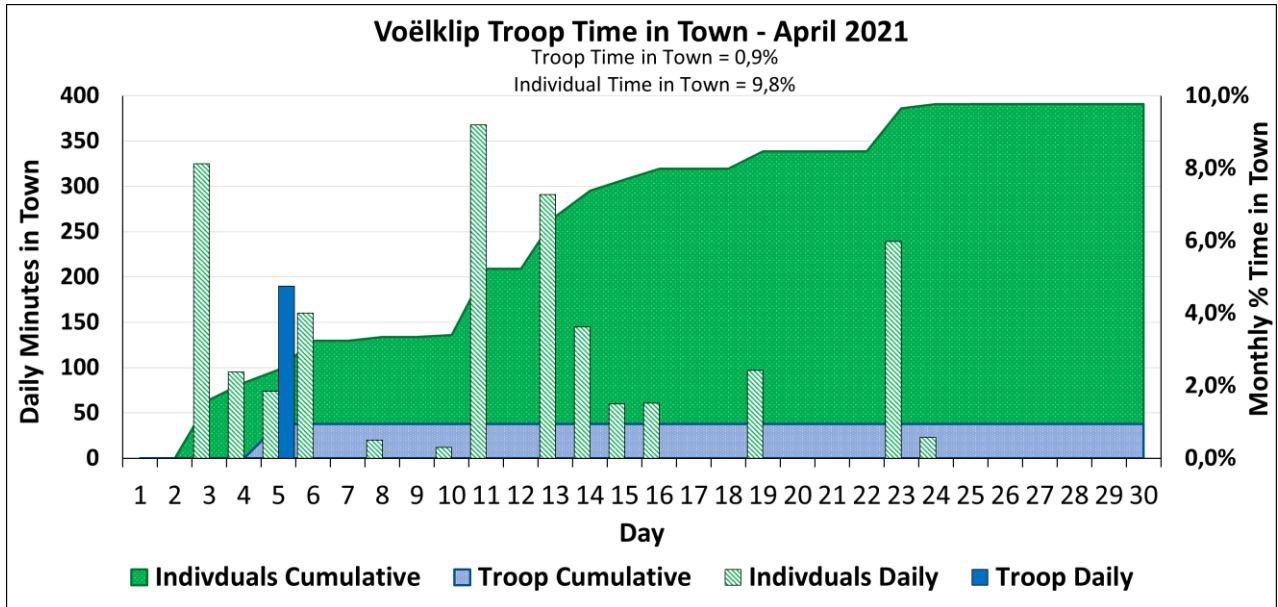


Figure 2.2: Troop and individual daily (bars) and monthly (area) Time in Town by the Voëlklip Troop during April 2021. Note: Percentage Time in town is recorded as a percentage of the average daylight hours (sunrise to sunset) for each month of the year.

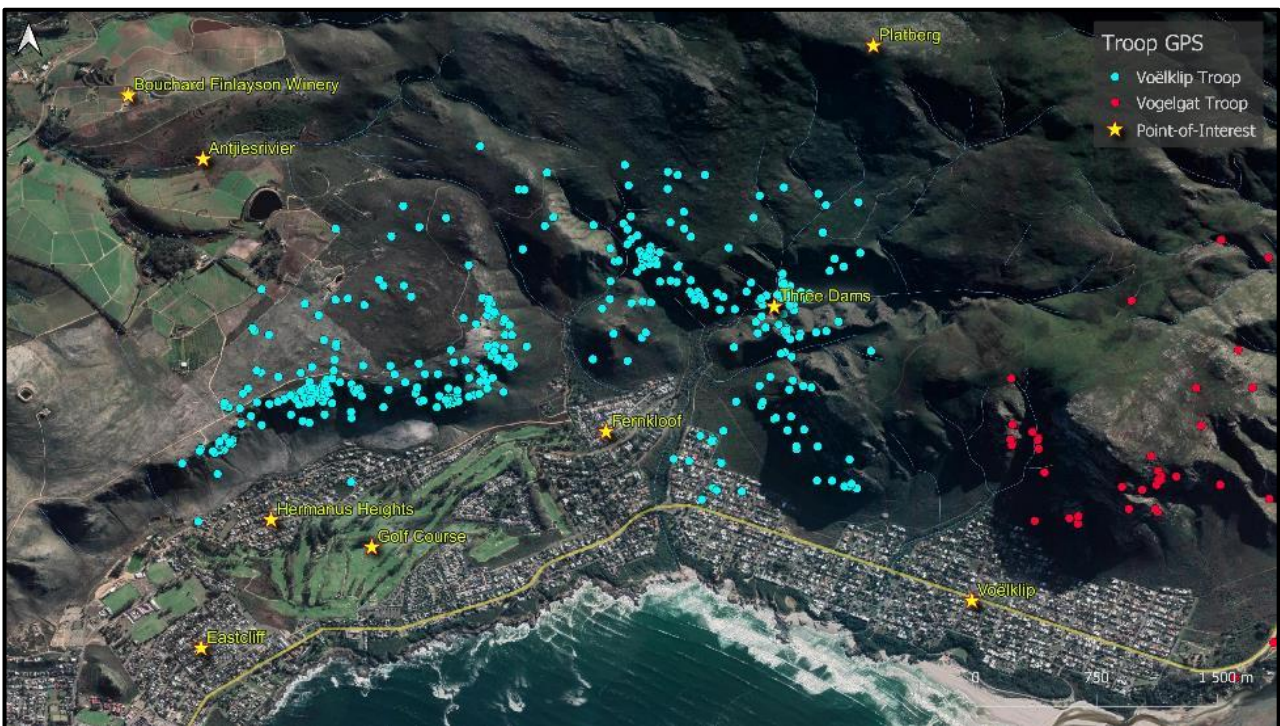


Figure 2.3: GPS locations of the Voëlklip Troop as determined by the GPS collar during April 2021.

2.2 VOGELGAT TROOP

2.2.1 IN TOWN STATISTICS

- Time out of town for the troop was 100% in April.
- Time out of town for individuals was 98.0% in April, an increase from 96.6% in March 2021.

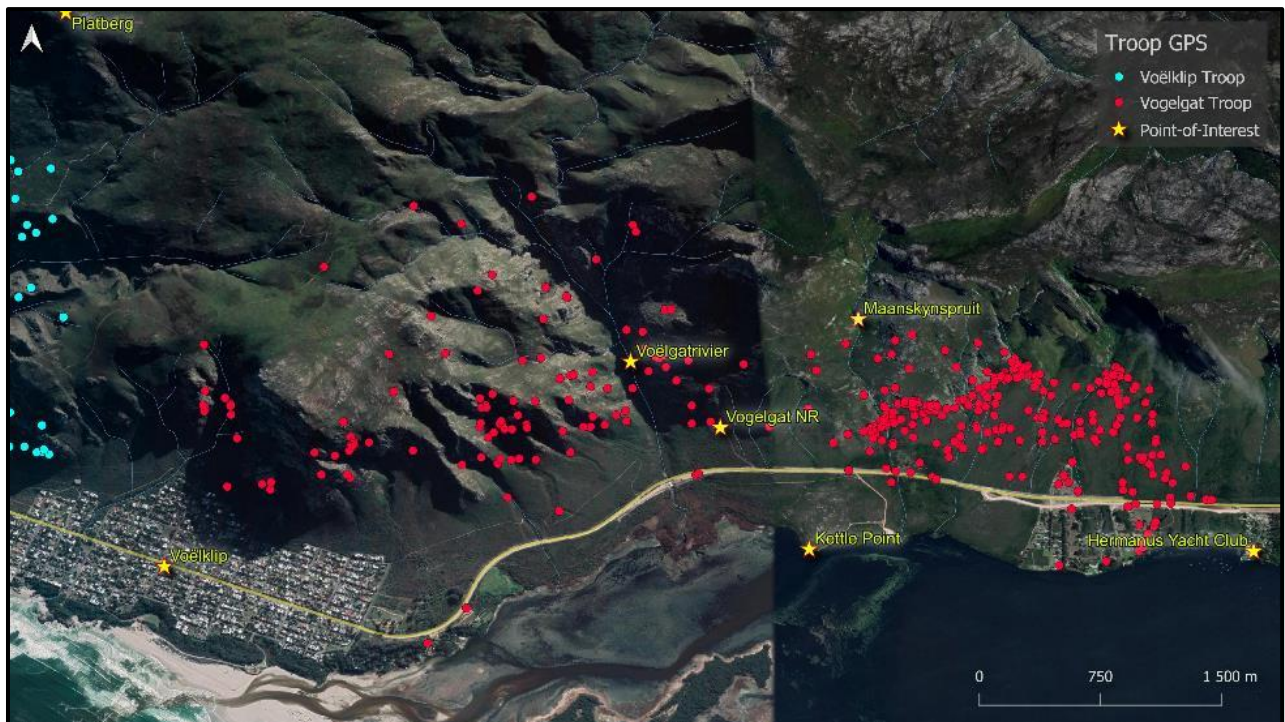


Figure 2.4: GPS locations of the Vogelgat Troop as determined by the GPS collar during April 2021.

2.2.2 NOTEWORTHY INCIDENTS

- Two bin raids were reported on 19 April 2021.
- Three **non-urban** bin raids and one **non-urban** house incursion were reported in April 2021. These occurred along the R43 towards Stanford.
- On four occasions hotline calls reported lone baboons in the urban space. The field team was however unable to locate these lone individuals. Lone baboons can hide easily between properties making it very difficult to locate them. This often means that these lone baboons spend extended periods of time in the urban space. Reports to the hotline by residents are vital in these situations and assists the field team immensely in locating these baboons.
- On 19 April 2021, VGF1 was seen eating berries from an Australian Brush Cherry (*Syzygium paniculatum*) on 7th Street.

- VGM2 was recorded to move independently from the troop on multiple occasions, sometimes alone and sometimes with a small number of individuals. These temporary departures from the troop were frequently followed by attempts to approach the urban space or gain access to human-derived foods or bins.
- On 23 and 24 April, bear bangers were fired by residents from a property along the R43.

2.2.3 VIRTUAL FENCE

- The troop spent three nights in April sleeping on cliffs overlooking the Voëlklip suburb. Strategic use of the Virtual Fence prevented any incursions of the troop into the urban area.

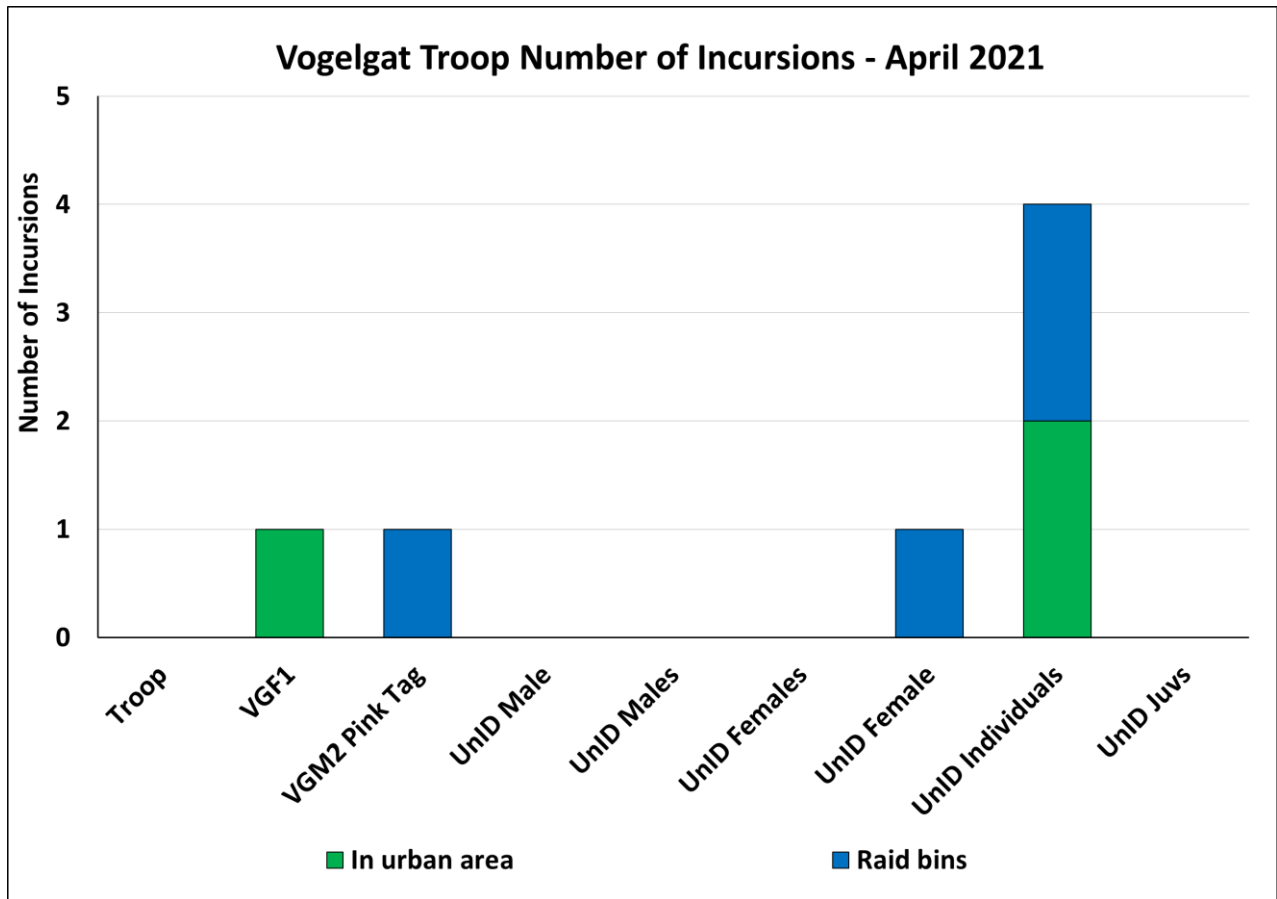


Figure 2.5: Incursions by the Vogelgat Troop and individuals during April 2021.

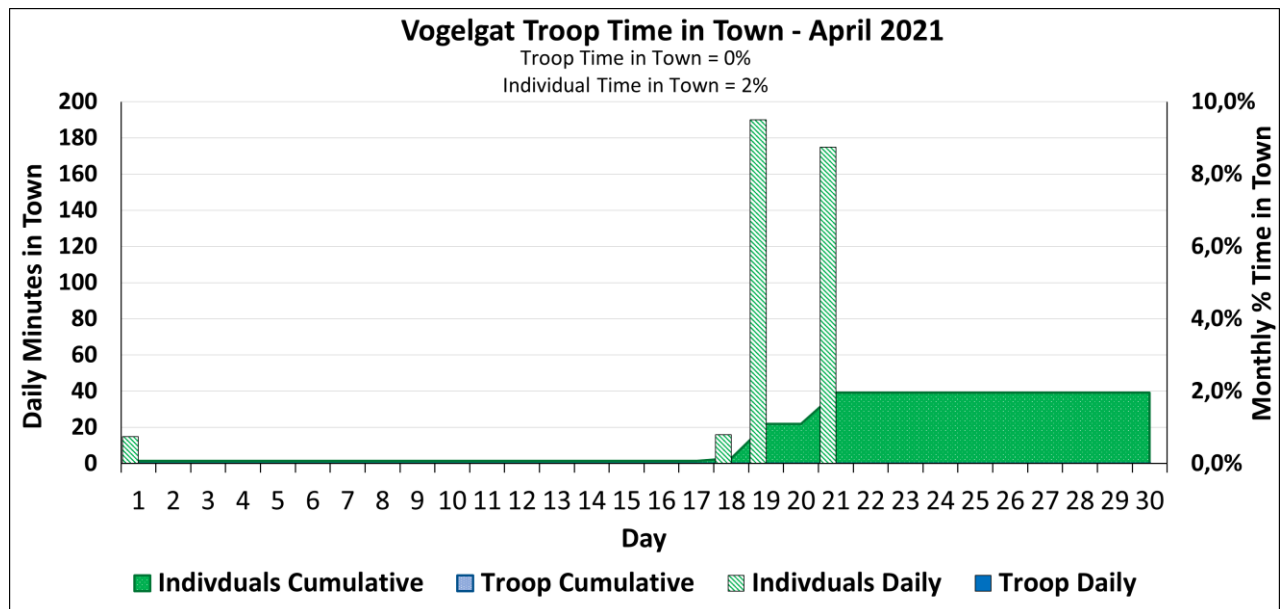


Figure 2.6: Troop and individual daily (bars) and monthly (area) Time in Town by the Vogelgat Troop during April 2021. Note: Percentage Time in town is recorded as a percentage of the average daylight hours (sunrise to sunset) for each month of the year.

2.3 ONRUS TROOP

2.3.1 VIRTUAL FENCE

- The Virtual Fence was activated above Owl Rock road. The troop responded well and moved northeast along the cliffs and away from the urban edge.
- On 30 April the troop moved past near Berghof Estates for the first time since the Virtual Fence was activated there in March.

2.4 HAMILTON RUSSEL TROOP

- An unidentified troop was observed on three occasions in April, once above Erica Close and twice on Kanonkop. The locations of these sightings suggest that it was likely the Hamilton Russell Troop.

2.5 BIRTHS, DEATHS & MIGRATIONS

- VKF4 was observed with a new infant on 25 April 2021, in the Voëlklip Troop.



Figure 2.7: GPS locations of the Onrus Troop as determined by the GPS collar during April 2021.

3 OVERSTRAND WEST TROOPS

3.1 PRINGLE BAY TROOP

3.1.1 IN TOWN STATISTICS

- The Pringle Bay Troop spent 100% of its time out of town in April.
- Individual baboons also spent 100% of their time out of town this month.
- The troop exclusively occupied the Buffelstal Nature Reserve (Figure 3.2).
- No incursion sheet has been provided because no incursions were observed or reported.

3.1.2 NOTEWORTHY INCIDENTS

- The Buffelsriver Troop was encountered in the Buffelstal Nature Reserve seven times this month. BRM1 and PBM1 vocalised when the Buffelsriver Troop was present in the nature reserve. When males from the Buffelsriver Troop approached the Pringle Bay Troop, BRM1 and PBM1 were observed chasing the males back to the Buffelsriver Troop. When the Buffelsriver Troop was present, BRM1 was seen pushing outlying members of the Pringle Bay Troop back to the core of the troop for protection.

- BRM1 is now the dominant (alpha) male in the troop. During this month, the core of the troop was observed associating with BRM1. The dominant females, PBF3 and PBF1 regularly groomed and socialised with BRM1. PBM1 spent most of his time on the periphery of the troop and associated mainly with juvenile baboons. BRM1 mounted PBF1 and PBF3 on several occasions. Neither female was in oestrus at the time.
- BRM1 attempted to attack two infant baboons this month. PBM1 chaperoned PBF2's and PBF4's infants to provide them with protection from BRM1. This is natural behaviour observed amongst baboons when deposed alpha males try to protect their offspring against infanticide by the new alpha male.
- On 12 April, a Pringle Bay resident reported a hit and run incident on the R44. The baboon was an adult female natal to the Rooiels Troop. The baboon was captured and transported for a veterinary assessment. X-rays of the baboon's right arm confirmed a broken humerus. The baboon also suffered head trauma. Due to the extent of the injuries, the baboon was humanely euthanised.
- On 13 April, BRM1 hunted a Cape Scrub Hare in the nature reserve. When BRM1 captured the hare, the troop mobbed the male. It is suspected that the baboons thought that BRM1 captured an infant and that the troop tried to protect the infant. BRM1 ran away from the troop and consumed the hare alone. On 20 April, PBM1 was observed eating honey from a natural beehive.
- On 22 April, PBF3 was seen returning to the troop from the direction of the Buffelstal Water Works. It is uncertain if an incursion took place. No reports were received.

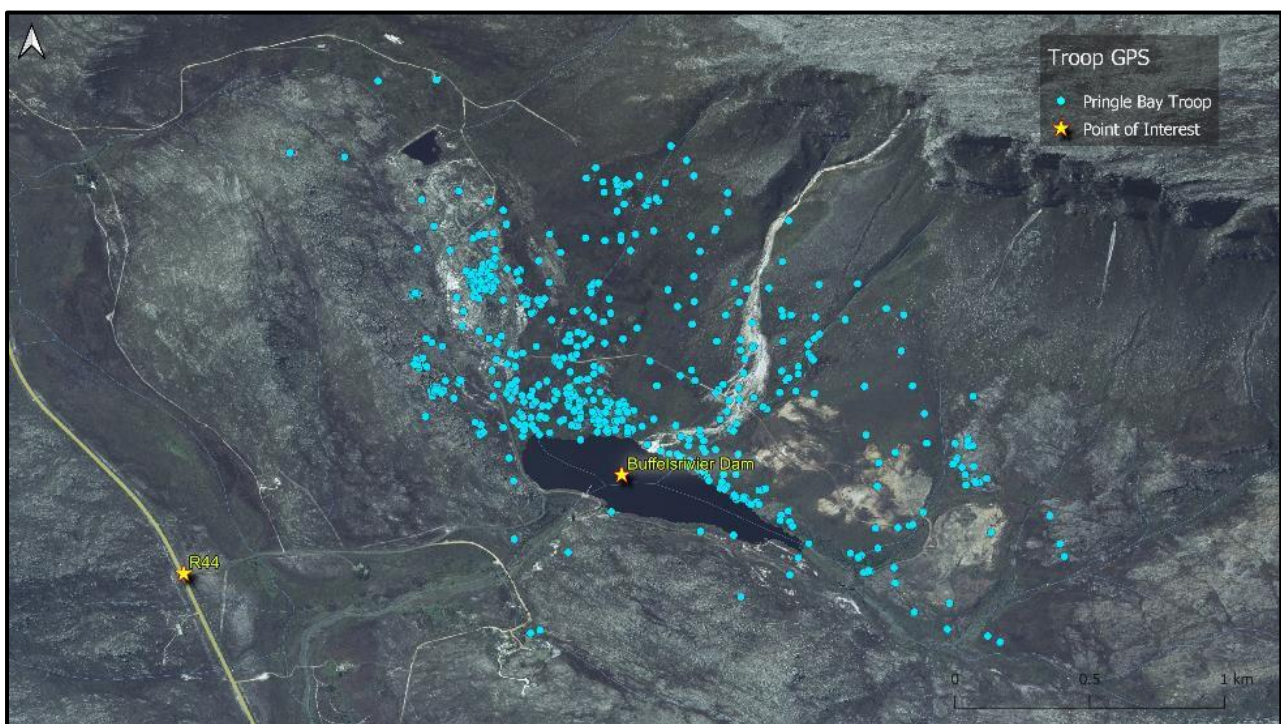


Figure 3.1: GPS locations of the Pringle Bay Troop as determined by the GPS collar during April 2021.

3.2 BETTY'S BAY TROOP

3.2.1 IN TOWN STATISTICS

- HWS officially commenced with management of the Betty's Bay Troop on 19 April 2021. This section of the report covers a 12-day period from 19 April to 30 April.
- During April, the troop was prevented from entering town on eight out of the 12 days.
- The Betty's Bay Troop spent 93.8% of time out of town during the period 19 – 30 April.
- Individual baboons spent 97% of time out of town during the period 19 – 30 April.

3.2.2 NOTEWORTHY INCIDENTS

- On 20 April, an unidentified baboon broke and entered a house on Bass Road. The incident was not witnessed by HWS, but the field team was alerted by the activated alarm. ASK Security was also present on the scene. The sliding door was partially pulled off its railing which caused the glass to shatter, and the glass panel of a centre window was also removed. Several individual baboons entered the house and obtained human-derived food. Betty's Bay Glass was on site to repair the damage to the property.
- On 20 April, BBM3 was identified trying to break and enter a home on Bass Road. The baboon was encouraged to move away from the property.
- On 21 April, construction workers on the R44 reported that baboons took their unattended bags and ate their food.
- On 21 April, an unidentified baboon broke and entered a house on Bass Road. HWS did not witness the incident but was alerted by an activated alarm. Sandown Security arrived on the scene and started to repair the damaged door. The sliding door was partially pulled off its railing.
- On 21 April, BBM1 entered an occupied house on Aristeia Road. The baboon gained access through an open door.
- On 21 April, SANBI employees reported that a baboon stole a toy directly from a child in the lower section of the Harold Porter Botanical Gardens.
- On 22 April, BBM3, BBF1 and a juvenile were prevented from entering the Disa Kloof Campsite on three occasions. The three baboons have been observed moving away from the troop frequently.
- On 23 April, a resident on Kloof Street reported that an adult male entered their occupied house. The baboon entered the house through an open door and took food.
- On 23 April, BBM1 attempted to break into seven houses, trying to break sliding doors or windows. The baboon was prevented from damaging the properties on all seven occasions.
- On 23 April, BBM3 and BBF1 entered the occupied Bayside Backpackers. The same baboons returned later that afternoon, and broke and entered the backpackers through a sliding door.

BBM3 and BBF1 were approximately 1.65 kilometres from the rest of the troop which was at Jock’s Bay at the time.

- On 27 April, a resident on High-level Road reported a house incursion, the individual was not identified.
- On 27 April, BBM1 broke into a house on Cliff Road. The sliding door was completely removed from its railings.
- It is important to note that HWS report on incursions that have been witnessed first-hand or on information provided by residents. Residents are encouraged to contact the baboon hotline (072 028 0008) to ensure that all incursions can be recorded accurately.

3.3 BIRTHS, DEATHS & MIGRATIONS

- No births or deaths were recorded for the Pringle Bay and Betty’s Bay Troop during April.

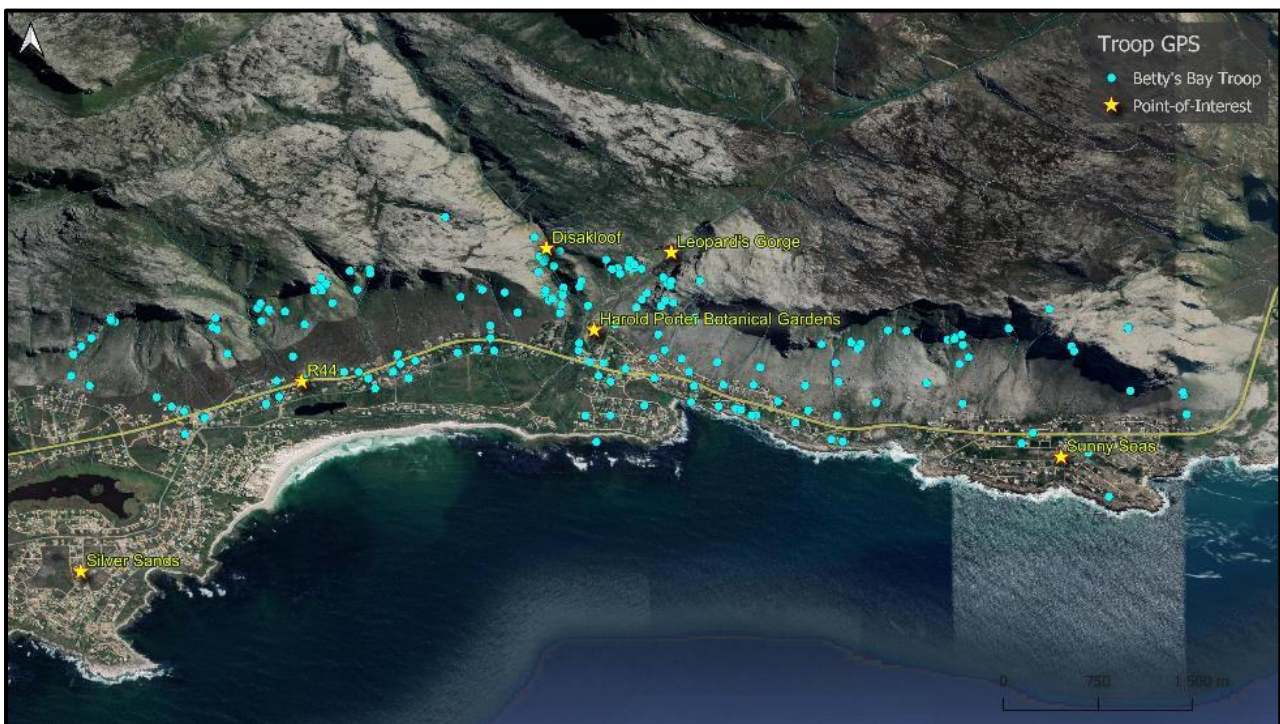


Figure 3.2: GPS locations of the Betty’s Bay Troop as determined by the GPS collar during April 2021.

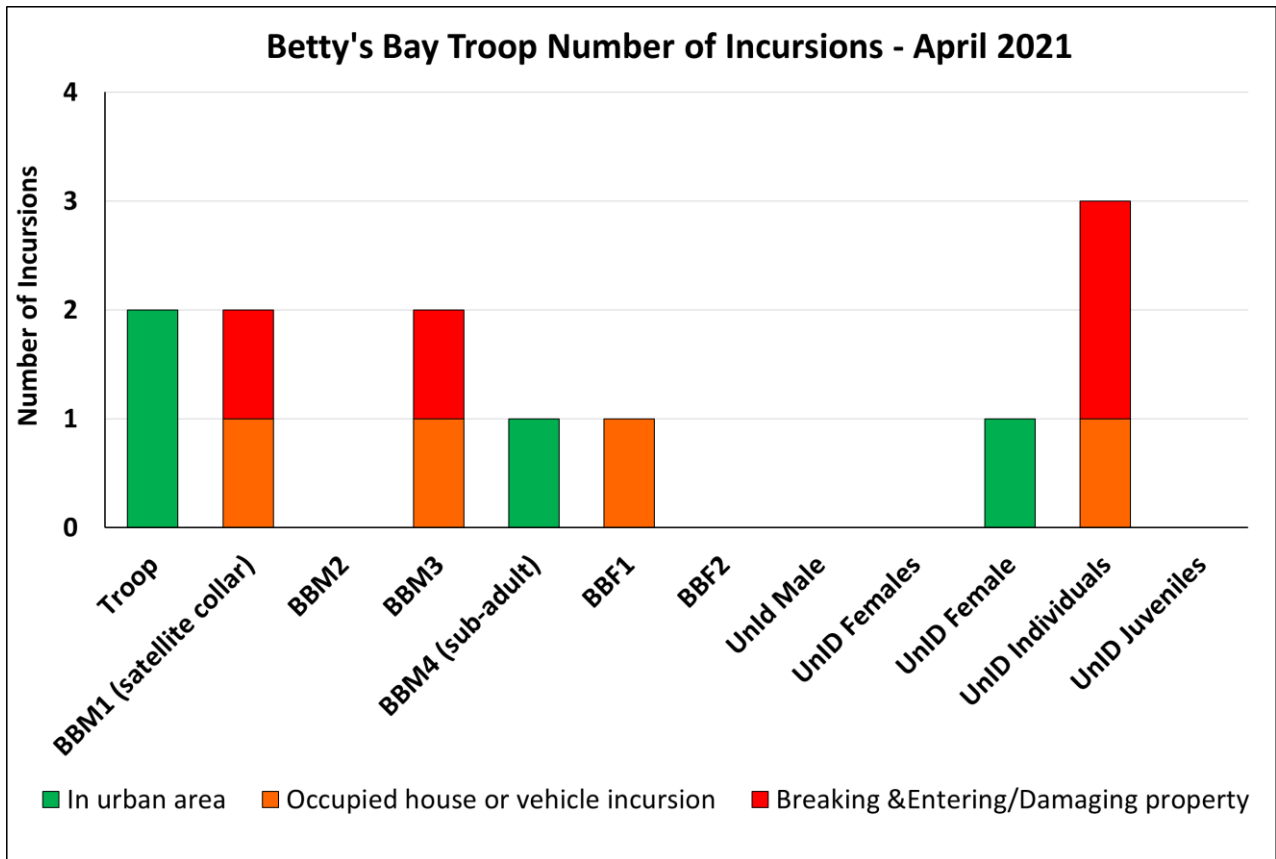


Figure 3.3: Incursions by the Betty’s Bay Troop and individuals during April 2021. Note: Active management of this troop commenced on 19 April 2021, and the data represented covers the period 19-30 April 2021.

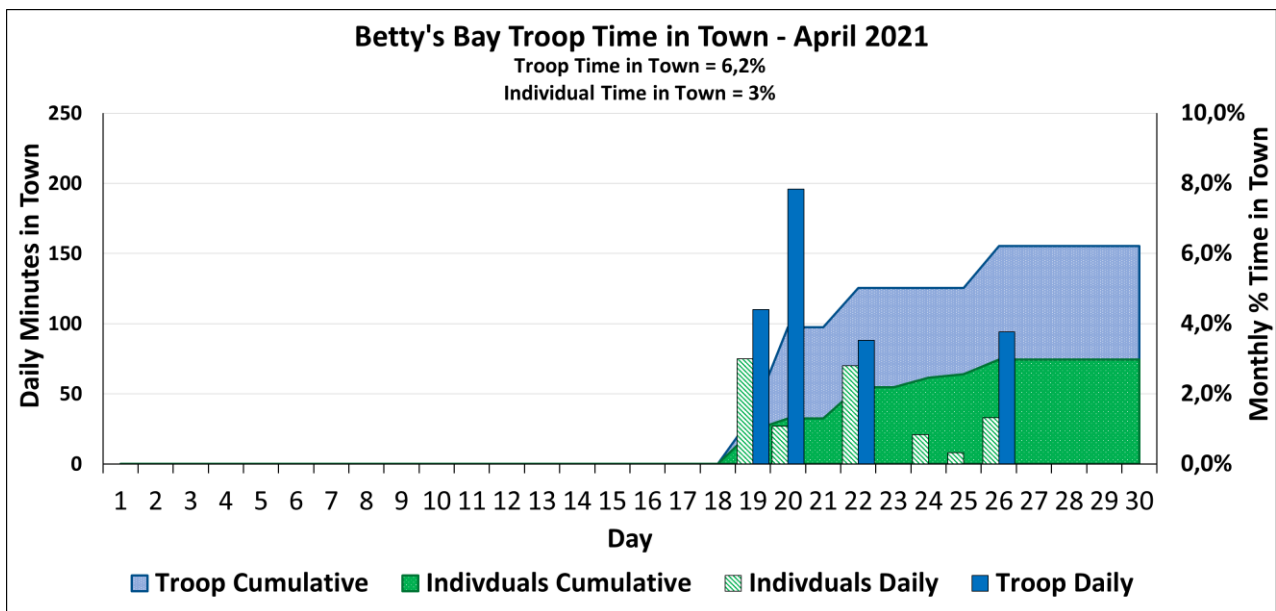


Figure 3.4: Troop and individual daily (bars) and monthly (area) Time in Town by the Betty’s Bay Troop during April 2021. Note: Active management of this troop commenced on 19 April 2021, and the data represented covers the period 19-30 April 2021. Note: Percentage Time in town is recorded as a percentage of the average daylight hours (sunrise to sunset) for each month of the year.

4 GENERAL COMMENTS – ALL TROOPS

4.1 POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

No deaths and one birth were recorded in the managed troops this month and are summarised in the tables below. The Betty's Bay Troop was added as a managed troop during April and a formal count has not been completed for this troop yet, but they are estimated to be about 19 individuals. The population data of the four closely managed troops can be seen in Tables 4.1 and 4.2 below.

TROOP	OCTOBER 2019	JUNE 2020	APRIL 2021			Total observed Births (1 July 2020 to Present)	Total observed Deaths (1 July 2020 to Present)	Total Migrations (1 July 2020 to Present)
			Births	Deaths	Emigration / Immigration			
Voëlklip	29	29	1	0	0	4	2	+1
Vogelgat*	N/A	22	0	0	0	0	1	0.
Pringle Bay	16	16	0	0	0	5	4	+1
Betty's Bay	N/A	N/A	0	0	0	0	0	0.
TOTAL	45	67	1	0	0	9	7	+2

Table 4.1: Population data for the four closely managed troops in the Overstrand in April 2021.

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 (July - April)	April 2021	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	5	2	7
Unknown		0	0	0
TOTAL DEATHS	6	7	2	13

Table 4.2: Causes of baboon deaths since October 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.

4.2 HOTLINE DATA

An increase in hotline calls received was observed this month. A total of 142 calls were received of which 108 were incursion related in managed areas. This increase is not unexpected; as the cooler winter weather approaches, it is normal behaviour for baboons to push towards the lower-lying urban areas.

The Betty's Bay Troop came under HWS management during this month (from 19 April 2021) contributing to the increase in incursion related calls, 21 calls were received from Betty's Bay following 19 April 2021; 13 calls were received from Betty's Bay prior to management commencing.

Most of the incursion related calls this month were again for the Voëlklip Troop (81 calls), with 39 calls coming from the Voëlklip suburb (39), followed by Fernkloof (28) and Hermanus Heights (10). Four calls were also received regarding this troop from outside the urban area.

A similar number of calls were received this April (142), compared to 2020 (146), however, the Betty's Bay Troop has been added as a managed troop, if removed to make a more accurate comparison only 108 calls were received for the same areas as in 2020. Importantly a reduction (of 24%) in incursion related calls has been observed down from 143 in Apr 2020 to 109 (88, excluding calls from Betty's Bay). This would indicate that the baboon management programme is continuing to enjoy success in reducing conflict between residents and baboons.

In line with previous months, the most common reason for hotline calls was to report baboons in the urban area (77% of incursion related calls). More bin raids than usual were reported to the hotline this month (7%), this was likely due to delays in waste removal experienced this month. Concerningly 16% of incursion related calls were assertive in nature (occupied house raids and causing damage), all these incidents were related to lone mals or small groups of individuals who broke away from the troop.

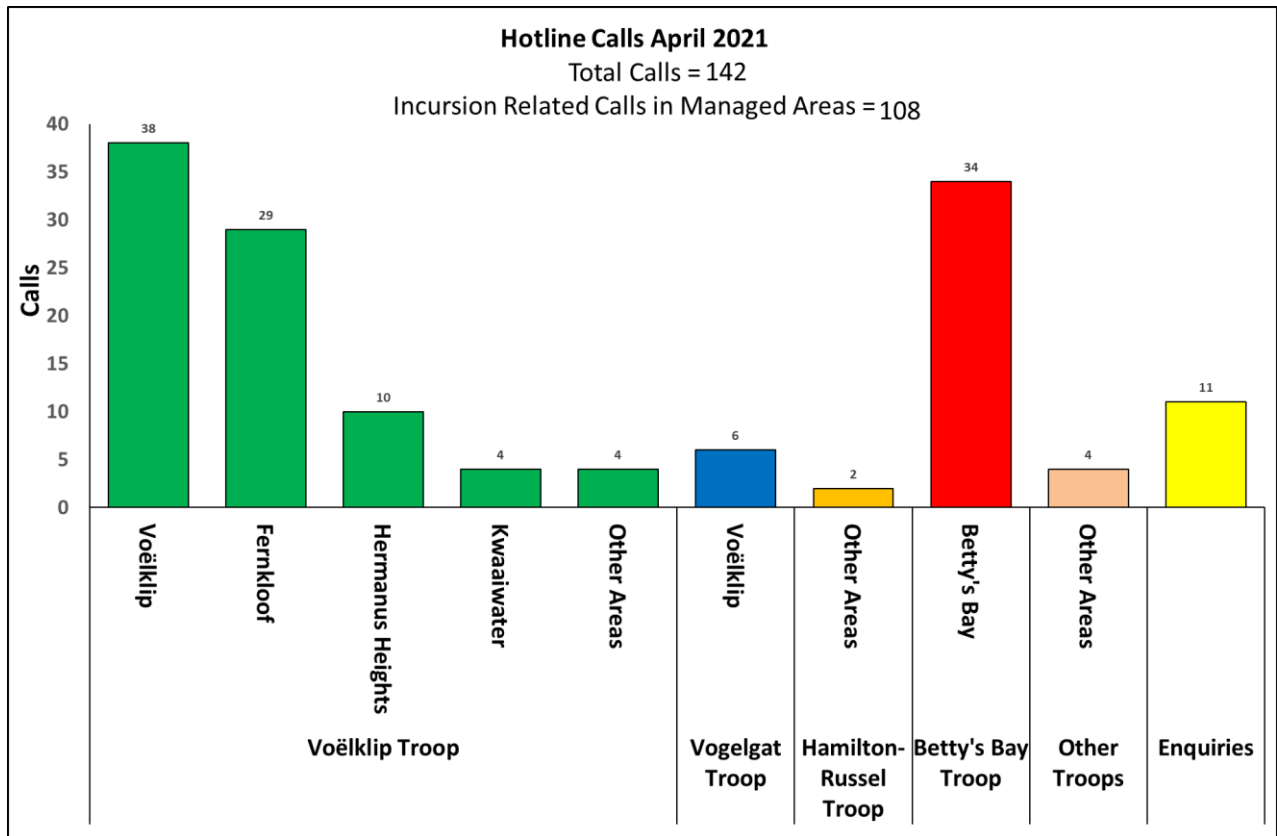


Figure 4.1: Hotline calls in baboon affected areas for April 2021. Incursion related hotline calls are calls reporting managed baboons in urban areas. Managed areas are those areas in which baboon troops are known to occur and are actively managed. Other Areas represent those areas beyond the urban edge or the range of managed baboons.

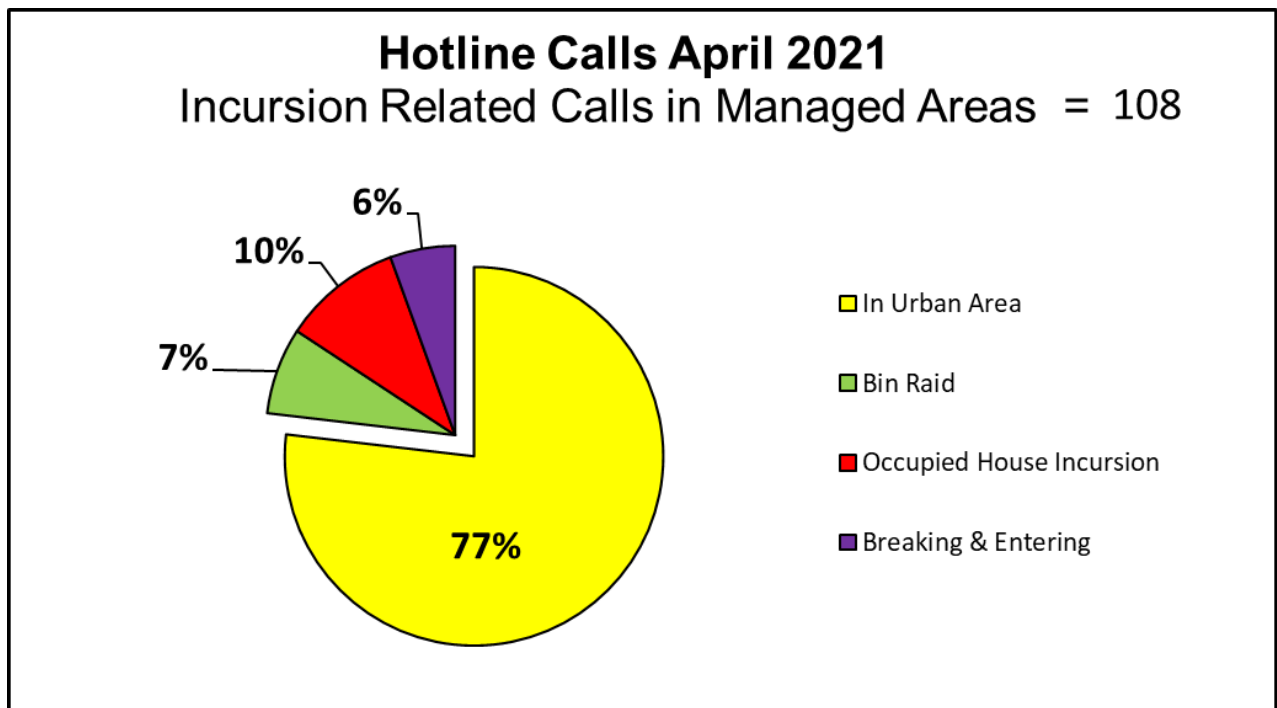


Figure 4.2: Composition of incursion-related hotline calls during April 2021. Note: This chart represents the composition of hotline calls, not the composition of known incursions by baboons.

4.3 PERCENTAGE TIME OUT OF TOWN

During April 2021, the average time out of town of managed troops declined to 98.8%, a large contributor to this decline was the addition of the highly habituated Betty's Bay Troop to the managed troops. Time out of town for Individuals within the troops was 98.8%. Individual time in town is only counted if individuals or small groups of baboons enter the urban area alone. No incursion into Pringle Bay was recorded by any member of the Pringle Bay Troop.

PERCENTAGE TIME OUT OF TOWN	TROOP	INDIVIDUAL
Voëlklip Troop	99.1	90.2
Vogelgat Troop	100.0	98.0
Onrus Troop	100.0	100.0
Hamilton Russel Troop	100.0	100.0
Pringle Bay Troop	100.0	100.0
Betty's Bay Troop*	93.8	97
Average Percentage Time Out of Town	98.8	98.8

Table 4.3: Percentage time the managed baboon troops and individuals spent out of town during March 2021. *Represents data recorded from 19-30 April 2021.

4.4 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, which is close to the mountainside. Here waste is currently collected at around midday. This same principle applies to Pringle Bay and Betty's Bay.
- HWS suggests that **waste removal** should start **on the urban edge** and then move down through the suburbs.
- 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.
- Baboon-proof bins are required throughout the western region of the Overstrand. Betty's Bay should be regarded as a high priority because there are very few baboon proof bins in place.
- Residents should not provide wild birds and other wildlife with feed. Baboons are known to frequent urban areas to obtain food intended for birds. Residents are reminded that it is illegal to feed any wild animal.
- Residents should not encourage baboons to enter town by providing water points for wildlife. Baboons and other wild animals have access to numerous natural water sources throughout Betty's Bay.
- Residents should not make use of pellet guns or paintball markers to deter baboons from their properties. Residents are encouraged to contact the baboon hotline (072 028 0008) to request assistance.
- Residents are requested not to hinder HWS in their efforts to encourage baboons to move out of town. Statistics show that human-induced injuries and deaths increase when baboon's frequent urban areas.

5 CONCLUSION

Single individuals or small groups of baboons breaking away from the Voëlklip Troop and entering the urban space posed a challenge for management this month. Time out of town for the Voëlklip Troop decreased significantly in April compared to March 2021. It is, however, similar to the Time out of Town that was reported in April 2020. As we move into winter, it is not unusual for the baboons to attempt to enter the urban space more frequently to gain access to HDF's.

The Vogelgat Troop spent fewer nights above the Voëlklip suburb and mainly used the eastern parts of its home range. Despite individual baboons entering the urban space, the troop was prevented from entering the urban space for the eight-consecutive month. Individual or small groups of baboons attempted to break away from the troop on multiple occasions to approach the urban space.

What was assumed to be the Hamilton Russell Troop was observed on only one occasion above Hermanus Heights and twice above Kanonkop. Although vocalisations between the Hamilton Russell Troop and the Voëlklip Troop were exchanged, no physical interactions were observed. The Virtual Fence successfully deterred the Onrus Troop from entering the urban space.

The Pringle Bay Troop foraged exclusively in the northern part of its range. This troop has been out of town for five consecutive months since 1 December 2020. BRM1 has now fully assumed alpha male status.

The Betty's Bay Troop attempted to enter town every day since the commencement of management on 19 November 2021. The troop (as a whole) was successfully prevented from entering town on eight out of twelve days during the reporting period. Various factors such as excessive habituation, exotic fruiting trees, easy to access HDF's, steep topography and the regular presence of small sub-groups posed major challenges for management.

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