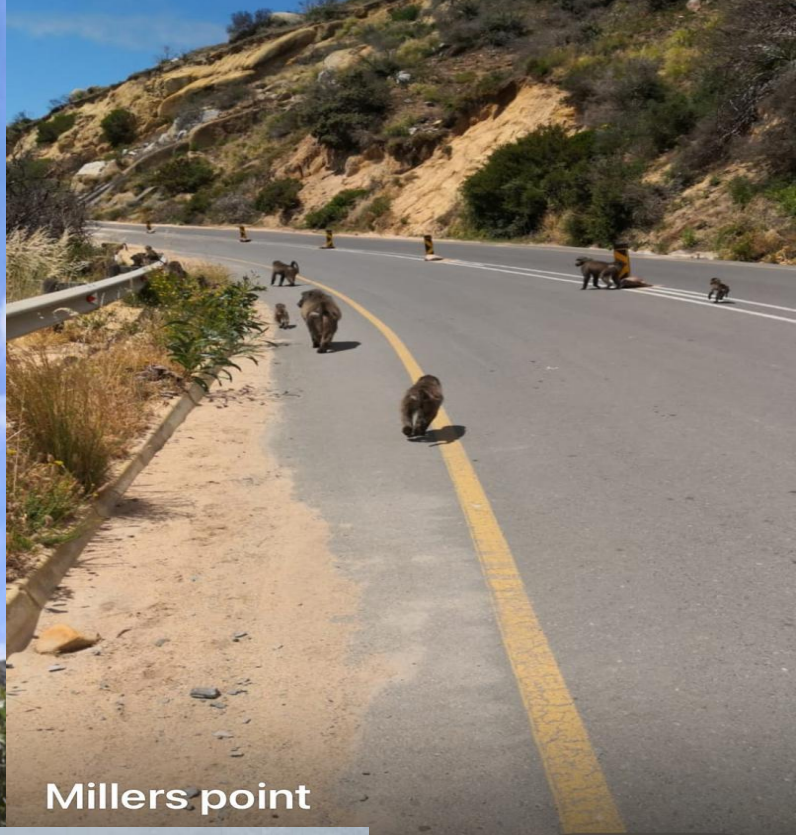
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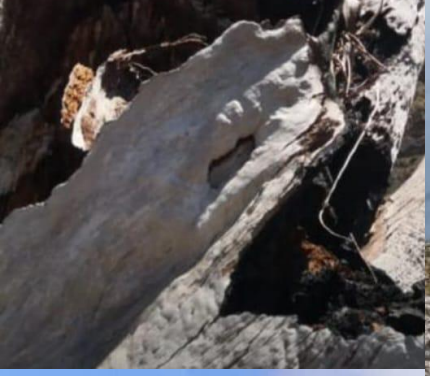

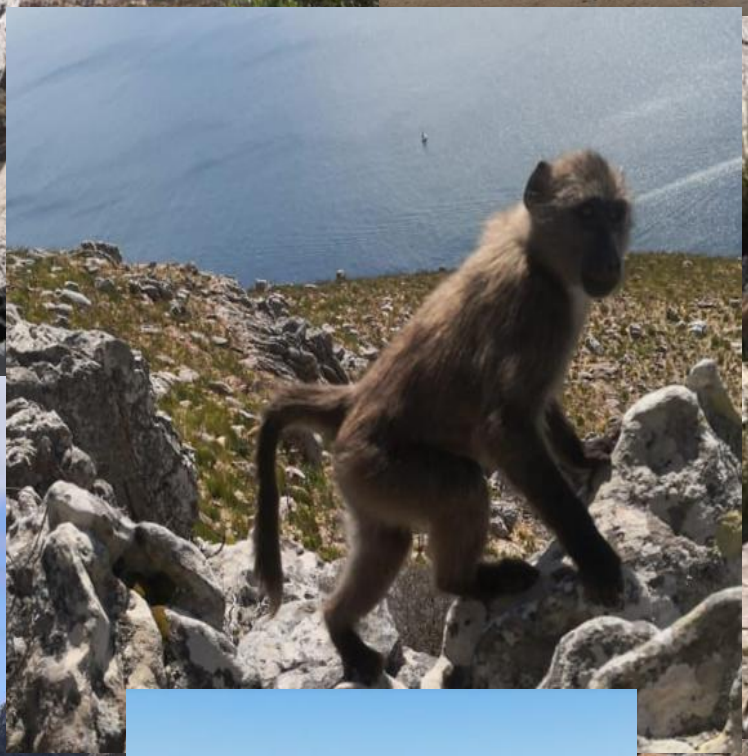

GREEN GROUP SIMONSTOWN NPC (GGST)

And

The **Southern African**

Faith Communities' Environment Institute (SAFCEI)

MEMBERS OF THE BABOON ADVISORY GROUP (BAG)

SUBMIT COMMENTS

to the City of Cape Town, CapeNature, and SANParks

(acting together as the Joint Task Team)

on the Proposed Baboon Action Plan

To

The Cape Peninsula Baboon Joint Task Team

City of Cape Town

City of Cape Town Coastal Management

CapeNature

SANParks

Shark Spotters / Cape Baboon Partnership

Table Mountain National Park

Cc:

Minister of Forestry, Fisheries, and the Environment Deon George

Premier of the Western Cape Alan Winde

United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)

29 August 2025

COVER: The Seaforth Troop living peacefully and cohesively in natural spaces on the mountain or in desert coastal areas across 2024.

These are only a few of the many images taken by Green Group Simonstown's monitors during the Baboon Monitoring Civil Coexistence Pilot Project and shared with the community of Simon's Town

For info: admin@greengroupsimonstown.org

Without accountability, there can be no democracy.

Nelson Mandela

Without accountability, there is no true reconciliation and no healing.

Desmond Tutu

In every deliberation, we must consider the impact
on the seventh generation yet to come.

Indigenous voice

A body of men, holding themselves accountable to nobody,
ought not to be trusted by anybody.

Thomas Paine

Image Credit: Gentina Danurendra

INVALID

It is both disingenuous and unlawful that three statutory authorities, the City of Cape Town, CapeNature, and SANParks, have abdicated their constitutional and statutory duty to ensure meaningful public participation in matters of public interest, instead forcing this duty onto civil society and NGOs. Such conduct is inconsistent with principles of cooperative governance, transparency, and accountability enshrined in section 195 of the South African Constitution, as well as the requirements for lawful, reasonable, and procedurally fair administrative action under the Promotion of Administrative Justice Act, 2000 (PAJA).

By allocating a mere 14 days for public comment and forcing NGOs and Associations to take the burden of consulting the broad public in such a limited time, the authorities have effectively undermined the very purpose of consultation, which requires a genuine opportunity for stakeholders to participate and influence decision-making. A process of this kind cannot be regarded as consultation in any meaningful sense, but rather as a perfunctory and predetermined exercise.

We accordingly submit that this process constitutes a procedural irregularity that renders it fundamentally flawed, unreasonable, and invalid. It falls short of constitutional obligations to facilitate participatory democracy as well as statutory obligations to ensure proper consultation.

For these reasons, we object to the process as currently designed and record that it cannot form a lawful basis for any decisions that may follow.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

It is our considered position that the proposed Cape Peninsula Baboon Draft Action Plan (the Plan) reflects years of inadequate action, disinterest, unaccountability, negligence, and failure by the responsible authorities to adopt collaborative solutions in the public interest, contrary to principles of cooperative governance and democracy. Now, facing public outcry, these entities propose to advance, as the most viable solution, a ***hard reset***. This framework would entail the physical elimination of possibly ***120 or 200 baboons*** or even more, from the Cape Peninsula, effectively, ***possibly erasing entire troops***. In practice, in our understanding, mass killing was proposed at an expert meeting as the most suitable option on the table of the discussion, while relocation and contraception were proposed as less viable options. While the City of Cape Town has invested years of public money into violent (and, we argue, ineffective) strategies, collectively, the competent authorities have indeed failed to implement adequate mitigation measures. The proposed *hard reset* is an ecologically questionable quick-fix remedy that would undermine our heritage, fuel fear, abuse, and division in the present of our society, and jeopardise future generations by dismantling ecological integrity and the foundations of social coexistence and justice. **We contest both the flawed decision-making process and the proposed outcomes it seeks to justify.**

INTRODUCTION

Green Group Simonstown (GGST) Green Group Simonstown NPC (GGST) is a registered non-profit dedicated to advancing human–wildlife coexistence through innovative, community-driven solutions. Our work prioritises ethical, holistic approaches that safeguard our natural heritage and biodiversity for the benefit of all life, including humans, now and for generations to come.

MANDATE OF GGST

In 2024, GGST was elected by the Simon's Town community and supporting organisations to represent them on the Cape Peninsula Baboon Advisory Group (BAG). In line with its Terms of Reference, BAG members are mandated to serve as a two-way communication channel

between authorities responsible for baboon management on the Cape Peninsula and the public.

We formally submit our comments, integrating inputs from the community.

Our submission is supported by the following organisations:

The Members of the Wildlife Animal Protection Forum of South Africa

Michele Pickover, Executive Director **EMS Foundation**

Dr Adam Cruise, **EMS Foundation**

Megan Carr, Founder **Rhinos in Africa**

Ross Harvey, Director of Research and Programmes at **Good Governance Africa**

Cormac Cullinan, Founder **Wild Law Institute**

Chad Cupido, Executive Officer **Beauty Without Cruelty**

Vishwas Satgar, Founder and Chair **Co-Operative and Policy Alternative Centre**

Charles Simane, Communications **Climate Justice Charter Movement**

Wynter Worsthorne, Founder of **Animal Talk Africa**

Mphatheleni Makaulule, Director **Dzomo La Mupo**

Liezl Smith, Chairperson **Kogelberg Villages Environmental Trustees**

Jabu Myeni, Founder **Gifted for Good**

Les Mitchell, Director **Institute for Critical Animal Studies**

Janet Solomon, Founder of **Ocean Not Oil**

Steve Smit, Co-Founder **Monkey Helpline**

Liz Cornwall and Catherine Nyquist, Co-Founders of **Panthera Africa Big Cat Sanctuary**

Lex Abnett, Director **Southern African Fight for Rhinos**

Dave Du Toit, Founder of **Vervet Monkey Foundation**

Sairusha Govindsamy, Youth Activist **Network African Climate Alliance**

Smaragda Louw, Founder/ Director, **Ban Animal Trading**

Stephen Munro, Director **Centre for Animal Rehabilitation and Education**

Pete Oxford and Rene Bisch, Founders of **Betty's Bay Baboon Action Group**

Cora Bailey, Founder of **Community Led Animal Welfare**

Guy Jennings, Consultant **Wild Africa Fund Southern Africa**

Linda Tucker, Founder and CEO of **Global White Lion Protection Trust**

Vivien Law, Founder of **Ancient Earth Farm**

Kirsten Youens, Chief Executive **AllRise Attorneys for Climate and Environmental Justice**

The Members of Baboon Interest Group (BIG)

RooiEls Conservancy

Greyton Conservation Society

Betty's Bay Conservancy

Coastal Rewilding

Baboon Strategy Support Group

Pringle Bay Conservation Group

In addition, individual comments we received from the public in a small, limited timeframe allowed by the JTT are accessible at this LINK and also HERE.

EXCLUSION OF BAG MEMBERS AND THE PUBLIC

Since its establishment, BAG has met only three times with the Joint Task Team (JTT), composed of the City of Cape Town, CapeNature, and SANParks. The first meeting in February 2025 was introductory. At the second meeting in May 2025, the JTT unilaterally announced a proposal to potentially remove more than 120 baboons, effectively erasing four to five troops from the Peninsula. This drastic measure was tabled without any consultation with BAG, undermining the very purpose for which it was created.

GGST strongly opposed the proposal and raised concerns about the absence of consultation. These objections were ignored. Public outcry was immediate: a protest in Simon's Town drew approximately 500 people; 7600 people signed a petition; and a memorandum was delivered to the JTT. Despite this, community voices and civil society's appeals appear to have been disregarded.

Irregular and Predetermined Processes

In July 2025, the JTT convened a panel of experts behind closed doors, allegedly under confidentiality clauses, bypassing fair and transparent selection procedures. BAG members' requests for disclosure were ignored. At the third BAG meeting (18 August 2025), JTT presented only a secondary report from this panel, which repeated previously announced outcomes. Meaningful scrutiny of the original reports from the experts was not permitted.

The process was flawed in multiple respects:

1. The expert panel was narrowly constituted, excluding disciplines essential to baboon management and disregarding established scientific recommendations for a multidisciplinary approach.
2. Indigenous and cultural voices were marginalised, despite their deep connections to the land and wildlife. At the 18 August meeting, an Indigenous representative invited by GGST raised, through a strong statement, serious concerns about violations of Indigenous rights and the erasure of cultural heritage, but these were not taken seriously.

3. One week before the deadline for submissions, ***BAG members have still not been provided with an updated baboon population count, nor with the revised guidelines (the missing Appendix K), which remain under review.***
4. As far as we are aware, the baboon service provider, Shark Spotters / Cape Baboon Partnership, has yet to publish any of its six monthly reports since its inception on 1 March 2025.
5. BAG members were given 14 days, an unreasonably short deadline to consult their constituencies. Written and verbal requests for extensions were denied.
6. The general public was informed in a purely top-down manner, with no invitation to get engaged in this process, either via submitting comments to the JTT or to the BAG
7. ***This approach has been characterised by secrecy, exclusion, unresponsiveness, and rushed decision-making.*** It is procedurally flawed, unjust, and undermines the integrity of participatory governance.
8. The JTT publicly claims to have consulted with welfare organisations, but we must clarify that this does not reflect the reality of the situation. GGST is aware that at least 78 animal welfare organisations have formally objected, some through official letters, others through cease and desist communications, to the proposed removal of chacma baboons from the Cape Peninsula.

Governance Failures of the JTT

Since its constitution in June 2022, the JTT has repeatedly failed to uphold its responsibilities and duties, including:

Failure to Act Holistically and Effectively

1. **No meaningful preventative measures to reduce urban attractants.**
2. **Poor enforcement of bylaws and basic waste management in baboon-populated areas.**
3. **Continued promotion of baboon- and penguin-populated areas as picnic sites, placing both people and wildlife at risk.**

4. **Failure to secure bins on penguin beaches (part of SANParks), drawing baboons into sensitive zones.**
5. **Neglect of meaningful stakeholder engagement, notably with the Navy, despite expert confirmation of the Navy's role in attracting baboons through poor waste management.**

Exclusion of BAG and the Public

6. **Drafting of the Baboon Action Plan without proper consultation.**
7. **Issuance of misleading media statements claiming consultation with welfare organisations, despite sidelining groups such as GGST and others.**

Opaque Expert Selection

8. **Appointment of the expert panel without disclosure or transparency.**
9. **Dismissal of repeated calls for procedural fairness**.

Non-Inclusivity

10. **BAG membership and the expert panel lacked cultural, racial, and Indigenous representation.**
11. **Indigenous voices, central to heritage and biodiversity, were marginalised.**

Neglect of Multidisciplinary Scientific Advice

12. **Scientific input was reduced to legitimising predetermined outcomes.**
13. **Root causes, urban attractants, and the need for harmonious coexistence to achieve conservation objectives remain unaddressed.**

Violation of Fundamental Principles

14. **The Republic of South Africa is founded on principles of participatory democracy, accountability, transparency, and public involvement, as enshrined in Chapter 1 of the Constitution. The conduct of the JTT falls far short of these standards.**

While GGST fundamentally disagrees with both the process and its outcomes, we will submit formal written comments to the Plan, reserving our right to pursue further remedies.

We remain committed to advocating for ethical, science-based, inclusive, and lawful management of baboons on the Cape Peninsula.

BACKGROUND - The Deliberate Obstruction of a Community-Driven Initiative

In 2022, a small splinter group of chacma baboons, led by an alpha male later named Martello by residents, broke away from the Smitswinkel troop. This group began occupying the naval dockyard and southern parts of Simon's Town, occasionally visiting beaches such as Boulders Beach, a critical habitat for endangered African penguins. Authorities quickly raised the option of removing the troop entirely**,** prompting concerned residents to mobilise in response.

Between October 2023 and February 2025, residents, organised under GGST, implemented the Baboon Monitoring and Civil Coexistence Pilot Project (the Project). The initiative aimed to reduce human-baboon conflict in Simon's Town and to pioneer ethical, non-violent solutions that benefit people, wildlife, and the broader environment.

Building Solutions Together

The Project was entirely community-funded and supported by residents, shop owners, and wildlife advocates. Recognising what scientists had consistently emphasised, GGST focused heavily on waste management, the key driver of baboon incursions into town.

Collaborating with the City of Cape Town, the group helped design baboon-proof bins, launched a voluntary wet-waste food collection programme for recycling at a nearby farm, and established a recycling station. These efforts significantly reduced food attractants, drawing commendation from both the City and the media.

Results: A Cohesive, Healthy Seaforth Troop Foraging Naturally

By April 2024, the Seaforth troop had largely vacated urban areas, sleeping consistently on the mountain and frequenting sparsely populated southern areas and deserted beaches where encounters with people were rare. For nearly a year, the troop remained cohesive,

calm, and displayed behaviours characteristic of a natural troop. Importantly, their physical health visibly improved, and baboons exhibited good body condition and glossy coats.

During this period, GGST developed a Standard Operational Procedure, which was then shared with CapeNature, documenting effective guidelines for including the consideration of "well-being" into management practices, as required by NEM:BA amendments.

Systematic devaluation and sabotage of community efforts

Despite these successes, the Project was undermined by external pressures. With the influx of mass tourism in December 2024, encouraged by the City of Cape Town's promotions of beach picnics in baboon and penguin habitats, conflicts began to rise again.

Around this time, CapeNature, a member of the JTT, acting on reports from their contracted baboon service provider, NCC Environmental Services, instructed GGST to apply for a hunting permit to continue the Civil Coexistence Project. This instruction was wholly inconsistent with the Project's character, which was explicitly non-violent, non-invasive, and had nothing to do with hunting. **Nevertheless, GGST was threatened with the arrest of its monitors if it failed to comply with this request. In fact, all past baboon service providers did indeed require hunting permits since they "hunted" baboons with paintballs. Apparently, the fact that we did not use aggressive deterrents did not count. Once GGST submitted the permit application, providing a detailed written account of its humane and non-aversive monitoring methods, CapeNature, the designated permitting authority, neither granted the permit nor issued a formal refusal, as required under law in cases where a permit is not granted within a timeframe. This procedural failure left GGST in legal limbo for months and eventually forced the Project to come to a halt.**

Without the effective monitoring of GGST, the Seaforth troop started its way back to northern areas, towards urban Simon's Town as early as March 2025.

Shark Spotters: A Shift Back to Coercive Management

At the end of December 2024, the City of Cape Town finalised arrangements with Shark Spotters, who assumed responsibility for baboon management across the Peninsula in March

2025. Within days, paintball guns were reintroduced as a primary deterrent, including in Simon's Town and against the Seaforth Troop, which Shark Spotters had, at the time of the takeover, classified as "rural" rather than "urban", therefore, having an understanding that the Seaforth troop at the end of our project was indeed out of urban areas and foraging naturally.

The consequences were immediate. Within days of these violent methods being reintroduced, the Seaforth Troop returned to the naval dockyard and the urban areas of Simon's Town. This regression provided clear evidence that coercive tactics do not resolve conflict but, instead, intensify it.

Violence and Division

The Civil Coexistence Project demonstrated that peaceful, community-driven interventions can succeed when implemented holistically, ***with consistency, and by competent monitors who care about the baboons instead of being at war against them***. By contrast, violent management strategies, such as paintballing baboons, educating the public into fear by framing indigenous wildlife as enemies, collecting unverified reports of "attacks," and encouraging the public to misidentify or misreport baboon locations and behaviour, have not only failed but also sown deep division within the community. **In this climate, neighbours turn against one another, dissenting voices are silenced through intimidation, and fear escalates into hostility. These approaches fuel abuse, conflict, and mistrust.** Yet, instead of questioning how to resolve conflict responsibly and ethically, through education and implementation of bylaws, authorities continue to neglect their fundamental duties and choose to remedy by introducing quick-fix, outdated, controversial, oppressive strategies that are unacceptable in a democracy.

Duty of Care and Legal Obligations

The White Paper on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of South Africa's Biodiversity, published in June 2023, emphasises the responsibility of humans to adopt and integrate conservation approaches that align with the principles of *Ubuntu*. This principle entails recognising the interdependence of humans, nature, and spiritual elements in conservation efforts, and promoting relationships of respect and care. Objective 2 of the White Paper

further underscores "***dignity, compassion, and social cooperation***," explicitly affirming the intrinsic value of animals. Developed over four years, the White Paper is intended to guide all national policies and legislation. It establishes a ***duty of care*** **in biodiversity management**, requiring decision-makers to "***avoid, minimise or remedy adverse impacts on biodiversity" while also "considering the interests of the animal" and its "well-being."***

Complementing this policy, the amendments to the National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act 10 of 2004 (NEM:BA)**,** which came into effect in June 2023, define animal well-being as a central objective of the Act. Section 2 of NEM:BA defines well-being as "**the ability to cope with the environment and a state that supports the animal's physical, physiological, and mental health, and overall quality of life.**" **This definition requires management practices to look beyond population control or human convenience, demanding instead that the quality of life of animals, both individually and collectively, is taken into account.**

In light of these developments, outdated plans and tools that ignore well-being, focusing solely on human priorities, imposed boundaries, or violent deterrents, can no longer be justified. Methods such as paintballing baboons or lethally targeting healthy alpha males belong to the past. Current law requires a more sophisticated approach: one that considers ***mitigation measures, holistic interventions, ecological context, rehabilitation, species-specific needs, and compassionate, integrative solutions that advance well-being in practice.***

Yet, despite this clear legal and policy direction, the existing baboon management framework has remained unchanged for decades. Authorities **continue to promote outdated methods and cruel practices that prioritise elimination over coexistence, while showing little evidence of adapting to recent legislative requirements.** This persistence raises a fundamental question: why, in the face of binding national policy and law, does such an outdated approach endure?

Equally concerning is the erosion of democratic principles in public engagement. Consultative processes have often involved the manipulation of dissenting parties and the selective exclusion of critical perspectives. Community-driven initiatives offering viable, non-violent solutions have been dismissed, undermined, or actively suppressed. This not only weakens efforts to build effective and ethical management but also contradicts the constitutional principles of participatory democracy, inclusivity, and accountable governance.

Indigenous perspectives and rights must also be included in conservation processes.

However, rather than embodying this holistic, legally required approach, current management remains narrowly driven by a predetermined agenda of "problem elimination," coupled with the manipulation of public opinion and intimidation of affected groups. This includes the shaming of welfare NGOs and broad civil society labelled as "activists".

The gap between South Africa's progressive legal framework and its on-the-ground implementation in baboon management is stark. Unless this disconnect is addressed, authorities will continue to perpetuate conflict, mistrust, and harm, contrary to the very principles of law, policy, and ethics they are mandated to uphold.

FUELLING FEAR

Constructing Flawed Narratives

In May 2022, the City of Cape Town (CoCT) launched the *Living Alongside Wildlife Charter* (WildCT), a progressive initiative promising to protect urban wildlife and reduce human-wildlife conflict.

The Charter committed to preventative measures, public education, better waste management, traffic calming, stronger law enforcement, and a holistic, non-lethal approach to biodiversity management.

These principles were later echoed in the *Baboon Strategic Management Plan 2023/24–2033/34*, positioning Cape Town as a city embracing wildlife-friendly planning and participatory governance.

Two years later, these promises remain largely unfulfilled.

This trajectory is deeply contradictory: while the City was internationally recognised in 2024 as a "Beacon City" for compassionate animal management, it now advances mass lethal removals as the principal strategy for managing wildlife in transformed landscapes.

Political Expediency Disguised as Necessity

The shift towards coercive removals is not an unavoidable reaction to conflict. It reflects systemic failures to implement preventative measures and to enforce existing legal obligations, particularly regarding waste management and traffic control.

To justify lethal removals, authorities have recently crafted narratives built on scientifically questionable claims. These include:

Troop Splintering as Abnormal

Authorities argue that smaller groups led by "lower-ranking" males or females indicate social dysfunction. In reality, ***troop fission is a natural phenomenon in baboon societies***. The four so-called "splinter troops" now targeted for removal have shown remarkable resilience, surviving devastating wildfires and sustained human pressures.

In primatology, the scientifically accurate term to describe the division of a troop into two or more subgroups is fission. ***Fission is a well-documented***, natural behavioural and ecological phenomenon that occurs across primate species, including baboons. It reflects the adaptive capacity of social groups to respond to pressures such as resource availability, population density, or internal dynamics. Crucially, fission is not considered a pathological or undesirable event; rather, it is a normal and expected feature of primate social organisation.

By contrast, the term ***"Splinter Troop" is a manufactured label*** that carries negative connotations, framing natural behaviour as a "problem" and pathologising certain baboons as undesirable. In particular, management authorities have applied the term in ways that suggest these groups consist of "low-ranking" or "inadequate" males and females, an assertion that has no scientific basis. This framing is deeply misleading because it constructs a false narrative of deviance or deficiency, which in turn is used to justify invasive or lethal interventions. It is therefore essential to use the correct scientific terminology. Referring to these events as "fission" not only aligns with established primatological knowledge but also prevents the distortion of language into a tool for marginalising or delegitimising the lives of wild baboons.

Hair Loss as Evidence of Ill-Health

Officials present hair loss as proof of declining health among baboons, yet no causal evidence has been disclosed. Stress hormone analyses, which could clarify the causes, remain unpublished. Existing research links hair loss to chronic stress, plausibly induced by management practices such as paintballing. Community members have documented repeated paintball use against females with infants or heavily pregnant females, raising serious welfare and ethical concerns.

Misleading Risk Narratives

Authorities further amplify fear by framing baboons as threats to public health and biodiversity:

- ***Swine Flu***: At the last Baboon Advisory Group meeting, officials suggested that reducing baboon populations could somehow prevent or pre-empt swine flu transmission to humans. We submit that this claim is disingenuous, scientifically unsound, and entirely speculative, an unsubstantiated scenario bordering on fear-mongering.
- ***Penguin Conservation***: Baboons were portrayed by JTT members as endangering African penguins. While baboons may occasionally and naturally startle penguins, there is no evidence of impacts. Research consistently shows that penguin declines are driven by anthropogenic activities, including

overfishing, climate change, and anthropogenic noise, as well as specific naval activities, which include the military exercises by the Navy in Simon's Town and bunkering. **The reality is that at Boulders Beach thousands of visitors are permitted to swim among the penguins, provided they purchase a ticket from SANParks for this privilege.** Should this not raise serious concern for the protection of a critically endangered and steadily declining colony? Yet, instead of scrutinising this daily human pressure, attention is repeatedly deflected onto the presence of a small group of around fifteen baboons who occasionally enter the area. **In August 2025, Minister George (Environment) signed new offshore ship-to-ship (STS) bunkering regulations, which experts widely criticise as failing to protect the critically endangered African penguin and other marine life. Scientists blame anthropocentric activities, not nature.**

- ***Habituation … or not***? Authorities promote the narrative that alpha males pose a threat to people in Simon's Town. Simultaneously, they claim that baboons are overly habituated to humans and have completely lost their wilderness. Together, these conflicting narratives are being used interchangeably to justify the elimination of alpha males and the cruel disruption of their troops.

The triple planetary crisis, affecting us also at the local level, is climate change, pollution, and biodiversity collapse. The triple planetary crisis is NOT baboons, diseases from baboons, and attacks by baboons. In our view, fear is used here as a governance tool.

This strategy distracts from evidence-based threats and doable solutions that have been negligently neglected. This crafted strategy is irresponsible; it deepens as a result community divisions, perpetuates harmful practices that affect people and devastate the environment and our future. Ultimately, it legitimises violence, cruel, and illegal practices.

IRREGULAR AND UNLAWFUL SELECTION OF EXPERT PANELLISTS

A further concern is the Joint Task Team's highly irregular choice of external expertise.

In South Africa, the establishment of expert panels by government departments or public entities is expected to follow principles present in constitutional and administrative law. ***These principles are not optional***; they form the foundation of legitimate, fair, and transparent public decision-making.

At the heart of this framework is Section 195 of the Constitution, which outlines the values governing public administration. These include five crucial elements: ***transparency, accountability, fairness, responsiveness, and public participation***, as well as the requirement for ***ethical and professional conduct***. Any process initiated by a public authority, including the appointment of an expert panel, must reflect these constitutional values. A failure to do so is not simply poor practice; it is inconsistent with the fundamental expectations of public governance in a democratic State.

This is reinforced by the Promotion of Administrative Justice Act (PAJA) of 2000, which gives legal effect to the constitutional right to just administrative action. PAJA, s 33, stipulates that all administrative decisions must be lawful, reasonable, and procedurally fair. It requires that affected parties are allowed to be heard, that reasons for decisions are provided, and that such decisions are open to judicial review (accountability). When an expert panel is constituted to advise on or influence decisions, such as those relating to the management or removal of wildlife, its formation and operation must adhere strictly to these legal requirements.

The JTT, as currently constituted, is not a legally accountable entity. It is not a statutory body, government department, or registered legal entity, ***but rather an inter-agency agreement between parties.*** As such, ***it lacks formal legal standing***, defined governance structures, and public accountability mechanisms. In light of this, ***it is inappropriate for the JTT to initiate or lead the establishment of a***

panel of experts, particularly on matters as serious and impactful as the proposed removal of hundreds of baboons from the Cape Peninsula.

Furthermore, for a panel of experts to be selected and established, government bodies are compelled to follow a structured and transparent process, particularly when the decisions to be informed by such panels carry environmental, social, or ethical weight.

The first step is a public announcement of intention. A government department or agency must publicly declare its intention to establish an expert advisory panel. The announcement usually outlines the issue at hand, defines the nature of expertise required, such as ecological, legal, social science, welfare, etc., and sets out the preliminary terms of reference for the panel.

Following this, the government body will issue a public call for nominations or submissions of CVs. This step is crucial, as it allows for the broad participation of qualified professionals and institutions. Interested individuals or organisations are invited to submit their credentials, along with statements of independence, non-conflictual interests, expertise, and motivations for participation.

Once submissions of CVs are received, the government proceeds with the evaluation and appointment of panel members. Selection is typically carried out by a review committee within government, using clear criteria such as professional expertise and absence of conflicts of interest. Those selected are then formally appointed, and their names and institutional affiliations are published for public scrutiny.

Upon appointment, the panel is provided with a clearly defined Terms of Reference (ToR). The ToR outlines the panel's scope and objectives, the timeline for their work, methodological expectations, and ethical standards. It also sets out the deliverables expected from the panel, typically including a detailed report, findings, and evidence-based recommendations.

No proper steps have been followed.

The panel of experts ***has been selected behind closed doors without any opportunity for broader scientific or public participation.*** The process lacked transparency, failed to invite multi-disciplinary input (as required by the complex socio-ecological nature of baboon management), and excluded key stakeholders. The process was irregular.

As UCT scientist Dr Bently Kaplan has emphasised in his PHD on the chacma baboons and human conflict on the Cape Peninsula, ***managing baboon populations requires the integration of multiple fields, including anthropology, sociology, animal behaviour, welfare science, conservation biology, psychology, ethics, and urban planning, among others***. The selection of a narrow, secretive expert panel is wholly inadequate and procedurally unacceptable.

Further, we were informed that the selected experts were given only a few working days to produce their assessments, an unreasonably short period given the gravity and complexity of the issue, and to inform a decision that will irreversibly affect entire troops of sentient beings and the communities living alongside them.

INCOMPLETE INFORMATION PROVIDED TO THE BAG

To compound the aforementioned concerns, we highlight that the JTT failed to share with the BAG members:

a. **copies of expert reports. Instead, the JTT has compiled a second-layer report based on these expert submissions;**
b. **updated population count;**

c. **updated and legally compliant management guidelines (the missing Appendix K in the Action Plan), which include lethal practices and standards;**

d. **the last 11 months baboon service provider's reports (NCC's last published report was in August 2024, and Shark Spotters / Cape Baboon Partnership has never published, up till today, monthly reports from its inception 6 months ago. This is particularly interesting for GGST because the reports might contain data on the Seaforth troop that we could easily verify.**

On 28 July, GGST and SAFCEI, both BAG members, formally requested procedural rectification from the JTT, in particular:

a. to restore integrity and fairness to this process;
b. to follow South African governmental procedures for constituting an expert advisory panel. This includes:
    i. appointing one JTT member as the government body to run the process of selecting the panel of experts. This body cannot be an *agreement* and must exist in law to grant accountability;
    ii. the body must publicly announce the intent to form a panel of experts and define a multidisciplinary scope of expertise;
    iii. inviting CVs and statements of interest from the public and academic institutions;
    iv. disclosing the selected panellists and allowing for public comment;
    v. allocating adequate time for research, consultation, and deliberation.
c. Scientific claims used to support proposed management interventions should be accompanied by peer-reviewed publications or ethically approved research (e.g., UCT ethics clearance numbers). The use of "science" in public decision-making and proposed actions must meet the standards of academic transparency and ethical accountability.
d. Once expert reports are released, the BAG and wider community should be given sufficient time to review and comment.

SELECTED USE OF SCIENCE

The fact that proper waste management is critical to reducing the presence of Chacma baboons in urban areas is consistent with science.

Dr Bentley Kaplan specialised in human-wildlife conflict as a PhD researcher in the Department of Zoology at the University of Cape Town under Professor Justin O'Riain. His focus was on the Cape Peninsula Chacma baboon. His multi-disciplinary research integrates behavioural ecology, cognition, and learning theory with practical conflict mitigation strategies. Kaplan also concluded that the "baboon problem" is a human problem. **Kaplan research is accessible at this LINK**

Kaplan's work combines extensive literature review, field-based behavioural observation, and data analysis to explore innovative, evidence-based approaches for "harmonious cohabitation" with wildlife.

The top findings of his research (2009 to 2013) are:

- **Waste management and enforcement of bylaws are top priorities in conflict mitigation.**
- **Solutions for "harmonious cohabitation" primarily lie in education.**
- **City of Cape Town's baboon-proof bins were effective, if used properly, to restrict baboon access to waste.**
- **The Namibian method (tailored provisioning) showed how to successfully lead troops away from populated areas near Simon's Town. Provisioning is indeed an effective short-term solution suitable for emergencies, to keep baboons out of urban areas. Provisioning only worked when large waste areas were closed down, highlighting the role of waste access in troop behaviour.**
- **The consistent use of rangers is a very expensive strategy and shows variable success.**
- **The use of rangers and deterrents significantly affects natural baboon behaviour.**
- **Baboons do not like humans or urban spaces; they are purely motivated by food.**
- **Urban landscapes should be modified with wildlife in mind, with effective bylaws to prevent people from attracting baboons.**
- **It is essential to integrate research disciplines such as sociology, psychology, social anthropology, behavioural economics, and policy.**

- **Most affected residents do not support lethal control methods. Despite localised intolerance, findings indicated a high level of tolerance for baboons among residents.**

LACK OF INDEPENDENT OVERVIEW AND THE EXCLUSION OF ETHICS TRAINED SCIENTISTS

Given the scale and gravity of the interventions being pursued, from the use of paintball guns to the proposed mass translocation or the potential killing of 120 baboons to 200 baboons, the absence of ethical oversight is deeply problematic. Despite repeated requests by civil society actors and academic experts in animal ethics, ***no formal ethical review process has been undertaken. Ethicists have been consistently excluded from all task teams, advisory committees, and strategic planning processes related to baboon management.***

Although welfare considerations have been intermittently acknowledged, animal welfare does not fully address the broader ethical dimensions involved in decisions about the lives, autonomy, and ecological roles of free-living, cognitively complex nonhuman primates.

These ethical questions demand rigorous, structured deliberation, especially when decisions involve irreversible outcomes such as large-scale killing or social disruption of wild troops.

It is noteworthy that research institutions in South Africa are legally required to obtain ethical approval for any activity involving animals, including non-invasive procedures such as tracking. Yet coercive wildlife management actions, often more disruptive and potentially lethal, proceed without equivalent ethical scrutiny. No clear justification has been offered as to why state-sanctioned management actions should be exempt from these fundamental standards of accountability.

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Animal Ethics Committee, during which she played a key role in drafting the institution's policy on the ethical treatment of non-human primates.

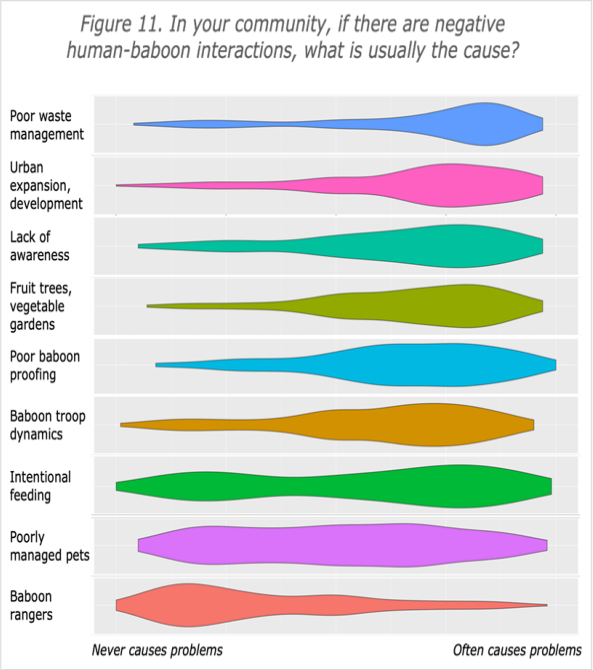
In a video, she highlights the lack of independent ethical oversight in the current management approach. The continued failure to engage an independent animal ethicist not only undermines the legitimacy of the strategy but also erodes the moral and public trust that should guide decisions involving sentient wildlife. Ethical review must be recognised as an essential, non-negotiable element of transparent, accountable, and lawful environmental governance.

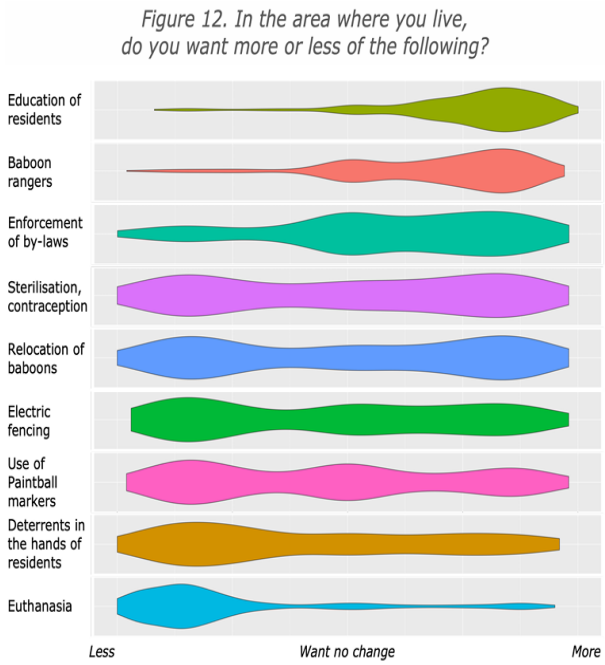
INSUFFICIENT EXPERT REPRESENTATION FOR SUCH A CRITICAL AND CONTROVERSIAL ISSUE

Baboon management is not solely a matter of conflict mitigation. It intersects with numerous other domains, including biodiversity conservation, environmental education, law, bylaw enforcement, animal welfare, waste management, urban planning, legislation, and civil society engagement. Effective and lawful responses must draw on expertise from a broad range of fields, not only ecological science and behavioural management, but also environmental ethics, social sciences, public policy, and conservation law.

FAILED COMPETENCIES - Waste management

Poor waste management is recognised as the leading cause of baboons entering urban areas, as noted by Unruly Natures, a two-year research project at Stockholm University. Two studies meaningfully examine urban human-wildlife coexistence. Based on interviews with over 500 residents and with the baboon rangers, the two papers explore perceptions of baboons as both troublesome and charming, and how people adapt to living alongside them.





Credit: Unruly Natures, Stockholm University research: *Awareness, attitudes, and action in environmental stewardship for a better relationship between two urban primates*

Surprisingly, a small percentage of residents (only about 1/4) said they would prefer that baboons did not enter their neighbourhood. Most did not want them inside their homes, which is understandable, but the tolerance for them in urban areas was relatively high.

Notably, most residents did not like baboons being killed; they wanted more education for residents, they thought poor waste management was the key problem, and they wanted to keep or ideally increase the number of baboon rangers/monitors.

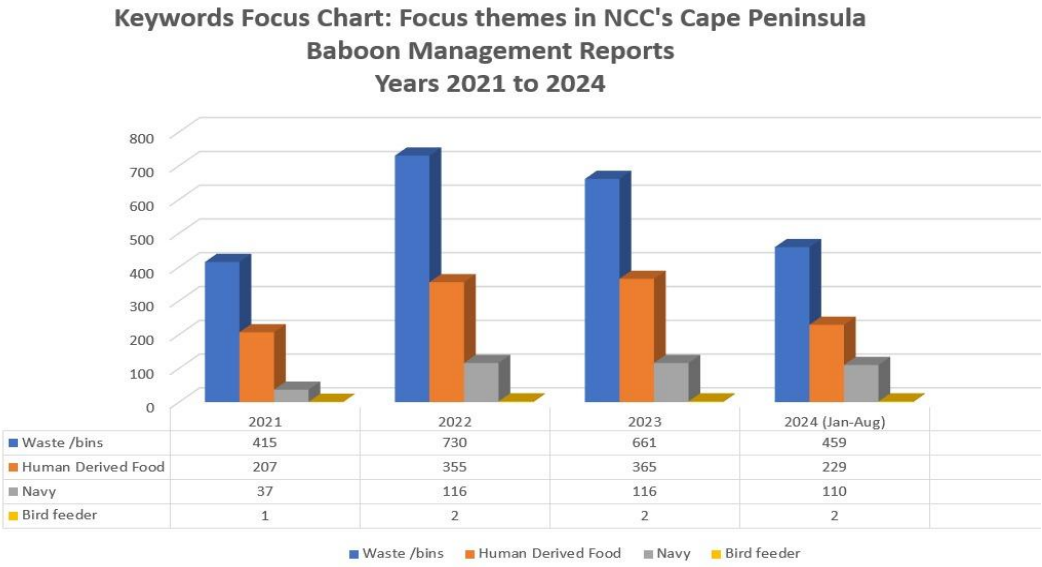
730 Warnings Later: Authorities Still Ignore Waste Management Failures

We have reviewed the reports of the former official service provider, NCC Environmental Services, covering their four years of work on the Cape Peninsula. A consistent theme across all reports is the central importance of waste management in reducing human–baboon conflict. NCC repeatedly emphasised that poor waste management directly attracts baboons into urban areas, making it a primary driver of conflict.

To illustrate the extent of this emphasis, a word count search revealed more than 730 references to waste management and

related attractants, often accompanied by clear recommendations for improvement.

Despite this consistent evidence, the responsible authorities failed to implement these recommendations in any meaningful way. The extract below reflects how NCC repeatedly highlighted waste management as a critical issue.



Analysis from NCC Baboon Urban Programme Monthly Reports 2021-2024

OVERLOOKING THE HERITAGE AND ECOLOGICAL DIMENSIONS

An indigenous Voice – Chad Cupido - Gorachouqua Tribe Cape City

At the BAG meeting on 18 August, an Indigenous Voice read this poem to the JTT. The Video of Chad Cupido reading his poem is accessible at this link.

Poem: Whose Mountain Speaks?

Whose mountain is this, rock or kin?
A lifeless stone, or life within?
Is it soil to exploit, or ancestor's breath?
A sacred protector, or a sentence of death?

Whose voices count when panels are picked?
Why were killers of predators the ones you select?
Where are the healers, the carers, the wise?
Why close the doors, why silence the cries?

You call this the JTT, but where is the trust?
When the process is broken, when it crumbles to dust?

When secrecy rules and inclusion is blocked,
Is this lawful governance, or justice mocked?

Our Constitution is clear, our White Paper too,
Biodiversity's future demands what is true.
ILO 169 makes it binding in law,
Indigenous voices must guide what you saw.

Yet Ocean View cries, a community betrayed,
Expropriated from Simon's Town, their history weighed.
Now baboons face erasure, their kin pushed away,
With no consultation, how is this okay?

We marched in Simon's Town, five hundred strong.
Mothers, elders, children, a thunderous song.
Did you hear us then, or turn away?
Do our voices mean nothing on that fateful day?

Look abroad, New Zealand, the Andes, the seas.
Rivers and forests given legal personhood, rights, and dignity.
While South Africa stalls, stuck in denial,
The world moves forward, mile by mile.

And what of Wendy, the baboon with the chain?
A collar that binds her to silence and pain.
If she were human, would you wait and delay?
Or would you free her without one more day?

We are Indigenous, we are still here.
Our law is the land, our message is clear.
You cannot erase us, you cannot pretend,
That this process is fair, or that justice will bend.

The law will prevail, the truth will remain,
Our heritage, our mountain, will not be in vain.
So hear this today: we are not going away.
Not tomorrow, not next year, we are here, we will stay.

You have lost the plot, so we will not stop until we win.
So I end with the Indigenous chant:
"Seeda Seeda Gerra Chwa Chwa",
Which means: "Let us begin."

BABOONS AS ECOLOGICAL INGINEERS

Chacma baboons are not only intelligent and socially complex animals, but also **keystone species** whose ecological role in the Cape Peninsula's fynbos biome is profound and still not fully understood. For over two million years, they have shaped this landscape, influencing plant regeneration, soil health, and biodiversity. Their daily activities, feeding, foraging, moving, and interacting with the land, act as essential ecological processes that sustain the resilience of the ecosystem.

Seed Dispersal and Germination

Baboons are the **primary seed dispersers** in the Cape Peninsula. By carrying seeds in their stomachs and depositing them across large distances, they:

1. Increase local genetic diversity of plant species.
2. Enhance germination rates by breaking down seed coats during digestion.
3. Improve seed survival by protecting them through the digestive process.

This constant seed movement maintains the richness and diversity of the fynbos.

Ecosystem Engineering

Through digging, overturning rocks, and foraging, baboons physically reshape the environment in ways that benefit countless other organisms. Their actions:

1. Aerate and loosen soils, increasing oxygen and nutrient circulation.
2. Create microhabitats where wind-blown seeds can establish.
3. Influence slope stability and landscape evolution through rock displacement.
4. Support invertebrate communities by modifying local habitats.

In effect, baboons act as engineers, creating living conditions that extend beyond their own needs.

Food Acquisition and Nutrient Cycling

Baboons play a key role in **nutrient cycling** and food-web dynamics. Their foraging behaviour:

1. Exposes invertebrates, an important protein source, for themselves and other species.
2. Increases soil fertility by mixing organic matter into the ground.
3. Makes plant parts and seeds accessible to smaller animals that cannot dig or break tough vegetation.

Pollination and Plant Facilitation

While not traditionally recognised as pollinators, baboons contribute by:

1. Transferring pollen on their hands, faces, and fur as they feed.
2. Breaking open plants, indirectly assisting smaller species in accessing food.
3. Promoting seed germination and plant regrowth, especially after fires.

Ecological Role After Fires

In fire-adapted fynbos landscapes, baboons are critical to ecosystem recovery. In recently burned areas they:

1. Feed on exposed seeds and underground storage organs.
2. Consume plants at different regrowth stages, influencing successional dynamics.
3. Accelerate the recycling of nutrients, helping the fynbos recover more quickly.

Why Their Role Matters

Baboons' ecological contributions make them **indispensable to the long-term health and resilience of the fynbos ecosystem**. Their activities sustain plant diversity, promote soil vitality, and create conditions for countless other species to thrive. To lose baboons from the Cape Peninsula would not only mean the disappearance of a sentient and socially complex species but would also unravel vital ecological processes that maintain one of the world's most unique and biodiverse regions.

Absence of Cumulative Impact Assessment in a Context of Ecological Crisis

No study evaluating the cumulative impacts of mass removals in the context of climate change, habitat fragmentation, genetic isolation, human encroachment, and biodiversity decline, was provided to the BAG or the public. This is alarming, especially in light of CapeNature's own *State*

of Biodiversity Report for the Western Cape, which highlights a continued decline in biodiversity despite an increase in the amount of formally protected land. The discrepancy between land protection and biodiversity recovery underscores the complexity of ecological resilience and the danger of assuming that removals of wild animals are benign or reversible actions.

Research established that keystone species have a disproportionately large effect on their natural environment and play a critical role in maintaining the structure of an ecological community.

Extinction Vortex

Population viability analysis consistently demonstrates that small, isolated primate populations face exponentially increasing extinction risk below critical demographic thresholds. The effective breeding population size in primate societies typically ranges from 25-40% of census population size. This mathematical reality places the Cape Peninsula chacma baboon metapopulation at approximately 120-194 effective breeders, dangerously close to the minimum viable population threshold for long-term persistence in large-bodied mammals. ***The proposed elimination of hundreds of individuals might drive this population into the "extinction vortex" - a demographic territory from which no primate metapopulation has ever recovered.***

Primates, in particular, are greatly affected by human population expansion and land alteration, particularly because of the human attitudes to primates and the perceptions of primates as pests, which have negative impacts on primate conservation.

About 60% of primate species face extinction, and about 75% have declining populations due to escalating human pressures. No population census has ever been undertaken in South Africa. There is therefore no rigorous estimate for the size of the South African indigenous non-human primate population or their conservation status. Nor reliable estimates of population trends at national or provincial scales. SANBI itself has identified the need to ascertain the national and regional population size. It is of particular concern that South Africa currently lacks a comprehensive census of the Chacma baboon (*Papio ursinus*), a species comprising at least two distinct subspecies within the country: *Papio ursinus ursinus* (the Cape Chacma),

predominantly found in the Western and parts of the Eastern Cape, and *Papio ursinus griseipes*, occurring in the northern provinces. These subspecies are ecologically and genetically distinct, a fact implicitly acknowledged by conservation authorities such as CapeNature, which prohibits the translocation of Cape Peninsula baboons to other provinces for reintroduction purposes, unless sterilised.

Local genetic integrity is key

The importance of local genetic integrity and the absence, in the proposed Plan, of disaggregated population data by subspecies means that no accurate national assessment of abundance, distribution, or conservation status currently exists for either form. Consequently, the Cape Peninsula population, comprised of *Papio ursinus ursinus*, may be significantly more vulnerable than generally understood, particularly given its geographic isolation, ongoing habitat fragmentation, and intensive human-wildlife conflict pressures. The failure to conduct a national census and to account for subspecific variation represents a critical gap in biodiversity monitoring and policy implementation.

BONDS AND RELATIONSHIPS

Chacma baboons are highly social and emotionally complex beings who live in close-knit troops bound together by strong relationships. They express affection through grooming, playing, cuddling, and other forms of gentle interaction. Grooming is one of their most important social behaviours: while it serves the practical purpose of removing parasites and dirt, its deeper significance lies in the way it builds trust, reduces tension, and strengthens bonds within the troop. Grooming stimulates the release of endorphins, the body's natural "feel-good" chemicals, promoting calm, comfort, and emotional well-being. These shared moments of care are central to troop cohesion and demonstrate the depth of baboon relationships.

Cognition, Sentience, Friendships and Emotional Lives

Chacma baboons are intelligent, adaptable, social and sentient beings. They use tools, such as rocks and sticks, to access food or examine their bodies. Their behaviour reflects a wide emotional range, including joy, empathy, fear, grief, and playfulness. For example, when

mothers lose their infants, they often mourn visibly for days or even weeks, carrying the body and showing signs of profound sadness. Such responses highlight their capacity for emotional depth and empathy. Baboons communicate in complex ways, through vocalisations, gestures, and facial expressions, demonstrating sophisticated social awareness and problem-solving abilities.

Parenting and Care

Parenting among chacma baboons is strikingly devoted and protective. Mothers nurture their infants with constant attention, carrying them close, nursing them, grooming them, and keeping them safe. They care for injured infants with remarkable patience and perseverance, often helping them recover fully. Males, too, play an important role in parenting: many form strong protective bonds with infants, grooming them, playing gently, and even carrying them on their backs. Parents actively teach their young social boundaries, foraging skills, and safety within the troop. This shared care reflects a deep commitment to the well-being and survival of their offspring.

Communication and Behavioural Complexity in Baboons

Chacma baboons are highly expressive, both vocally and behaviourally. Their communication repertoire reflects their intelligence, social sophistication, and ability to adapt to the challenges of group living in dynamic environments. Far from being random or instinctive, their signals, whether vocal, visual, or tactile, are carefully attuned to context, shaping social bonds, resolving conflict, and ensuring survival.

Vocal Communication

Baboons communicate through an extensive range of vocalisations, each carrying a specific meaning. Their calls span from soft grunts and murmurs used in close social contexts to sharp, bark-like alarm calls that can ripple through the troop when a threat is detected. These alarm calls—staccato bursts often described as "hah-hah-hah" barks- serve to alert others, trigger vigilance, and coordinate group movement under threat.

Grunts and growls often arise during moments of tension, reflecting agitation, defensiveness, or low-level aggression, particularly in competitive feeding or dominance interactions.

Conversely, higher-pitched chirps and squeaks serve as contact calls, keeping individuals connected in dense vegetation or expressing excitement and playfulness.

Male “wahoo” calls are among the most iconic vocalisations. Deep and resonant, these long-distance calls communicate strength, dominance, and location, broadcasting an individual’s presence to rivals and allies alike. These powerful vocal signals play a critical role in male-male competition and in maintaining troop cohesion across landscapes.

Non-Verbal Signals and Aggression

Baboons are also masters of non-verbal communication. Posture, gesture, and expression often speak louder than sound. A hard, direct stare may serve as an unmistakable challenge, while piloerection (hair standing on end) amplifies perceived size, projecting strength in the face of rivals or predators. Tooth-baring, ground-slapping, and lunging are dramatic visual displays designed to intimidate and deter without escalating to actual combat.

These behaviours serve an important ecological and social function: they minimise injury while maintaining the integrity of dominance hierarchies that structure troop life. In this way, baboon aggression is not mindless violence but a finely tuned form of negotiation within complex social systems.

Mock Charges in Elephants and Baboons: Decoding Key Communication of African megafauna and non-human primates. Why Martello is an excellent Alpha male fulfilling his natural role.

A *mock charge* is a defensive display frequently observed in large mammals such as elephants and baboons. It involves a rapid advance toward a perceived threat, often accompanied by vocalisations, posturing, or ground displays, but stops short of physical attack.

Ethological studies confirm that this behaviour is not an act of aggression but a form of communication designed to establish boundaries, deter intrusion, and prevent escalation into physical conflict.

In elephants, mock charges are well-documented and are often experienced by tourists to Africa as a dramatic, mostly thrilling, yet not really dangerous encounter. Similarly, dominant male baboons frequently employ mock charges as a natural and context-specific behaviour,

particularly when defending access to food or troop members. These actions are ritualised signals, warnings rather than assaults, that form part of complex primate and megafauna communication systems. Misinterpretation of mock charges as “attacks” reflects a lack of public understanding. Education is critical: recognising the distinction between communication and aggression reduces fear, prevents unnecessary retaliation against wildlife, and fosters coexistence. Studies in human-wildlife conflict show that fear-based narratives, when uncorrected, lead to increased hostility and intolerance towards Indigenous wildlife, and create the conditions for public support of lethal control.

Humans co-evolved alongside species capable of challenging them. Our survival relied on interpreting such signals correctly. The modern, over-protected lifestyle has dulled this sensitivity, fuelling both entitlement to occupy wildlife spaces and exaggerated fear when boundaries are enforced.

It is deeply troubling when authorities entrusted with protecting wildlife, and claiming to base their management on the best available science, issue misleading statements that no credible primatologist would support. In our view, the continued misrepresentation of animal communication becomes a deliberate tool to justify elimination.

Mislabelling a mock charge as an “attack” erodes tolerance, justifies violence against wildlife, and distorts conservation priorities. Education that frames these encounters as natural communication, rather than aggression, is essential for building informed, respectful, and harmonious coexistence within wildlife.

Affiliative, Playful, and Curious Behaviours

Equally central to baboon life are affiliative behaviours that maintain harmony and cohesion. Grooming is the cornerstone of these relationships, serving both hygienic and emotional purposes. By carefully picking through each other’s fur, baboons reduce parasite loads, while

simultaneously building trust, relieving tension, and reinforcing alliances that may later determine support in conflicts.

Play, especially among juveniles, is another essential behaviour. Far more than simple entertainment, play strengthens social bonds, develops motor skills, and teaches young baboons the boundaries of dominance and submission. Adults also engage in playful or gentle interactions, which help diffuse tension and sustain bonds.

Curiosity is another defining trait. Baboons explore their environment with a sense of investigative intelligence, sniffing, manipulating objects, experimenting with food sources, and even using stones or sticks as rudimentary tools. Such behaviours highlight their capacity for social learning, where younger individuals observe and imitate older, more experienced troop members.

Behavioural Roles in Group Survival

Certain behaviours reflect not only individual intelligence but also a deep commitment to group well-being. Sentinel behaviour, where one baboon perches in a high position to scan for predators, ensures safety for the troop while others forage or rest. This role demonstrates cooperation and the prioritisation of group security over individual needs.

Foraging, too, showcases their ecological adaptability. Baboons dig, turn rocks, and probe vegetation in ways that reshape the environment, while simultaneously teaching younger troop members how to exploit diverse food sources. Through these behaviours, baboons reveal themselves as ecosystem engineers, knowledge carriers, and cooperative beings.

Why Behavioural Complexity Matters

The behavioural repertoire of baboons, ranging from vocal calls and visual displays to play, curiosity, and caregiving, reflects their status as **sentient, socially intelligent, and ecologically significant beings**. Their communication systems and behavioural strategies not only ensure survival in a challenging environment but also sustain the complex social fabric of their troops. Recognising this richness is essential to appreciating who baboons are: emotionally intelligent, behaviourally sophisticated, and vital members of the ecosystems they inhabit.

Understanding Baboons' Needs

Baboons flourish in environments where their needs for safety, food, water, and social interaction are respected. They are curious, playful, and resourceful animals who enjoy foraging, exploring, and engaging in lively play with troop members. Their joy is found in the comfort of family bonds, the security of cohesive groups, and the freedom to express their natural behaviours. When they are allowed to live without threat, baboons reveal themselves as intelligent, emotional, and socially rich beings whose lives are defined by care, connection, and resilience.

A NAME GIVEN TO EVERY SINGLE BABOON. WHY UNDERSTANDING INDIVIDUAL BABOONS DOES MATTER

In primatology, some of the most influential researchers, most notably Jane Goodall in her long-term study of chimpanzees and Dian Fossey in her work with mountain gorillas, introduced the practice of naming individuals. This marked a departure from the convention of using numbers or codes. Naming was not merely symbolic: it acknowledged that each primate was a unique individual with a distinct behavioural profile, personality, and social role within the group.

This practice has scientific as well as ethical significance. By recognising individuality, researchers are better able to observe and interpret complex behaviours such as alliance formation, friendships, maternal strategies, dominance interactions, and reconciliation. Identifying individuals by name allows for the tracking of life histories over years and even decades, thereby advancing understanding of primate cognition, social complexity, and cultural transmission.

At the same time, naming is an act of ethical recognition. A baboon identified as "Martello" proposed as a Wise King in a book, or as "Lefty," a tripodal but strong mother, or, "Kataza" whose ordeal made headlines, is no longer an anonymous data point but a subject of life whose individuality demands acknowledgement. This contrasts sharply with the treatment of primates in biomedical laboratories and exploitative or violent management systems, where animals are intentionally anonymised through codes or numbers. Such de-individualisation

reduces sentient beings to laboratory or field experimental units, facilitating practices that would be more difficult to justify if their individuality were recognised.

Extending the practice of naming to wild baboons thus carries both scientific value and moral weight. It affirms their sentience, highlights their personalities, and enables rigorous long-term behavioural research. Equally, it challenges the epistemic frameworks that enable their objectification and mistreatment. Just as Goodall and Fossey transformed scientific and public perceptions of great apes by foregrounding individuality, a similar shift in the study and management of baboons **could indeed promote deeper understanding, respect, and the development of more ethical coexistence strategies.**

THE FAILURE OF PAINTBALL GUNS IN BABOON MANAGEMENT ACCORDING TO EMPIRICAL OBSERVATIONS

The use of paintball guns as a baboon management tool is outdated and inconsistent with South African law, particularly section 2 of the National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act (NEM:BA) and its 2023 Amendments. These amendments require that all management interventions consider animal well-being and ensure that negative effects on biodiversity are minimised. The continued use of paintballs, despite overwhelming evidence of their harmful effects, is therefore not only ethically indefensible but also legally non-compliant.

Physical Harm

Paintball shots can cause direct and severe physical harm. The most serious risk is permanent blindness, as the eyes are exceptionally vulnerable to high-velocity impact. Documented cases have recorded baboons left permanently blinded, with paint marks near the eyes of juveniles, lactating females, and elderly individuals. Other injuries include lacerations, bruising, internal bleeding, and lasting tissue damage, particularly when individuals are repeatedly targeted. Such practices are cruel and incompatible with the principle of well-being enshrined in NEM:BA.

Psychological and Behavioural Impacts

Beyond physical harm, paintball use causes long-term psychological damage. Repeated exposure induces chronic stress and anxiety, altering natural behaviour and troop cohesion. Baboons subjected to such stress may become hyper-vigilant, defensive, or aggressive, disrupting their ability to forage, lead, or care for infants effectively.

Stress-related breakdown of social hierarchies can destabilise troop leadership, weaken bonds, and trigger intra-troop violence. Lactating females under prolonged stress may experience reduced milk production and diminished maternal care, with knock-on effects for infant survival. Chronic stress also weakens immune systems, making baboons more vulnerable to disease.

Ineffectiveness of Paintball Deterrents

From a management perspective, paintball guns fail to deliver sustainable results. Baboons demonstrate habituation, reducing their responsiveness to deterrents even when they are harmful. As a result, managers escalate force without addressing the underlying ecological drivers of conflict, leaving baboons harmed and communities frustrated.

This ineffectiveness is compounded by the fact that disrupted foraging behaviour drives baboons toward human food sources, precisely the outcome managers seek to avoid. Instead of restoring ecological functioning, paintball use entrenches dependency on human-derived, high-calorie foods, exacerbating conflict.

Negative Impacts on Tourism and Communities

Beyond ecological harm, paintball use carries social and reputational costs. Images of cruelty and violence towards baboons damage South Africa's reputation for conservation and ecotourism. Communities associated with such practices risk being perceived as cruel or incompetent in managing wildlife, undermining both trust and tourism revenue.

Legal and Ethical Non-Compliance

Under NEM:BA and its 2023 amendments, management strategies must:

- Incorporate animal well-being as a legal requirement.
- Avoid practices that cause unnecessary suffering.
- Minimise biodiversity impacts through science-based, ecologically sound interventions.

Paintball use fails on all these counts. Its continuation represents a breach of both the spirit and the letter of South African biodiversity law.

Demonstrated Failure

Years of reliance on paintball deterrents have conclusively shown that this approach fails—not only in Simon's Town but wherever it has been applied in South Africa. The strategy neither resolves human–baboon conflict nor protects ecological integrity. Instead, it entrenches cycles of violence, stress, and ecological imbalance, contrary to the requirements of law, ethics, and science.

THE BABOON STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT PLAN AND "CULLING"

Genetic Bottleneck Concerns

At the BAG meeting of 18 August 2025, members expressed serious concern regarding the potential genetic consequences of removing between 100 and 200 baboons from the Cape Peninsula population, currently estimated at approximately 600 individuals. Such a reduction represents a significant proportion of the total population and would have immediate and long-term implications for genetic viability. There was a session where all members brainstormed about ***genetic enrichment*** in the event of a cull.

GGST questions if we are setting the Cape Peninsula Baboon population for genetic collapse.

The Cape Peninsula constitutes a geographically and ecologically isolated environment, functioning effectively as a closed system. Urbanisation has created a complete barrier around the Peninsula, preventing the natural dispersal of baboons to and from surrounding regions. This lack of connectivity means that no genetic exchange with external populations

is possible, while emigration from the Peninsula typically results in mortality, as dispersing baboons are inevitably killed during conflict encounters in urban areas.

Within the Peninsula, the population is already fragmented into several troops occupying discrete ranges, further reducing opportunities for gene flow. Under these conditions, any artificial reduction of the population would exacerbate the risks of inbreeding depression, loss of genetic diversity, and long-term population decline.

During the discussion, one suggestion raised was the introduction of baboons from other parts of South Africa into the Peninsula to increase genetic variation. However, this was widely acknowledged as an ethically and ecologically problematic measure. Introducing wild baboons into an already stressed and highly urbanised environment would likely result in high mortality, maladaptation, and the rapid habituation of immigrant baboons to anthropogenic food sources, particularly if waste management deficiencies remain unresolved. Such translocations would also raise significant welfare concerns for the animals involved and could further destabilise existing social structures within resident troops.

For these reasons, the prospect of a genetic bottleneck underscores the conclusion that population reduction through removals is both scientifically irresponsible and ecologically unsustainable. A precautionary approach is required, prioritising habitat restoration, conflict mitigation, and long-term coexistence strategies, rather than drastic population reduction measures that threaten the genetic integrity and survival of the Peninsula's baboon population.

FAILED ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION

The 2024 *Western Cape State of the Environment Report* offers a dire picture: ecosystem health continued its steady decline over the past five years. Habitat loss and species deterioration are recorded even in protected areas like Table Mountain. Drivers include invasive species, poaching, arson, illegal trade, lack of enforcement, and poor implementation. While protected areas have expanded on paper, this has not translated into ecological recovery.

These trends expose a critical truth: formal protection without ecological restoration is not sufficient. Fragmented, ***reactive conservation is failing***. ***We need preventative measures.***

No climate adaptation plans seem to be effectively in place.

No significant funding seems to be allocated to ecosystem repair.

Most alarmingly, legal duties remain unfulfilled: the duty of care and the obligation to consider animal well-being in management decisions are routinely ignored. Nature continues to be treated not as a living system, but as an inert object to be controlled and used.

INDIGENOUS WISDOM AND SUPPRESSED ECOLOGIES

Globally, Indigenous communities represent just 5% of the population, yet protect over 80% of biodiversity. In southern Africa, the San and Khoe Peoples have long held baboons in high regard. Known as beings who "*refuse to die*," baboons were admired for their powerful resilience and ability to heal, escape danger, overcome drought, and injury. San healers observed them closely, evoked their powers in rituals, and followed them to learn which plants they used to manage pain and heal, laying the foundation for their legendary knowledge of medicinal plants.

This empirical wisdom is grounded in generations of observation and harmonious coexistence.

THE POSITION OF CIVIL SOCIETY

Persecuted species are those less charismatic fauna that are believed to be abundant. The chacma baboon (Papio ursinus) is one such animal. Negative human attitudes towards primates pose a significant barrier to effective conservation. Without public support or a shift in perception, conservation efforts for socially complex and ecologically important species like baboons will remain compromised.

It is therefore essential to promote a more informed and empathetic understanding of these species within human communities. However, it must also be recognised that **those who are directly affected by human-wildlife conflict, while important stakeholders, should not be the sole or primary decision-makers** in determining the fate of the species in question. While

community consultation is crucial, conservation decisions must be guided by ecological science, ethical considerations, and long-term biodiversity objectives.

DISREGARD OF PUBLIC OPINION

The **Unruly Natures project's** scientifically rigorous survey of 537 residents across the Cape Peninsula reveals overwhelming evidence contradicting elimination justifications. An overwhelming 74% of residents expressed tolerance for baboons entering their neighbourhoods, reflecting a widespread willingness to share space with these wild primates. Only 5% of respondents supported the complete removal of baboons from the Cape Peninsula, a clear indication that eradication is not in line with public sentiment. Even among the 83% of residents who have had direct encounters with baboons, including 47% who reported baboons entering their homes, there were no reports of physical harm to humans. This suggests that, contrary to some narratives, baboons are not inherently aggressive or dangerous in urban environments. Many residents placed responsibility for negative interactions on themselves rather than the animals. Poor waste management practices and human behaviours, such as leaving food accessible or failing to secure bins, were most often cited as the root causes of conflict.

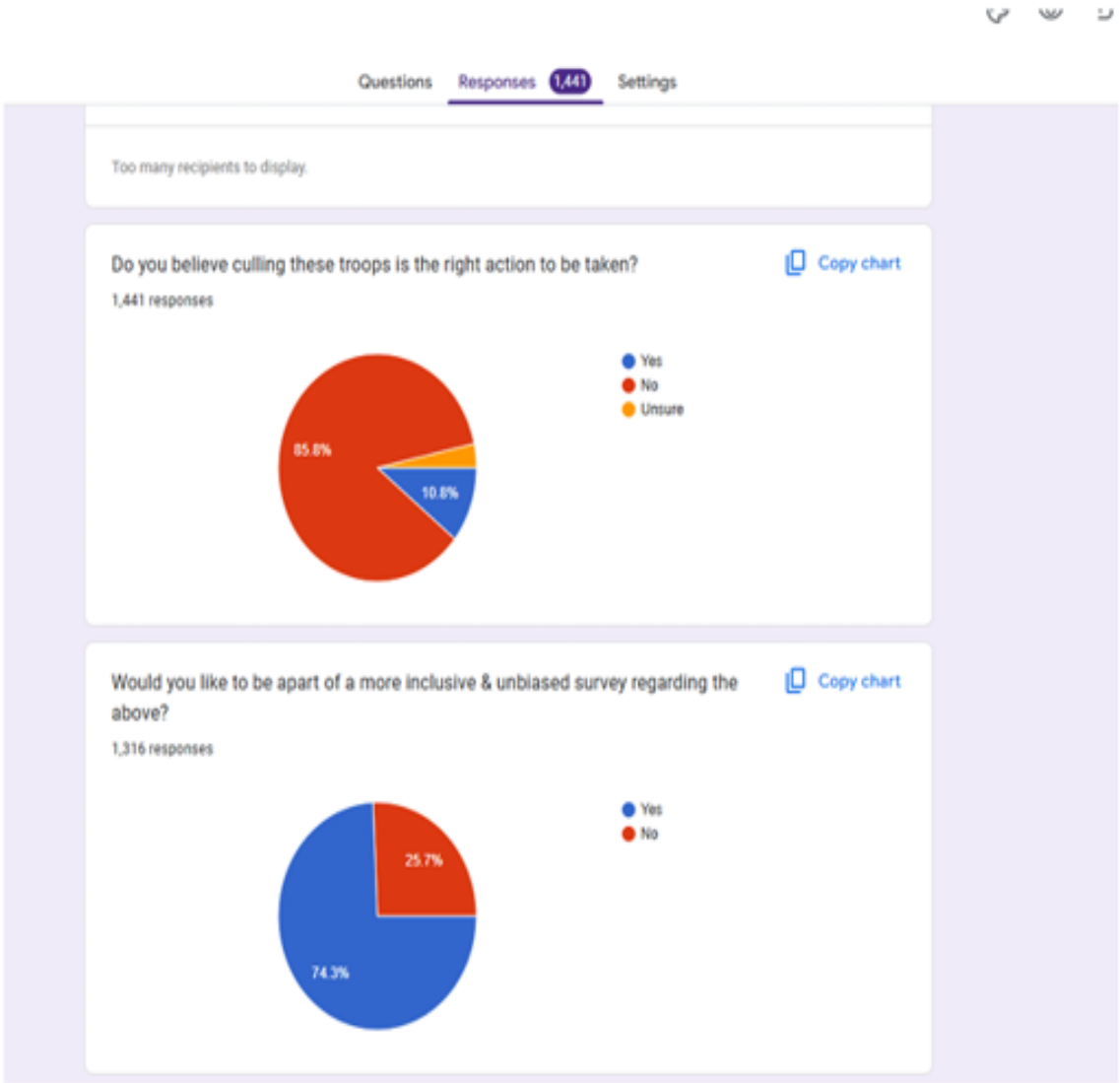
Importantly, there was near-universal opposition to the killing or euthanising of baboons across all demographics surveyed. Instead, residents strongly supported non-lethal, community-based strategies, including expanded education initiatives and the use of trained baboon monitors to manage interactions and promote coexistence. In the Western Cape, 47 registered NGOs from the Cape Animal Welfare Forum strongly opposed this proposal via a letter. 28 different NGOs from the Wildlife Animals Protection Forum sent a cease and desist letter. Public petitions and protest actions are currently underway as well.

These reactions indicate a significant gap between current management approaches and community values. They also underscore the urgent need for policies grounded in education, shared responsibility, rather than coercion and control.

A 48 hours survey indicated strong rejection to culling

Do you believe culling these troops is the right action to be taken?

These are the results of that poll, as of 14h45 Friday 22nd August:



A PREMATURE PROPOSAL

Despite longstanding commitments, *none of the agreed-upon interventions have been meaningfully operationalised*. ***Notably, waste management systems remain critically deficient, with key measures, such as the rollout of baboon-proof refuse bins, deferred until 2026, despite their recognised importance.***

The role of unmanaged waste as a major attractant for baboons to urban areas is well established in both scientific literature and local precedent (including reports from NCC). Community-led initiatives demonstrate that proper waste management eliminates most negative interactions without requiring baboon elimination. Practical alternatives include proper waste management and baboon-proofing bins. Improved waste disposal systems provide immediate conflict reduction as demonstrated in successful community programmes.

It is **illogical and procedurally indefensible** to proceed with the proposed removal or killing of baboons while simultaneously acknowledging that basic mitigation tools, such as secured waste infrastructure, will only be implemented in 2026. Communities have waited for the rollout of these essential measures for years, and no justification has been provided for the continued delay.

If any form of lethal control is to be considered, **it must be a measure of absolute last resort,** taken only after all non-lethal and preventive strategies have been fully exhausted and independently evaluated for efficacy. That threshold has clearly not been met in this case.

Accordingly, the proposed culling of baboons is both **premature and unacceptable**, and stands in direct conflict with the ethical, policy, and legal principles that should govern responsible and lawful wildlife management.

Given the current context, it is **premature and scientifically unjustifiable** to consider invasive interventions such as the removal or relocation of baboon troops. Authorities have **not yet exhausted foundational, non-lethal management measures.** These include the

implementation of effective waste management systems and the consistent enforcement of relevant municipal bylaws. Proceeding with drastic actions in the absence of these basic interventions reflects a failure of due diligence.

Ecological buffering

Ecological buffering and wildlife corridors are both tools of landscape-scale conservation, but they serve different ecological functions. Wildlife corridors are linear or connective patches of habitat that allow animals to move between fragmented habitats. They are designed to facilitate gene flow, seasonal migration, and dispersal, often at broader spatial scales.

In contrast, ecological buffering involves the targeted restoration or enhancement of habitat adjacent to or surrounding areas of conflict (such as the urban edge), with the specific aim of reducing wildlife movement into human-dominated spaces. Buffer zones do not serve primarily as pathways but as destination habitats that fulfil animals' core biological needs, food, shelter, and safety, so that movement into undesirable zones (e.g., towns) becomes unnecessary and infrequent.

In the case of Cape baboons, buffering could take the form of strategically located indigenous food patches, reforested roosting zones, and biologically rich zones of attraction between core baboon ranges and urban edges. These vegetated buffers would act as ecological magnets, drawing animals away from towns by meeting their evolutionary and ecological requirements within their natural range.

Ecological buffering has been successfully implemented in various contexts to mitigate conflict, increase wildlife protection, and support primate and large mammal conservation. In Old Oyo National Park (Nigeria), habitat restoration supported baboons and patas monkeys by reducing their reliance on nearby farms. In Uganda's Kibale National Park, enriched buffer zones helped retain chimpanzees within forest margins. In India's Jim Corbett National Park, passive rewilding has re-established buffer zones that both deter and absorb wildlife from agricultural and village areas.

While provisioning is not currently considered a viable management tool, it is important to recognise that environmental conditions and contextual circumstances are shifting. In regions

affected by climate change and recurrent wildfires, such as the Cape Peninsula, it may be necessary to reconsider certain measures in light of ecological realities.

For instance, Addo Elephant National Park employs a system of gradient water provisioning to support elephants and other wildlife in dry areas. A similar approach could be adapted, in a cautious and context-specific manner, for areas where habitat degradation, water scarcity, or altered ecosystem dynamics pose risks to wildlife communities.

Any such intervention would require careful ecological assessment, strict safeguards to avoid habituation, and alignment with conservation and biodiversity objectives.

These examples highlight the importance of combining ecological understanding with spatial planning.

PROPOSED TRANSLOCATIONS

The capture and relocation of an entire baboon troop is **not simple not harmless.** The process is often **chaotic, physically and psychologically traumatic**, and can result in the disruption of complex social hierarchies while causing long-term stress. Baboons' well-being depends on stable group structures and familiar ecological conditions. Displacement frequently leads to **permanent captivity**, sterilisation, and a significant reduction in behavioural and reproductive freedom, which raises serious ethical and welfare concerns for these primates.

Furthermore, there are ***no clearly identified or suitable release sites*** *that would guarantee both ecological sustainability and long-term safety for relocated troops. Sanctuaries, while often well-intentioned, may effectively function as* ***permanent confinement****, failing to meet the species-specific needs of wild primates.*

Extreme measures such as removal or euthanasia should be regarded as **measures of last resort**, permissible only after **all humane, science-based, and context-appropriate interventions have been thoroughly implemented and independently assessed.**

The practice of issuing broad, annual permits by CapeNature, authorising the transportation, relocation, or killing of baboons under a blanket permit, raises serious concerns regarding transparency, accountability, and legal compliance.

Permits of this nature, which were obtained through Promotion of Access to Information Act (PAIA) requests, effectively allow authorities to implement invasive management interventions without any opportunity for oversight or public scrutiny. This approach undermines the principles of procedural fairness, environmental justice, and the precautionary principle enshrined in South African environmental law, including the National Environmental Management Act (NEMA) and its biodiversity-specific frameworks such as NEM:BA.

KILLING

At the most recent BAG meeting on the 18th of August 2025, during the presentation of the ***Draft Action Plan***, we raised a fundamental question: if the proposed ***hard reset*** entails eliminating entire baboon troops, ***how do the authorities intend to carry this out in practice?*** A troop of baboons will not remain passive while being exterminated. Yet, despite the gravity of such a proposal, officials were unable to articulate any clear methodology. The assurance that the process would be ***humane*** was repeated, but without any substantive explanation, suggesting either a lack of planning or an unwillingness to disclose the details. **This is alarming because it reveals that the plan's most radical, yet preferred measure rests on a method that has not been thought through.**

The Draft Action Plan briefly refers to the possible use of large cages. However, this raises profound welfare concerns. Baboons do not enter cages simultaneously, meaning family groups would be disrupted, juveniles separated from mothers, and entire troops subjected to acute psychological distress. Evidence from other regions demonstrates that once baboons perceive entrapment, extreme panic, aggression, and trauma follow. Specialist hunters have been proposed as a fallback, tasked with shooting individuals one by one until the troop is exterminated. Such a method raises the unanswerable question: what constitutes humane in

this context? Would shooters kill infants before their mothers, or mothers before their infants?

South Africa has witnessed a precedent for this type of logic. During the apartheid era, elephant culling was conducted on the claim that it was "humane." Families of elephants were driven together, immobilised, and, while still conscious, shot. Subsequent evaluations, by scientists, ethicists, and the broader public, revealed this to be not a "humane" intervention but an appalling carnage that caused profound suffering to highly intelligent, socially bonded animals. To replicate such an approach with baboons, who also possess complex cognitive abilities and strong kinship ties, would repeat a historical injustice that science has already condemned.

To describe mass killing of baboon troops, whether by caging or systematic shooting, as "humane" is not only scientifically indefensible, but ethically untenable. It risks perpetuating a model of conservation grounded in cruelty and deception, rather than ecological understanding and coexistence.

CURRENT BABOON MANAGEMENT IS AN EXAMPLE OF NON-HARMONIOUS COEXISTENCE

The ongoing conflict between humans and baboons on the Cape Peninsula is a striking example of ***non-harmonious coexistence***. Humanity faces a fundamental choice: to invest in frameworks that enable coexistence with wildlife, or to persist in treating other species as problems to be controlled or eliminated, an approach that ultimately undermines ecological resilience and human well-being.

The Wild Law Institute and the EMS Foundation have collaborated on advancing the concept of **Harmonious Coexistence (HC)** and its relevance to addressing contemporary challenges, including the mitigation of climate change. By recognising the interdependence of species and ecosystems, HC provides a scientifically grounded and ethically coherent framework for managing human–wildlife relationships.

Current management approaches on the Peninsula illustrate how **outdated conservation paradigms**, focused on coercion and removal, impede the pursuit of coexistence and contribute to broader patterns of ecological degradation.

The proposed Draft Plan, which contemplates the removal of several baboon troops, represents the abandonment of even a nominal commitment to coexistence. Such removals are highly likely to result in the extermination of individuals, the disruption of troop cohesion, and cascading ecological consequences within a habitat of global biodiversity significance.

No lasting progress can be achieved while discourse and policy remain entrenched in the **language of elimination**. A shift towards Harmonious Coexistence is not only necessary for the survival of the Peninsula's baboon population but also for safeguarding the ecological integrity of the Cape Floristic Region in the face of climate change, habitat fragmentation, and biodiversity loss.

Asking Wrong Questions Can Only Lead to Wrong Answers

Critical Paradigm Shift: Moving Beyond Reductive Management Frameworks

By Carol Knox – Member of GGST

The Cape Peninsula Baboon Management Joint Task Team (JTT), **operates from fundamentally flawed questioning that inevitably leads to ecologically catastrophic outcomes**. Their **reductionist approach** treats complex ecosystem dynamics as simple elimination problems, ignoring decades of conservation science demonstrating the irreplaceable ecological functions of **this genetically distinct Papio ursinus metapopulation**.

The Framework Transformation: Side-by-Side Analysis

1. Problem Definition and Causation

Current JTT Framework (Problematic): *"How do we eliminate the baboon problem quickly and cost-effectively?"*

Instead of elimination-focused thinking,

Ask: *"What anthropogenic factors are creating artificial conflict scenarios, and how do we systematically address these root causes while preserving this keystone species' irreplaceable ecological functions?"*

Scientific Evidence: Hoffman & O'Riain (2012) demonstrate that Papio ursinus preferentially forages in natural fynbos habitats when adequate indigenous resources exist. Urban foraging behaviours result from management-created artificial feeding opportunities through chronically unsecured waste systems, not population excess or inherent behavioural defects such as “habituation”.

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2. Conservation Obligation Recognition

Current JTT Framework (Problematic): *"What's the cheapest way to reduce human-baboon conflict immediately?"*

Instead of short-term cost minimisation,

Ask: *"How do we fulfil UNESCO World Heritage Site obligations to protect this genetically distinct metapopulation while addressing legitimate human community concerns through evidence-based coexistence protocols?"*

Scientific Evidence: The Cape Peninsula's **Outstanding Universal Value** designation explicitly mandates protection of endemic and specially adapted species. *These baboons represent 200,000 years of evolutionary adaptation to Mediterranean-climate ecosystems—irreplaceable genetic heritage that cannot be substituted by conspecific populations from different biomes.*

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3. Ecosystem Service Integration

Current JTT Framework (Problematic): *"How many baboons can we remove to achieve immediate conflict reduction?"*

Instead of arbitrary reduction targets,

Ask: *"What demographic thresholds are essential for maintaining viable breeding populations and preserving critical seed dispersal networks throughout the Cape Floral Kingdom?"*

Scientific Evidence: With only 461 individuals recorded in 2022/2023 (representing a 7.4% population decline), this metapopulation faces severe demographic constraints. Eliminating an additional 25% risks precipitating irreversible collapse through genetic bottlenecking and disrupted social structures essential for juvenile survival.

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4. Social Structure Preservation

Current JTT Framework (Problematic): *"Which problem individuals should we eliminate first for maximum impact?"*

Instead of targeting troop leaders,

Ask: *"How do we preserve natural social hierarchies and troop cohesion essential for population resilience while addressing anthropogenic conflict drivers through infrastructure modification?"*

Scientific Evidence: Culling dominant males like Martello and Samuel destabilises established social structures, triggering abnormal fragmentation, increased intraspecific aggression, and compromised juvenile care systems. Natural fission processes (remember the term "splinter troops" is a term with no scientific foundation, it is a manufactured term to problematise baboons), represent adaptive responses to resource availability, not management problems requiring lethal intervention. Additionally, to talk of bringing in "other" males for genetic diversity is astonishing, since healthy young dispersing males are routinely killed and two troop leaders are set to be killed imminently for natural baboon behaviour. On the one hand mention "new genetics" and on the other killing our dispersing males and current troop leaders.

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5. Infrastructure Accountability

Current JTT Framework (Problematic): *"How do we force baboons to stay out of urban areas permanently?"*

Instead of coercive wildlife displacement,

Ask: *"What comprehensive waste management infrastructure and enforcement protocols are required to eliminate anthropogenic food sources that artificially attract natural foraging behaviours into urban matrices?"*

Scientific Evidence: The Green Group Simonstown model demonstrates that systematic waste containment using baboon-resistant infrastructure, combined with community-based monitoring, eliminates urban incursions while maintaining natural foraging patterns. This approach operates a much lower cost than lethal management whilst achieving superior conflict reduction outcomes.

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6. Evidence-Based Success Scaling

Current JTT Framework (Problematic): *"What's the most efficient elimination strategy to implement across the Peninsula?"*

Instead of systematic culling approaches,

Ask: *"How do we scale the demonstrably successful Green Group Simonstown coexistence model Peninsula-wide, and what resources are required for comprehensive implementation within UNESCO World Heritage Site management frameworks?"*

Scientific Evidence: Green Group protocols achieve documented elimination of aggressive human-baboon encounters, substantial reductions in property damage incidents, and maintenance of natural fynbos foraging behaviours through evidence-based infrastructure deployment and non-aversive monitoring techniques.

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7. Legal Compliance Framework

Current JTT Framework (Problematic): *"How do we minimise legal obstacles to rapid baboon removal?"*

Instead of circumventing conservation legislation,

Ask: *"How do we ensure full compliance with NEMBA, NEMA, and Section 24 constitutional environmental obligations while achieving conflict reduction through habitat management and anthropogenic behaviour modification?"*

Scientific Evidence: Current management failures - including inadequate enforcement against illegal shootings, systematic infrastructure neglect, and sidelining of community expertise - represent potential constitutional violations requiring immediate rectification rather than species elimination to avoid accountability.

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8. Economic Analysis Integration

Current JTT Framework (Problematic): *"What's the cheapest immediate solution regardless of long-term consequences?"*

Instead of short-term cost and avoidance of responsibility,

Ask: *"What are the quantified ecosystem service values provided by this keystone species, and what are the true long-term ecological and economic costs of eliminating seed dispersal networks essential for fynbos regeneration?"*

Scientific Evidence: Papio ursinus functions as primary long-distance seed dispersers facilitating plant community persistence across fragmented landscapes. Their elimination would sever ecological processes developed over millennia, potentially triggering cascading biodiversity collapse with incalculable restoration costs, perhaps even beyond human efforts, exceeding any immediate management savings.

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9. Community Partnership Recognition

Current JTT Framework (Problematic): *"How do we implement management decisions with minimal public consultation?"*

Instead of dismissing, sideling, ignoring community expertise,

Ask: *"How do we formalise partnerships with successful local conservation initiatives and integrate community and indigenous knowledge systems that have demonstrated effective human-baboon coexistence outcomes?"*

Scientific Evidence: The systematic sidelining of Green Group Simonstown's proven methodologies represents catastrophic underutilisation of evidence-based conservation approaches. **Community-driven initiatives demonstrate superior conflict reduction whilst operating on substantially lower budgets than centralised lethal and aggressive management programmes.**

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10. Population Viability Assessment

Current JTT Framework (Problematic): *"How quickly can we reduce baboon numbers to eliminate management challenges?"*

Instead of demographic reduction strategies,

Ask: *"What conservation genetics protocols are essential for maintaining genetic connectivity across fragmented habitat patches, and how do we ensure population resilience against escalating anthropogenic mortality factors?"*

Scientific Evidence: Human-induced mortalities represent the leading cause of baboon deaths, with twenty-six individuals dying predominantly from pellet gun shootings, dog attacks, and vehicle collisions in 2022/2023. Additional systematic culling would compound existing demographic pressures threatening metapopulation viability. Change the protocols for dispersing males and immediately cease culling plans for the two male troop leaders of

Waterfall and Seaforth troops to stop troop trauma and increased fragmentation and stress.

Conservation Imperative: The Path Forward

This paradigm transformation from elimination to coexistence represents more than methodological adjustment - it constitutes recognition of fundamental ecological reality. *The scientific evidence overwhelmingly demonstrates that systematic infrastructure management and anthropogenic behaviour modification eliminate conflict whilst preserving irreplaceable evolutionary heritage essential for Cape Floral Kingdom ecosystem integrity.*

The current crisis demands immediate implementation of evidence-based protocols that honour both conservation obligations and human community needs. The choice is between ecological stewardship and expedient elimination which will destroy the Peninsula's conservation legacy, already stressed by climate change, and fynbos plundering, for the generations to come.

Rehabilitation, Not Removal

Removal is not a solution; it is a symptom of systemic failure. The way forward lies in rehabilitation, restoration, and rethinking our relationship with Nature. To begin repairing its fractured bond with wildlife, the JTT must shift from a conservation paradigm of control and elimination to one of ecological restoration and care.

An anonymous artist painted a striking mural of bullets near a baboon with a bleeding heart in Simon's Town, June 2025. The artwork captures the growing public outcry, reflected in a **rapidly expanding local PETITION** opposing the continuation of cruel management practices.

COCT must immediately impose a moratorium on all planned baboon removals. Any future decision must be based on interdisciplinary knowledge, transparency, procedural fairness, and genuine public consultation. This contrasts sharply with the flawed process imposed on

the Cape Peninsula Baboon Advisory Group, which was handed the baboon removal final decision without being consulted.

CapeNature and SANParks must commit to large-scale habitat restoration. This means rehabilitating degraded zones, creating corridors and large ecological patches, and planting indigenous food-bearing species essential for baboon and other wildlife survival, reducing their dependence on urban waste.
COCT must implement its own mitigation strategies and bylaws on waste management, WildCT, and the Cape Peninsula Baboon Strategic Management Plan by promoting true interdepartmental collaboration between waste management, law enforcement, urban planning, and environmental units.

This crisis is not simply political. It is ecological, ethical, and cultural. It will only be resolved when the question shifts: not how to remove baboons, but how to restore the environments that have failed them.

CONCLUSION

In light of the serious procedural flaws outlined above, it is our considered position that no legitimacy can be attached to this consultation process or to any decisions flowing from it. The constitutional and statutory duties of the City of Cape Town, CapeNature, and SANParks cannot be delegated to civil society, nor discharged through rushed, exclusionary, or perfunctory processes.

Accordingly, we call for an immediate ***moratorium*** on the killing or removal of baboons, whether individual animals or entire troops, pending the establishment of a lawful, transparent, and inclusive process. Such a moratorium must remain in place until:

1. **all reasonable and non-lethal mitigation measures have been properly implemented, monitored, and exhausted** in line with section 2 of the National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act (NEM:BA), which requires that the well-being of wild animals be explicitly considered in all decision-making;

2. **a genuinely multidisciplinary expert panel** is transparently and fairly constituted, including specialists in animal behaviour, conservation science, welfare, Indigenous knowledge systems, and human-wildlife conflict;
3. **The public is not only consulted but meaningfully engaged and educated** by the responsible authorities, so that residents can understand both their obligations and their role in coexisting with baboons as indigenous, ecologically important animals;
4. **Accountability mechanisms are established** to ensure that both the authorities and the public bear responsibility for protecting baboons and addressing the human-generated attractants (such as poor waste management and habitat destruction) that underlie conflict.

Absent these conditions, any invasive, quick-fix actions against baboons, including removals, forced relocations, or killings, would not only be unlawful but also ethically indefensible, undermining the principles of cooperative governance, environmental justice, and the constitutional mandate to protect biodiversity for present and future generations.

We thank the community of the Cape Peninsula
for their contributions,
for their deep love of this beautiful place,
and for their courage,
speaking the truth to protect it.

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Beloved Simon's Town baboon euthanised, X-rays reveal several bullet wounds

APPENDIX 1

Cape Peninsula Baboon Management Crisis: Comprehensive Key Points Analysis by Carol Knox of Glencairn, Cape Town

Executive Summary

- **Opposition to "Hard Reset"**: Rigorous scientific critique of proposed lethal culling of approximately 117 chacma baboons (Papio ursinus), representing 25% of the managed population
- **UNESCO World Heritage Crisis**: Conservation catastrophe occurring within landscape of Outstanding Universal Value and globally significant biodiversity importance
- **Anthropogenic Root Causes**: Human-baboon conflicts driven by systematic management failures, habitat fragmentation, and inadequate infrastructure
- **Constitutional and International Action**: Formal proceedings through South Africa's Public Protector (Section 24 environmental rights) and UNESCO World Heritage Centre oversight
- **Public Opposition**: Over 7,500 signatures on petition opposing culling actions to be submitted to Parliament
- **Urgent Leadership Protection**: Immediate halt required to prevent culling of Seaforth and Waterfall troop male leaders

1. Comprehensive Refutation of Culling Justifications

Complex Habitat and Population Dynamics

- **Habitat Fragmentation Crisis**: Baboons severely constrained by urban encroachment, not natural carrying capacity limitations

- **Historical Range Collapse**: Dramatic contraction from Peninsula-wide distribution to fragmented mountainous refugia
- **Anthropogenic Conflict Origins**: Urban foraging behaviours driven by chronic unsecured waste access and management failures
- **Population Decline Evidence**: 2022/2023 Urban Baboon Programme census documented 461 individuals (7.4% decrease), with 58 documented mortalities exceeding historical averages
- **Human-Induced Mortality Crisis**: 26 baboons killed primarily through pellet gun shootings, dog attacks, and vehicle collisions

Ecological Significance and Keystone Functions

- **Irreplaceable Seed Dispersal Networks**: Critical long-distance dispersers maintaining fynbos biome regeneration across fragmented landscapes through specialised gut transit times and territorial ranging patterns
- **Ecosystem Engineering Functions**: Large-bodied herbivores facilitating vegetation structure modification and nutrient redistribution across elevation gradients
- **200,000-Year Evolutionary Heritage**: Mediterranean-climate adaptations creating genetically distinct metapopulation with unique physiological tolerances and behavioural repertoires
- **Cascading Ecological Disruption Risk**: Population reduction threatening Cape Floral Kingdom biodiversity through ecosystem service collapse and seed dispersal network fragmentation

2. Demonstrated Non-Lethal Management Success

Green Group Simonstown Conservation Model

Organisational Attribution: Community-based conservation initiative demonstrating exceptional human-baboon coexistence through scientifically grounded methodologies

- **Systematic Waste Management Infrastructure**: Purpose-designed baboon-resistant containment systems with consistent maintenance protocols eliminating anthropogenic food rewards

- **Community-Based Monitoring**: Dedicated field monitors trained in ethologically appropriate baboon behaviour interpretation and non-aversive management techniques
- **Wet Waste Programme Success**: Comprehensive organic waste management reducing high-quality anthropogenic attractants and preventing resource aggregation patterns
- **Economic Efficiency**: Operating on approximately one-third the budget of lethal management programmes whilst achieving quantifiably superior conflict reduction metrics
- **Superior Conservation Outcomes**: Documented elimination of aggressive human-baboon encounters, substantial property damage reduction, and maintenance of natural foraging patterns within indigenous fynbos habitats

Field Innovation Examples

- **Waterfall Troop Management**: 20-year established social unit successfully managed by ranger Mbullelo using camouflage techniques at traditional cliff-face roosting sites, demonstrating respect for natural behavioural ecology
- **Da Gama Troop Conservation**: **Cape Peninsula Civil Conservation** successfully reintegrated fission group comprising two reproductive females, one juvenile, and one infant ("the Cremies") through intensive monitoring protocols with two dedicated rangers, preserving critical demographic units and genetic diversity

3. Anthropogenic Health and Welfare Crisis

Chronic Stress Pathophysiology and Physical Trauma

- **Systematic Human Harassment**: Paintball harassment causing not merely behavioural disruption but documented physical injuries and chronic stress responses, alongside excessive herding and illegal shootings systematically compromising immune function and cortisol regulation
- **Physiological Manifestations**: Abnormal alopecia patterns indicating chronic stress, gastrointestinal disorders from anthropogenic refuse consumption disrupting natural gut microbiome composition

- **Social Structure Fracturing**: Disrupted dominance hierarchies and maternal lineages essential for juvenile survival and cultural transmission of foraging knowledge
- **Metabolic Disruptions**: Nutritional stress from inadequate waste management protocols forcing consumption of inappropriate anthropogenic food sources

4. Critical Scientific and Terminological Challenges

"Wicked Problem" Misrepresentation

- **Academic Misuse**: Cape Peninsula Baboon Management Action Plan systematically misrepresenting Parrott (2017) collaborative modelling research
- **Methodological Guidance Ignored**: Parrott's stakeholder involvement methodologies and iterative solution development frameworks deliberately overlooked
- **Defeatist Framing**: Management authorities exploiting "wicked problem" terminology to justify management inaction and resignation to persistent conflict, rather than implementing evidence-based collaborative solution development protocols

"Splinter Troops" Scientific Invalidity

- **Terminological Precision Failure**: Term completely absent from established primatological literature and ethological classification systems
- **Natural Fission Mischaracterisation**: Systematic misrepresentation of adaptive troop division processes as pathological fragmentation requiring immediate intervention
- **Waterfall Troop Exemplar**: 20-year independent social unit demonstrating natural fission-derived stability and territorial establishment, wrongly classified as ephemeral "splinter" requiring elimination

Population Management Contradictions

- **Genetic Enhancement Paradox**: Formal risk assessments simultaneously considering outside male introductions whilst systematically eliminating healthy dispersing males critical for gene flow

- **Demographic Destabilisation**: Disproportionately high percentage of 2023 mortalities affecting dispersing males essential for genetic exchange between increasingly fragmented subpopulations
- **Critical Leadership Targeting**: **IMMEDIATE HALT REQUIRED** - Proposed culling of dominant males Martello (Seaforth troop) and Samuel (Waterfall troop) despite their documented protective and stabilising behaviours maintaining troop cohesion and reducing intraspecific aggression

5. IUCN Classification Crisis and Local Extinction Risk

"Least Concern" Conservation Loophole Exploitation

- **Global vs. Local Status Paradox**: Widespread savanna distribution statistics masking genetically distinct Peninsula population's critical extinction risk within Mediterranean fynbos ecosystem
- **Administrative Convenience**: Management authorities cynically exploiting broad taxonomic classification to justify potential irreversible local population collapse
- **Demographic Mathematics**: Proposed 25% population reduction constituting catastrophic demographic crash within geographically confined ecosystem already experiencing unsustainable human-induced mortality rates

Genetic Distinctiveness and Irreplaceable Evolutionary Heritage

- **Mediterranean-Climate Adaptations**: Unique digestive enzyme profiles enabling efficient processing of Cape Floral Kingdom plant species with specialised secondary metabolite detoxification pathways
- **Behavioural Specialisations**: Evolved foraging strategies adapted to seasonal phenological patterns and territorial ranging behaviours optimised for fragmented landscape matrix navigation

- **Physiological Tolerance Mechanisms**: Enhanced osmoregulatory capacity from marine coastal proximity and sophisticated dietary adaptations enabling utilisation of indigenous geophyte communities during resource-scarce periods
- **Metapopulation Viability Threshold**: Fragmented population structure requiring minimum demographic connectivity thresholds for long-term genetic viability across habitat patches

6. Post-Wildfire Ecological Vulnerability

Fire-Induced Resource Scarcity and Population Stress

- **Habitat Degradation Quantification**: Wildfires eliminating 80-90% of natural food resources for 6-18 month recovery periods, creating ecological refugee conditions requiring emergency intervention (Dubay, 2018)
- **Foraging Displacement Dynamics**: Forced anthropogenic resource exploitation during habitat regeneration periods, necessitating strategic management responses rather than punitive elimination
- **Strategic Support Requirements**: Evidence-based supplementary feeding and water provisioning protocols strategically positioned away from human settlement interfaces during post-fire ecological disasters

7. Management Crisis: Cowboy Tactics and Systematic Welfare Violations

Inexperienced Ranger Deployment and Training Failures

- **SharkSpotters Transition Crisis**: It seems rangers may be inadequately trained or instructed to employ cowboy tactics fundamentally incompatible with primate behavioural ecology and stress physiology

- **Community Distress Documentation**: Persistent complaints from Simonstown residents via baboon WhatsApp monitoring groups reporting fearful screaming from terrorised baboons during aggressive herding operations into urban environments
- **Acoustic Harassment Evidence**: Constant noise pollution from paintball shooting creating chronic acoustic stress throughout baboon territories and disturbing residential communities
- **Hotline Intervention Calls**: Complaint call made to the Hotline reporting excessive force and inappropriate herding tactics indicating systematic management protocol failures.

Systematic Welfare Violations and Physical Trauma

The documented deployment of paintball harassment causing measurable physical trauma, combined with strategic targeting of behaviourally stable troop leaders and inexperienced rangers employing aggressive cowboy herding tactics resulting in fearful screaming from terrorised animals, reveals management approaches that systematically exacerbate rather than resolve the underlying drivers of human-wildlife conflict whilst simultaneously violating fundamental animal welfare standards and primate stress physiology principles.

8. Legal Framework Failures and Constitutional Violations

Existing Protection Mechanisms Under Systematic Violation

- **Legislative Framework**: National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act (NEMBA) 2004, NEMA 1998, Nature and Environmental Conservation Ordinance 19 of 1974 (Section 29 explicitly prohibiting killing, hunting, poisoning or wilful disturbance of baboons)
- **Animal Protection Act 71 of 1962**: Comprehensive prohibition of maltreatment including goading, terrorising, and neglect - systematically violated through paintball harassment protocols and aggressive herding causing documented distress
- **Enforcement Crisis**: Negligible prosecution rates despite extensively documented illegal shootings, deliberate poisoning incidents, and vehicular collisions with compliance and enforcement capacity remaining catastrophically inadequate

International Oversight and UNESCO World Heritage Obligations

- **Outstanding Universal Value Classification**: UNESCO designation of Cape Peninsula as World Heritage Site of unparalleled global biodiversity significance explicitly requiring protection of endemic and specially adapted populations
- **2025 UNESCO Formal Inquiry**: Official information request regarding baboon management implementation demonstrating mounting international scrutiny of proposed elimination programmes
- **Biosphere Reserve Conservation Mandates**: Integrated, ethical, science-based conservation approaches prioritising ecosystem integrity and sustainable human-wildlife coexistence over population control measures

9. Evidence-Based Conservation Imperatives

Immediate Conservation Actions Requiring Emergency Implementation

- **Comprehensive Lethal Control Moratorium**: Immediate halt to all culling activities pending thorough independent scientific review by international primate conservation specialists
- **URGENT LEADERSHIP PROTECTION**: **Immediate cessation of planned elimination of Seaforth troop leader Martello and Waterfall troop leader Samuel** - these dominant males provide essential troop stability, reduce intraspecific conflict, and maintain critical social structures necessary for population resilience
- **Emergency Ranger Retraining Programme**: Immediate suspension of cowboy tactics and implementation of evidence-based, ethologically appropriate management protocols respecting primate behavioural ecology
- **Green Group Model Scaling**: Peninsula-wide implementation with dedicated funding allocation for comprehensive waste infrastructure and community-based monitoring protocol expansion

- **Rapid Infrastructure Deployment**: Emergency rollout of baboon-proof waste management systems following proven Green Group specifications across all Peninsula settlements
- **Enhanced Legal Enforcement Capacity**: Establishment of dedicated wildlife crime prosecution units with proactive patrol capabilities during waste collection periods and community education initiatives with statutory penalties for repeat offenders

Long-Term Ecosystem Management and Research Priorities

- **Humane Behavioural Management Protocols**: Implementation of management strategies respecting natural social structures whilst systematically reducing chronic anthropogenic stress factors
- **Scientific Documentation Reform**: Comprehensive revision ensuring terminological accuracy and alignment with established primatological literature
- **Research Priority Implementation**:
    - **Contraceptive Research Programmes**: Comprehensive investigation requiring substantial scientific study and rigorous trial protocols conducted according to international standards before any widespread implementation consideration
    - **Genetic Connectivity Studies**: Urgent assessment of gene flow patterns between increasingly fragmented Peninsula subpopulations using modern molecular techniques
    - **Ecosystem Service Quantification**: Detailed analysis of baboon contributions to Cape Floral Kingdom biodiversity maintenance through seed dispersal network mapping and vegetation recruitment studies
- **Early Warning System Development**: Implementation of predictive human-baboon conflict protocols incorporating existing community-based monitoring networks and WhatsApp communication systems
- **Dispersing Male Protocol Emergency Revision**: Immediate overhaul of protocols affecting healthy dispersing males critical for genetic exchange and population connectivity

Addendum: Systematic Dereliction of Duty Analysis (Rorvik, 2025)

Two-Decade Waste Management Failure Documentation

- **Foundational Strategy Systematic Abandonment**: Waste management and baboon-proofing explicitly identified as fundamental to every baboon management plan over past 20 years, yet catastrophically under-implemented
- **Infrastructure Deployment Crisis**: Critical baboon-proof bin deployment delayed from December 2023 deadline indefinitely until 2026, systematically exacerbating habituation risks and creating inevitable "death trap scenarios"
- **Community Compensation Response**: Local residents and community conservation initiatives independently developing and funding baboon-proofing solutions to compensate for systematic official management failures
- **Irrational Management Progression**: Scientifically unjustifiable advancement to drastic removal and lethal control measures without prior implementation of primary mitigation strategies

Enforcement and Compliance Systematic Catastrophe

- **Bylaw Violation Institutional Tolerance**: City of Cape Town waste management bylaw enforcement failures with resident complaints systematically unaddressed whilst community educators face harassment and abuse
- **Resource Allocation Strategic Failure**: Complete absence of appropriately skilled and adequately resourced enforcement teams during critical waste collection periods in identified conflict hotspots
- **Repeat Offender Institutional Protection**: Naval facilities and residential properties consistently violating waste security protocols without facing statutory consequences or prosecution
- **Strategic Enforcement Protocol Recommendations**: Immediate deployment of dedicated monitoring teams during waste collection periods to provide education, issue formal warnings, and prosecute persistent violators

Community Partnership Systematic Sidelining and Opportunity Waste

- **Local Expertise Institutional Sidelining**: Joint Task Team's systematically sidelining and dismissive attitude toward established local baboon conservation groups, preventing valuable partnership development and community experience utilisation
- **Aversive Measure Escalation**: Documented overuse of paintball guns causing measurable physical injuries and behavioural disruption, systematically increasing rather than reducing human-baboon conflict incidents
- **Collaborative Success Model Rejection**: Institutional failure to integrate demonstrably successful community-driven initiatives like Green Group Simonstown, despite warranting formal cooperation and scaling
- **Community Trust Systematic Erosion**: Urgent need for enhanced collaborative approaches to harness extensive local expertise, rebuild institutional trust, and promote evidence-based sustainable coexistence

Historical Precedents and Ethical Evolution Framework (Rorvik Historical Analysis)

Colonial Elimination Mentalities: Historical Practices Now Universally Condemned

- **1860 Bloemfontein Systematic Massacre**: Prince Alfred's orchestrated wildlife slaughter where "thousands upon thousands of eland, kudu, blesbok, quagga, zebra, ostrich, hartebees, wildebeest" (estimated 20,000-30,000 total population) were systematically encircled and eliminated, with the Prince "firing as fast as guns could be handed to him," resulting in 500-1,000 individual animals killed within a single hour of sustained killing
- **Contemporary Elite Celebration vs. Modern Conservation Recognition**: Once celebrated as "a very exciting day... that has not taken place in any part of the civilised world within the present century," now universally recognised as ecological catastrophe and systematic biodiversity destruction
- **Prophetic Resource Depletion Documentation**: Even contemporary observers noting with concerning prescience: "were His Royal Highness to live for a hundred years, I do not believe he could ever see such a scene again, for the game in South Africa is fast disappearing"

Social Justice Evolution and Ethical Transformation Parallels

- **Slavery Institution Abolition**: "Less than 200 years ago slavery was alive and well in Simonstown" - systematic human exploitation practices now universally recognised as morally unacceptable
- **Apartheid Forced Population Removal**: "Over 7,000 people forcibly removed from Simonstown because of the colour of their skin" - systematic human rights violations now globally condemned and constitutionally prohibited
- **Fundamental Ethical Transformation Recognition**: "Times change and the callous attitudes and norms of yesterday are no longer acceptable today" - acknowledgement of moral progress and ethical evolution

Conservation Paradigm Revolutionary Transformation

- **Global Conservation Movement Recognition**: "Widespread global surge towards more holistic approaches, more caring and non-lethal approaches to our natural environment, our ecology, and the fauna and flora in it, with much greater emphasis on Human-Wildlife Coexistence"
- **Integrated Conservation Ethics Framework**: "Conservation and Animal Rights are not oppositional forces, they are intrinsically interconnected" - recognition of unified approach to biodiversity protection
- **Elimination Strategy Historical Obsolescence**: "Short-sighted and irreversible elimination strategies are outdated and often illegal" - acknowledgement of paradigm shift toward coexistence
- **Legal Sentience Recognition Evolution**: Modern animal protection legislation acknowledging sentience and ecosystem stewardship principles with "change is a natural and needed process"

Strategic Change Imperatives Requiring Emergency Implementation

- **Comprehensive BSMP Constitutional Fulfilment**: Emergency acceleration of waste management infrastructure deployment, enforcement of human behavioural compliance, and systematic reform of aversive management techniques to minimise stress and ecological disruption

- **Community Partnership Institutional Facilitation**: Immediate establishment of constructive stakeholder engagement protocols aligned with environmental legislation and animal welfare standards
- **Simonstown Global Coexistence Excellence Model**: Strategic development of leading international human-wildlife coexistence demonstration through formal Green Group Simonstown partnership expansion and institutional support
- **Progressive Conservation Ethics Alignment**: Comprehensive adoption of management strategies compatible with modern conservation science, constitutional legal frameworks, and ecosystem stewardship principles

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Summary: A Critical Conservation Emergency Within Outstanding Universal Value Landscape

This comprehensive conservation crisis represents an unprecedented convergence of systematic management failures, constitutional environmental rights violations, and the imminent threat of irreversible loss of an extraordinary evolutionary achievement spanning 200,000 years of Mediterranean-climate adaptation within a UNESCO World Heritage landscape of globally recognised Outstanding Universal Value. The Cape Peninsula's chacma baboon metapopulation constitutes a genetically unique assemblage whose specialised ecological functions as keystone seed dispersers maintain the structural integrity of the Cape Floral Kingdom through irreplaceable ecosystem services that cannot be replicated by any other species within this biodiversity hotspot of unparalleled global significance.

The overwhelming convergence of rigorous scientific evidence, reinforced by over 7,500 petition signatures representing unprecedented public opposition to the proposed culling programme, unequivocally demands immediate implementation of proven non-lethal management alternatives whilst categorically halting all elimination strategies that would precipitate ecological catastrophe across this irreplaceable Mediterranean ecosystem. The Green Group Simonstown conservation model provides conclusive empirical demonstration that sustainable human-baboon coexistence is not merely theoretically possible but practically achievable, economically viable, and ecologically beneficial when proper waste management

infrastructure and evidence-based community monitoring protocols are systematically implemented with adequate institutional support and scientific oversight.

The immediate elimination threat to troop leaders Martello and Samuel represents a conservation emergency requiring urgent intervention to prevent irreversible social disruption. These behaviourally stable dominant males provide essential social cohesion, territorial defence capabilities, and intraspecific conflict mediation within their respective social units. Their systematic elimination would trigger cascading social fragmentation, elevated stress-induced mortality, and potential complete troop dissolution at a critical demographic juncture when population resilience is already severely compromised by escalating anthropogenic pressures and habitat constraints.

The systematic institutional failure to address fundamental causative mechanisms—chronic unsecured waste access creating predictable anthropogenic food aggregation patterns, catastrophically inadequate enforcement of existing environmental protection legislation, and sidelining of demonstrably successful community conservation initiatives—whilst simultaneously targeting individual baboons for systematic elimination, and the use of cowboy tactics employed by what seem to be inadequately trained rangers, represents a profound breach of conservation biology principles, constitutional environmental obligations, and international biodiversity stewardship commitments. The documented deployment of paintball harassment protocols causing measurable physical trauma and chronic psychological distress, combined with aggressive herding operations producing fearful vocalisations that distress both animals and residential communities, reveals management approaches that systematically exacerbate rather than resolve the underlying drivers of human-wildlife conflict whilst violating fundamental animal welfare standards and primate stress physiology principles.

The community reports of constant paintball acoustic harassment and terrorised animals being herded into urban environments by what seem to be inexperienced rangers demonstrate a catastrophic departure from evidence-based primate management protocols. These cowboy tactics not only inflict unnecessary suffering but actively undermine careful behavioural research demonstrating that respectful, non-aversive management approaches achieve superior conservation outcomes whilst maintaining natural social structures essential for population viability.

The historical precedents meticulously documented by Rorvik—from Prince Alfred's 1860 systematic massacre of thousands of indigenous wildlife species within a single orchestrated killing event to apartheid-era forced removals of human populations based on racial classification—serve as sobering reminders that practices once institutionally sanctioned and publicly celebrated are now universally condemned as ethically indefensible and ecologically catastrophic. The proposed elimination of 25% of this unique baboon metapopulation within a UNESCO World Heritage Site of Outstanding Universal Value represents a direct continuation of these outdated colonial elimination mentalities, fundamentally incompatible with modern conservation ethics, constitutional environmental rights, and international biodiversity stewardship obligations enshrined in global conservation frameworks.

Time remains critically finite for preserving this irreplaceable evolutionary treasure. Once eliminated through systematic culling protocols and aggressive management tactics, these 200,000 years of Mediterranean-climate genetic adaptations, culturally transmitted foraging behaviours, specialised physiological tolerances, and essential ecosystem service contributions cannot be restored through any conceivable human intervention, technological advancement, or conservation management technique. The scientific imperative transcends mere species protection to encompass preservation of irreplaceable evolutionary processes, ecological relationships, and genetic heritage that represent the culmination of millennia of natural selection within one of Earth's most extraordinary biodiversity regions.

The path forward demands immediate emergency action on multiple fronts: halt all planned eliminations including the critical troop leaders Martello and Samuel, suspend cowboy management tactics and retrain rangers in evidence-based primate behaviour protocols, implement proven coexistence methodologies at Peninsula scale, honour constitutional environmental obligations, and preserve this unique baboon metapopulation as an integral component of the Cape Peninsula's extraordinary natural heritage for current and future generations. The choice before us transcends local wildlife management to encompass our fundamental commitment to evidence-based conservation stewardship within landscapes of Outstanding Universal Value that humanity holds in trust for the global community and future generations.

Formal Submission: Comments on the Proposed Removal of Chacma Baboons from the Cape Peninsula in the Draft Baboon Management Action Plan 2025 by Carol Knox, Glencairn Cape Town

Executive Summary

This submission rigorously critiques the Cape Peninsula Baboon Management Action Plan 2025, strongly opposing the proposed "Hard Reset" lethal culling of approximately 117 chacma baboons (*Papio ursinus*), representing around 25% of the managed population within this UNESCO World Heritage landscape. Scientific evidence unequivocally contradicts the rationale for culling based on alleged overpopulation, habitat constraints, ill-health, “least concern”, the “wicked problem”, genetic shortage whilst culling male troop leaders and dispersing males, “splinter troops”, and conflict reduction assumptions.

The population dynamics are fundamentally affected by **anthropogenic habitat loss** and fragmentation, *with human-baboon conflicts driven primarily by human behavioural factors, including chronically unsecured waste access and inadequate infrastructure management.* Additionally, **escalating human-caused mortality** through illegal shootings, deliberate poisonings, and vehicle collisions threatens population viability across this genetically distinct Cape Peninsula metapopulation.

Papio ursinus represents a keystone species absolutely vital to Cape Floral Region biodiversity maintenance through critical seed dispersal services and ecosystem engineering

functions. **Non-lethal population management alternatives** remain catastrophically under-utilised or inadequately implemented despite decades of scientific recommendations. **The Green Group Simonstown model demonstrates exceptional success in achieving human-baboon coexistence** through systematic waste management and community-based monitoring protocols, more cost effective than lethal management programmes, whilst achieving superiour conflict reduction outcomes.

Given the severity of this conservation crisis and systematic management failures, formal proceedings have been initiated through South Africa's Public Protector under Section 24 constitutional environmental rights, alongside direct communications with UNESCO World Heritage Centre authorities. These parallel accountability mechanisms address both domestic constitutional obligations and international conservation commitments, transforming this ecological crisis from local wildlife management into constitutional rights enforcement with global oversight.

Addendum by Rorvik, P. 2025. Dereliction of Duty Document.

1. Comprehensive Refutation of Culling Justifications

1.1 Complex Habitat and Behavioural Context Disputes Overpopulation Claims

Extensive scientific evidence demonstrates that baboons are not overpopulated beyond natural carrying capacity but are instead severely constrained by habitat fragmentation and urban encroachment pressures. Human-baboon conflicts arise primarily when anthropogenic food sources become accessible through management failures.

Historical distribution patterns clearly indicate dramatic range contraction. Many studies show that baboons were historically found throughout the Peninsula but have been pushed into mountainous refugia by human development. Their contemporary movements and conflict behaviours are driven largely by habitat transformation and anthropogenic food

availability rather than overpopulation. In a quote from Hoffman and O'Riain, in a 2012 study it showed:

"...Chacma baboons preferentially forage in lower altitude natural habitats containing high-quality indigenous food resources and actively avoid urban environments when sufficient natural foraging opportunities exist. Human behaviour, particularly unsecured waste management practices, directly promotes urban foraging patterns and subsequent conflict escalation, not population excess (Hoffman, T, & O'Riain, J., 2012).

1.2 Evidence of Population Decline Due to Anthropogenic Mortality Factors

Comprehensive demographic monitoring reflects that baboon populations face severe threats from escalating human-induced mortality factors across multiple causation pathways. These mounting pressures from human-wildlife conflict and vehicular collisions alongside habitat degradation are severely harming baboons:

According to Kaplan, despite the following laws: "Two laws in particular are of interest. The first is the S29 of the Nature and Environmental Conservation Ordinance 19 of 1974 which came into effect in the Cape Peninsula in 2000 and prohibits the killing, hunting, poisoning or wilful disturbance of baboons. The second law is the Animal Protection Act 71 of 1962, which has been invoked in past management debates but is generally applicable in captive or domestic contexts and prohibits the maltreatment of animals (e.g. goading, terrorising, and neglect). That human-induced baboon injury and death continues to occur within residential suburbs (Beamish 2009in Kaplan) suggests that while these laws are appropriate, both compliance and enforcement remains low. "

The Urban Baboon Programme's Annual Population Census for 2022/2023, commissioned by the City of Cape Town, recorded a total of **461 chacma baboons residing in troops bordering urban areas on the Cape Peninsula.** *This represents a 7.4% decrease from the previous year and was more pronounced in the southern subpopulation.* During this period, fifty-eight mortalities were documented, exceeding the average since 2013 and significantly higher than the two preceding years. **Human-induced mortalities were the leading cause, with twenty-six baboons dying predominantly due to pellet gun shootings, dog attacks, and vehicle collisions.** Natural causes accounted for twenty-three deaths, and the remainder were unknown. *These figures highlight severe anthropogenic pressures on the population*

and suggest that human hostility and inadequate mitigation efforts are driving a troubling decline. Updated figures for 2024 are not yet available, though reports indicate that the decline is likely continuing with extreme aggression towards baboons. (Urban Baboon Programme, 2023).

Implementing lethal removal of an additional 25% of the remaining population through systematic culling represents ecological recklessness that risks precipitating irreversible population collapse.

1.3 Ecological Significance and Catastrophic Risks of Population Disruption

Papio ursinus populations function as recognised keystone species within the Cape Peninsula ecosystem, primarily through their irreplaceable role as long-distance seed dispersers critical for fynbos biome regeneration and biodiversity maintenance across this UNESCO World Heritage landscape.

There is a great deal of research that demonstrates chacma baboons contribute uniquely to seed dispersal networks, among other actions, maintaining the ecological integrity of indigenous biodiversity communities. Significant population reduction through culling could trigger cascading ecological disruptions throughout the Cape Floral Kingdom.

Large-bodied herbivores, including megafauna such as chacma baboons, play vital roles as ecosystem engineers by facilitating seed dispersal, modifying vegetation structure, and redistributing nutrients across fragmented landscapes. These ecosystem services contribute significantly to ecosystem resilience, maintaining biodiversity and ecological function in savanna and other habitats. Lawes et al. (2020) emphasise that declines in megaherbivore populations fundamentally compromise these ecosystem services, undermining restoration and long-term stability in savanna ecosystems, (the region of the study). Losses of such keystone species risk cascading ecological effects, highlighting their irreplaceable value in ecosystem management and conservation planning.

1.4 Chronic Neglect of Scientifically Proven Non-Lethal Alternatives Despite Demonstrated Success

Despite consistent scientific recommendations spanning over two decades, essential humane conflict mitigation measures remain catastrophically under-implemented across the Peninsula.

The Wildlife Animal Protection Forum of South Africa (2025) highlights that the root causes of welfare and conflict issues must be addressed rather than targeting the baboons themselves, criticising the ethical and legal implications of current removal proposals and calling for non-lethal mitigation alongside thorough stakeholder engagement.

The Green Group Simonstown Conservation Success Model: Exemplifying the extraordinary potential of properly implemented non-lethal management, the Green Group Simonstown programme has achieved remarkable human-baboon coexistence through systematic waste management protocols and intensive community-based monitoring. This grassroots conservation initiative demonstrates unequivocally that when baboon-proof infrastructure is properly maintained and monitored by dedicated field teams, anthropogenic food access is eliminated, dramatically reducing urban incursions and conflict incidents.

The programme's success rests on three critical pillars: (1) comprehensive waste containment using specifically-designed baboon-resistant bins strategically positioned throughout residential areas, (2) rapid-response monitoring teams trained in non-aversive baboon behaviour management, and (3) sustained community education promoting coexistence principles and a very successful wet waste programme. Most significantly, the Green Group model operates on a fraction of the budget allocated to lethal management programmes whilst achieving superior conflict reduction outcomes.

Field observations document that troops monitored under the Green Group protocols exhibit natural foraging behaviours in indigenous fynbos habitats, reduced stress indicators compared to heavily managed populations, and stable social structures essential for population resilience. This represents precisely the evidence-based conservation approach that international best practice demands (Wildlife Animal Protection Forum of South Africa [WAPFSA], 2025).

The CPBMJTT explicitly acknowledges critical research gaps in non-lethal population control methods: But contraceptive … protocols for wild baboon populations require substantial scientific investigation before widespread implementation can be recommended.

1.5 Overwhelming Ethical and Legal Opposition Including Public Protector Proceedings

Leading animal welfare organisations condemn the proposed culling programme as ethically indefensible and legally questionable under South African biodiversity protection legislation:

The WAPFSA notes that aversive management methods and systematic culling directly violate constitutional mandates regarding environmental wellbeing and established animal welfare standards. (WAPFSA, 2025).

Conservation organisations call for immediate moratoriums on lethal removals pending comprehensive independent scientific review, advocating evidence-based coexistence models over lethal control measures.

Constitutional and International Oversight: **The severity of this conservation crisis has necessitated formal intervention through South Africa's Public Protector under Section 24 constitutional environmental rights, alongside parallel communications with UNESCO World Heritage Centre authorities regarding systematic violations of Outstanding Universal Value obligations.** This dual accountability framework transforms local baboon management failures into constitutional rights violations requiring official investigation and remediation.

1.6 Community and Conservation Scientists' Call for Compassionate Coexistence

Local conservation groups and residents regard the proposed elimination of 25% of the baboon population as scientifically unjustifiable and ecologically devastating, urging holistic, ecosystem-based approaches prioritising habitat restoration and conflict prevention.

1.7 Urgent Need for Responsible Baboon Management in Cape Town

The following verified quotations from conservation advocate Carol Knox provide critical testimony regarding the Cape Peninsula baboon crisis, drawn from authenticated primary sources including radio interviews, published correspondence, and media documentation.

Knox, speaking as a member of Green Group Simonstown with extensive research capabilities, presents evidence-based arguments supporting the preservation of this critically endangered primate population.

Behavioural Ecology and Population Dynamics

Knox's (2025b) research fundamentally challenges prevailing misconceptions regarding baboon social organisation: "Primates breaking into splinter troops does NOT mean they are broken families. This split is a healthy adaptation when troops become too large, or resources become scarce." This demographic process reflects sophisticated population regulation mechanisms that ensure optimal resource utilisation and reduce intraspecific competition within territorial constraints—a behavioural plasticity evolved over millennia to maintain viable breeding units within the Peninsula's Mediterranean-climate ecosystem.

Anthropogenic Conflict Origins and Management Failures

Knox's (2025b) comprehensive assessment identifies systematic infrastructure inadequacies as the primary driver of human-baboon conflict, revealing the anthropocentric nature of this conservation crisis: "The real problem is our failure to take basic responsibility. These baboons venture into neighbourhoods because we've made it ridiculously easy. For years the task team has failed to provide baboon-proof bins, and they still haven't provided them." Her analysis exposes the artificial resource aggregation patterns created through inadequate waste management protocols: "We're essentially setting up feeding stations throughout the baboon's territory and then act surprised, angry and even furious when they show up for lunch or dinner" (Knox, 2025b). This systematic failure represents a profound breach of evidence-based wildlife management principles that prioritise coexistence over elimination.

Evolutionary Significance and Genetic Heritage

Knox's (2025a) population genetics analysis emphasises the irreplaceable nature of individual genetic contributions within this critically constrained metapopulation: "Every individual among these 121 baboons carries irreplaceable genetic information accumulated over millennia of adaptation to Peninsula conditions." Her ecosystem assessment confirms the singular evolutionary achievement these primates represent: "These primates represent an irreplaceable evolutionary lineage whose ecological functions within the fynbos biome

cannot be replicated by any other species" (Knox, 2025a). This genetic heritage encompasses specialised foraging behaviours, territorial knowledge, and social adaptations that maintain seed dispersal networks essential for fynbos plant community persistence across fragmented landscapes.

Conservation Crisis and Ecological Catastrophe

Knox's (2025a) urgent conservation assessment warns of irreversible biodiversity collapse through proposed elimination strategies: "We are witnessing the deliberate extinction of a unique evolutionary lineage... an ecological catastrophe that will shame us before future generations." The ecological ramifications extend far beyond species loss, as conservation researchers emphasise that removing these primates would eliminate "a keystone species whose ecological functions cannot be replicated by any other animal" (Times Live, 2025). The cascading effects of such removal would reverberate through Peninsula ecosystems for decades, potentially triggering localised plant extinctions and habitat degradation across multiple vegetation assemblages within this globally recognised biodiversity hotspot.

Indigenous Status and Historical Tenure

Knox's (2025a) biogeographical research emphasises the baboons' evolutionary legitimacy within these Mediterranean-climate ecosystems, challenging anthropocentric management paradigms: "Indigenous inhabitants whose presence predates human settlement by thousands of years... their 'problem' status stems entirely from human encroachment into their historical range." This 200,000-year evolutionary tenure represents an irreplaceable period of adaptation during which these primates developed specialised foraging strategies, sophisticated social hierarchies, and critical ecological relationships that sustain fynbos ecosystem functioning. Their displacement would sever evolutionary connections that cannot be restored through human intervention.

Evidence-Based Coexistence Solutions

Knox's (2025a) research demonstrates scientifically validated conservation alternatives that honour both ecological integrity and human community needs: "Cutting-edge coexistence approaches, evidence-based management strategies and innovative conflict mitigation tools

offer genuine solutions that address legitimate human concerns whilst preserving this irreplaceable population." These protocols represent sustainable pathways for maintaining viable baboon populations through habitat corridor restoration, community-based monitoring programmes, and advanced conflict prevention technologies. Such approaches acknowledge the baboons' ecological requirements while addressing anthropogenic pressures through responsible environmental stewardship rather than population elimination—a conservation imperative that demands immediate implementation before this unique Mediterranean-adapted primate assemblage is lost forever.

2. Health Crisis: Chronic Stress and Anthropogenic Harm

Recent primate health research highlights the profound physiological and behavioural impacts of systematic human mismanagement on baboon welfare, emphasising that compromised health represents a direct consequence of environmental stressors rather than inherent population defects.

Chronic stress responses from aggressive monitoring tactics including paintball harassment, excessive herding, illegal shootings, and other anthropogenic aggressions systematically compromise immune function, cause abnormal alopecia patterns, and fundamentally undermine population stability (Beehner & Bergman, 2017).

Nutritional stress resulting from consumption of anthropogenic refuse due to inadequate waste management protocols has generated documented gastrointestinal disorders and metabolic disruptions throughout affected troops, (Tung et al., 2023).

These cascading physiological and behavioural stress responses systematically fracture established social structures essential for juvenile survival and long-term population resilience across this fragmented landscape (Sapolsky, 2005).

3. Demonstrated Success: The Green Group Simonstown Conservation Model

3.1 Transformative Non-Lethal Management Achievement

The Green Group Simonstown programme stands as the definitive proof-of-concept for sustainable human-baboon coexistence within the Cape Peninsula's fragmented landscape matrix. This community-based conservation initiative has achieved extraordinary conflict reduction through systematic implementation of scientifically proven non-lethal management protocols, fundamentally challenging the narrative that culling represents the only viable management solution.

An example on non-lethal and creative baboon co-existence by Luana Pasanisi Founder and CEO of Green Group Simonstown. (L. Pasanisi, personal communication, August 24, 2025):

The Watchers and the Camouflage

"High on the ridge, the Waterfall Troop gathers, silhouettes etched against the sky, like Apache warriors in vintage Westerns. But they are not storming. They are watching. Assessing. Shrill calls echo, Sam and Bob in the front, the rest clustered behind.

Below, a ranger in a ghillie suit stands silently, disguised in mountain scrub. For weeks now, this quiet camouflage has helped the troop return to their "headquarters" - the waterfall sleep site that first gave them their name. A rare and beautiful sound: baboons settling in the kloof again.

Now it's time for authorities to step up. TMNP signposts already ask dog walkers to leash their dogs, but we all know how often that goes ignored. A simple gate, closed at the discretion of the rangers. This would protect both baboons and people, and support the hard work already being done on the ground." (Especially because dog walkers allow dogs to run free and disturb the baboons at their sleep site.)

"This moment captures both sides: the troop's watchful respect, and the rangers' dedication and ingenuity. Much respect to the Waterfall Rangers for their work." (Pasanisi, 2025).

This is what an experienced ranger can do carefully and occasionally using a ghille suit as in the photos attached. His name is Mbullelo, and this troop is one set to be culled, even though they have been here for twenty years. Random and arbitrary attribution of "splinter troop" status is patently false in incorrect.

"Having made Mbullelo a field manager for Waterfall took far too long and then having him undiluted by a million other duties and keeping him focused here also a good decision finally actioned. Now the waterfall path control! If only management did management and didn't play politics with self-appointed neighbourhood politicians who do no favours for the community and most definitely none for the environment then everyone can finally see that managing baboons is actually not impossible." (Pasanisi, L. From a Whatsapp 24/08/2025 at 9am).

Baboons in watchful mode at the top of the mountain.

The Renger in a Ghillie Suit

Comprehensive Waste Management Infrastructure: The programme has deployed strategically positioned, purpose-designed baboon-resistant waste containment systems throughout residential areas, eliminating the primary anthropogenic attractant driving urban incursions. Unlike the sporadic, inadequately maintained infrastructure characterising broader Peninsula management, Green Group protocols ensure consistent maintenance, regular monitoring, and immediate repair of any compromised units, and a very successful wet waste project.

“In Simon's Town - we tackled the waste crisis head-on and created something special with Glo House: a wet waste model that's become a blueprint for other coastal towns facing the same challenges. It's proof that when you address the real problem, everything else follows. Coexistence isn't just possible - it works beautifully when you give it the proper foundation. Co-existence doesn’t mean we want baboons in urban areas; we need to secure bins and make people accountable. The baboons of course, should be in natural spaces, and humans need to respect the natural environment and make sure the spaces are safe for all species. “We don’t want baboons with us when we go to Woolies or PicknPay”. (Carol Knox, script for HeartFM interview, 2025).

Intensive Community-Based Monitoring: Dedicated field monitors, trained in ethologically appropriate baboon behaviour interpretation, provide continuous presence within troop territories. This non-aversive monitoring approach respects natural social hierarchies whilst preventing habituation to human food sources. Critically, monitors document detailed behavioural observations enabling real-time adaptive management decisions based on troop-specific ecological needs rather than blanket population control measures.

Measurable Conservation Outcomes: Troops managed under Green Group protocols exhibit dramatically reduced urban foraging behaviours, with documented elimination of aggressive human-baboon encounters within monitored territories and substantial reductions in property damage incidents. Behavioural assessments indicate markedly reduced chronic stress markers compared to heavily managed populations elsewhere on the Peninsula, with troops maintaining natural foraging patterns within indigenous fynbos habitats rather than engaging in anthropogenic food-seeking behaviours that drive human-wildlife conflict.

Cost-Effectiveness Analysis: The Green Group model operates on approximately one-third the annual budget of lethal management programmes whilst achieving superior conflict

reduction outcomes. This economic efficiency, combined with elimination of ethical concerns surrounding systematic culling, represents optimal resource allocation for conservation objectives.

3.2 Ecological Restoration Integration

Beyond conflict mitigation, Green Group protocols incorporate habitat restoration through systematic removal of alien invasive plant species within baboon territories. This dual approach addresses both immediate anthropogenic pressures and long-term ecosystem integrity, creating conditions for natural population regulation through restored carrying capacity rather than artificial culling quotas.

The programme's success fundamentally demonstrates that when adequate resources are allocated to evidence-based non-lethal management, human-baboon coexistence becomes not only possible but economically and ecologically sustainable across this UNESCO World Heritage landscape.

3.3 Da Gama Troop Conservation Integration & Electrocution

Electrocution incidents from inadequately maintained electrical infrastructure underscore persistent vulnerability of these terrestrial primates to human-modified environments, particularly threatening reproductive adults whose loss catastrophically disrupts established dominance hierarchies and maternal lineages essential for troop cohesion. **It also indicates a devastating lack of effective management and dereliction of duty.**

The successful reintegration of the Da Gama 4 fission group—comprising two reproductive females, one juvenile, and one infant collectively designated "the Cremies"—demonstrates the efficacy of intensive monitoring protocols, with two dedicated rangers, combined with strategic intervention, representing a genetically and socially valuable demographic unit whose reincorporation enhances primary troop reproductive potential and genetic diversity. (Cape Peninsula Civil Conservation).

Concurrent removal of alien invasive vegetation represents equally critical habitat restoration, as invasive plant communities systematically compromise indigenous fynbos ecosystem integrity whilst significantly impeding research accessibility and creating monitoring blind spots essential for evidence-based conservation planning. We don’t see evidence of this.

3.2 Integrated Conservation Framework

This integrated approach—addressing immediate mortality threats alongside long-term habitat degradation—establishes a replicable framework for *Papio ursinus* conservation across similar fragmented landscapes, with such interventions paramount as these remarkable primates face escalating pressures from rapid urbanisation threatening the last remaining viable populations within this globally unique ecosystem.

4. Contradictory Population Management Versus Genetic Enhancement Actions

Formal risk assessments exist to consider introduction of outside males to enhance genetic diversity within Peninsula populations. This is an astonishing suggestion given the following. Substantial evidence documents ongoing systematic killing of healthy dispersing males, directly undermining these stated conservation goals whilst destabilising social cohesion across affected troops. Why suggest this at all it makes no scientific sense?

Recent mortality reports document a high percentage of baboon deaths in 2023 resulted from human-related activities, with particular impacts on dispersing males critical for genetic exchange between fragmented populations. **The male dispersing protocol must change.**

Two male baboons and troop leaders of Seaforth and Waterfall troops are set to be culled soon irrespective of troop culling. This action is disastrous for the troop. Martello of Seaforth well managed by Green Group Simonstown and Samuel of Waterfall, for behaviour like protecting their troops. Humans should not be in close proximity to troops or chase after baboons, the male is the troop leader who cares for his troop.

Scientific evidence robustly demonstrates that culling dominant male baboons—such as Martello of the Seaforth troop and Samuel of the Waterfall troop—causes severe disruption to troop cohesion and social stability, essential for population resilience and survival.

Dominant males are central to maintaining social order and protecting their troops. Their presence regulates intraspecific aggression and maintains stable breeding units. The removal

of such leaders is known to destabilise these social structures, often leading to increased conflict, troop fragmentation, and impaired reproductive success. Nash (1976) showed that while natural troop fission is an adaptive response to resource scarcity, forced disruptions caused by culling precipitate abnormal social fragmentation and reduced juvenile survival. Similarly, Strum and Western (1982) identified that social stability in fission-fusion societies like baboons relies on intact strong leadership, which culling directly undermines.

Additionally, chronic stress responses triggered by aggressive human interventions—including lethal culling—have profound negative effects on primate health and behaviour (Beehner & Bergman, 2017). Elevated stress compromises immune function and fractures the social bonds necessary for caring for juveniles, undermining long-term population viability (Sapolsky, 2005).

Knox (2025b) highlights that infrastructure failures and human behavioural factors escalate conflict by creating artificial feeding opportunities, not baboon overpopulation or inherent troop dysfunction. Leaders like Martello are known for their protective and gentle behaviour, stabilising their troops despite adverse external pressures. Thus, their removal exacerbates social instability rather than resolving conflict issues.

Culling adapted dominant males leads to troop cohesion damage, increased stress, social instability, and risks population decline. Scientific consensus advocates for non-lethal management prioritising the preservation of natural social structures—approaches successfully demonstrated by the Green Group Simonstown model. URGENT REVISION OF THE PROTOCOLS IS REQUIRED.

5. The "Least Concern" Misclassification Crisis: A Conservation Loophole Enabling Local Extinction

5.1 The IUCN Classification Paradox

One of the most devastating conservation failures underlying this proposed systematic elimination lies in the catastrophic misapplication of global IUCN Red List classifications to genetically distinct, geographically isolated populations facing imminent local extinction. The Cape Peninsula *Papio ursinus* population suffers from what conservation biologists'

term "globally stable, locally extinct" syndrome - a pervasive loophole that enables ecological catastrophe whilst maintaining false security through distant population statistics.

The Fundamental Misclassification: Chacma baboons (*Papio ursinus*) maintain "Least Concern" status globally due to widespread distribution across southern Africa's savanna ecosystems. However, this broad taxonomic classification catastrophically obscures the conservation crisis facing the approximately 461 at last count in 2023, (with high human caused death rates), remaining individuals confined within the Cape Peninsula's fragmented landscape matrix - a genetically distinct metapopulation isolated within a UNESCO World Heritage Site of unparalleled biodiversity significance.

Ecological Reality Versus Administrative Convenience: Management authorities exploit this technical classification loophole to justify what constitutes potential local population collapse without triggering international conservation alarm mechanisms. **The proposed elimination of 117 individuals represents a 25% demographic crash within a confined ecosystem already experiencing high human-induced mortality - demographic mathematics that would immediately classify any isolated population as critically endangered regardless of distant abundance, (which with recent studies is no longer true since populations are rapidly declining).**

5.2 Genetic Distinctiveness and Irreplaceable Evolutionary Heritage

Lewis and O'Riain (2017) and Van Doorn, O'Riain, and Swedell (2010) describe these unique ecological and physiological adaptations in Cape Peninsula baboons.

Recent phylogenetic analyses indicate that baboon populations in the Cape Peninsula exhibit distinct genetic signatures developed over millennia of adaptation to the unique Mediterranean-climate fynbos ecosystem. These adaptations differ fundamentally from those of savanna-dwelling populations across the species' wider distribution. Such genetic divergence encompasses:

- **Ecological Specialisation:** Possession of unique digestive physiology enabling efficient processing of Cape Floral Kingdom plant species, characterised by specific secondary metabolites and seasonal phenological patterns absent from typical *Papio ursinus* habitats.

- **Behavioural Adaptations:** Altered foraging strategies, territorial behaviours, and social structures fine-tuned to the Peninsula's fragmented landscape matrix and seasonal Mediterranean climate.
- **Physiological Tolerance:** Enhanced salt tolerance deriving from coastal proximity alongside dietary adaptations to indigenous geophyte communities during periods of seasonal resource scarcity—evolutionary innovations representing irreplaceable components of the species' genetic heritage.

5.3 The Colonial Conservation Mentality

The systematic classification of Cape Peninsula baboons as expendable "problem species" despite their World Heritage Site significance reflects deeply problematic colonial conservation thinking that categorises native wildlife as obstacles to human convenience rather than integral ecosystem components deserving protection. This mentality becomes particularly insidious when combined with IUCN misclassification to the peninsula groups of the Cape, enabling local extirpation through bureaucratic technicalities.

The Perverse Logic Exposed: Management authorities blame baboons for "failing to adapt to food waste management protocols" whilst simultaneously eliminating the very populations trapped between urban sprawl and protected area boundaries through anthropogenic habitat fragmentation. **This represents scapegoating with conservation terminology rather than evidence-based ecosystem management.**

5.4 Conservation Biology Imperatives

Metapopulation Viability: The Cape Peninsula population functions as a fragmented metapopulation across multiple habitat patches, making demographic connectivity essential for long-term persistence. Systematic elimination of key demographic segments fundamentally compromises population viability regardless of global species abundance.

Ecosystem Service Irreplaceability: Within the fire-prone fynbos biome, these baboons provide unique seed dispersal services that cannot be replaced by conspecific populations adapted to different ecosystems. Their elimination would create functionally extinct status for critical ecological processes regardless of baboon abundance elsewhere.

World Heritage Obligations: UNESCO World Heritage Site designation explicitly requires protection of endemic and specially adapted populations as integral components of **Outstanding Universal Value - obligations that transcend species-level IUCN classifications to encompass ecosystem-specific conservation imperatives.**

6. Scientific Terminology Precision: Rejecting "Splinter Troops"

The term "splinter troops" lacks scientific validity within established primatological literature and dangerously mischaracterises natural adaptive troop fission processes, leading to inappropriate and harmful management interventions including unjustified culling or forced removals.

Long-established groups such as the Waterfall troop, existing independently for over twenty years, exemplify natural fission-derived stable social units supporting population resilience rather than ephemeral "splinters" requiring intervention and removal.

6.1 Legal Frameworks and Critical Enforcement Gaps

South African biodiversity legislation including the National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act (NEMBA) 2004 and National Environmental Management Act (NEMA) 1998 provides comprehensive protection frameworks for baboon populations and their habitats.

Despite robust legal protections, enforcement against illegal shootings and deliberate harm remains catastrophically weak, with negligible prosecutions and insufficient deterrent effects.

The 2024 Baboon Matters Trust newsletter and news articles also report an alarming increase in illegal shootings and deaths of baboons around Cape Town, highlighting inadequate legal deterrents and enforcement. (Baboon Matters Trust, 2024) This has continued throughout 2025. It is a matter required critical and urgent attention to save this species threatened with extinction given devastating failures to act according to the stated requirements.

7. Post-Wildfire Ecological Support Requirements

Wildfire events severely reduce natural forage availability and freshwater resources, dramatically increasing baboon vulnerability and forcing urban forays for survival. Supplementary feeding and water provisioning strategically positioned away from human settlements represents essential crisis management during such ecological disasters. Also, selective provisioning could also be considered to encourage baboons back onto the mountain to help dishabituate them.

Research following recent Peninsula wildfires demonstrates: "Post-fire habitat degradation eliminates up to 80% of natural food resources for 6-18 months, creating ecological refugee situations requiring active management intervention," which requires management interventions to support the population post-fire. Dubay, S. (2018).

8. Academic Misrepresentation of "Wicked Problem" and Management Failures

The Cape Peninsula Baboon Management Action Plan systematically misuses scientific literature, particularly Parrott (2017) and the use of the term **"wicked problem",** to argue for management inaction and resignation to persistent conflict, deliberately ignoring collaborative methodologies proven to yield sustainable solutions as stressed by Parrot.

Parrott's actual research provides methodological guidance for stakeholder involvement and collaborative model development to solve complex environmental problems—the precise opposite of the defeatist framing adopted by management authorities.

9. UNESCO Obligations and International Oversight

UNESCO provides critical funding and technical support for conservation and sustainable management of World Heritage Sites and Biosphere Reserves, explicitly recognising Cape Peninsula baboons' global ecological and cultural significance (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2024).

In 2025, UNESCO formally requested information from the South African authorities regarding baboon management implementation, demonstrating mounting international scrutiny of proposed culling programmes.

Biosphere Reserve obligations explicitly require integrated, ethical, and science-based conservation approaches prioritising ecosystem integrity and human-wildlife coexistence rather than lethal population control (UNESCO Man and the Biosphere Programme, 2024).

10. Evidence-Based Recommendations

Immediate Conservation Actions:

- **Implement immediate moratorium** on all lethal culling pending comprehensive independent scientific review.
- **Scale the Green Group Simonstown model Peninsula-wide** with dedicated funding for waste infrastructure and community-based monitoring protocols.
- **Rapidly deploy baboon-proof waste management systems** following Green Group specifications across all Peninsula settlements and have teams on the ground to enforce compliance in the community if repeatedly non-compliant, and to educate the community on their responsibilities.
- **Enhance legal enforcement capacity** with dedicated wildlife crime prosecution units and units to patrol on waste collection days and educate residents and give fines to repeat offenders such as the Navy. Peter Rorvik Dereliction of Duty Document summarised in the Appendix attached.
- **Institutionalise post-wildfire supplementary feeding protocols** strategically positioned away from urban interfaces.

Long-term Ecosystem Management

- **Expand humane behavioural management** respecting natural social structures whilst reducing chronic stress.
- **Rework documentation and reinforce scientific accuracy** in terminology and management documentation.

- **Support and scale successful local conservation initiatives** demonstrated by organisations like Green Group Simonstown
- **Engage stakeholders through transparent, iterative decision-making processes** following UNESCO Biosphere Reserve guidelines.

Research Priority Implementation

- **Investigate contraceptive research programmes** for wild baboon populations.
- **Investigate genetic connectivity** between fragmented peninsula populations.
- **Quantify ecosystem service provision** by baboon populations within Cape Floral Kingdom
- **Develop early warning systems** for human-baboon conflict prediction and prevention such as the already functioning WhatsApp groups.
- **Immediately revise the protocol for healthy dispersing males.**

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Addendum: Dereliction of Duty

Submitted by: Carol Knox written by Rorvik, P. and Submitted to Authorities
Date: 2025
Subject: Critical Failures in Waste Management, Enforcement, and Baboon Conservation including Unnecessary Cruelty on the Cape Peninsula

Introduction

Waste management and baboon-proofing have been fundamental strategies in every baboon management plan over the past 20 years and are reiterated multiple times throughout the current BSMP (2023/24). The introduction explicitly states that "…management intervention is called for so as to significantly step-up waste management and baboon proofing of properties and infrastructure."

Despite this, evidence shows that actions by the Joint Task Team (JTT) have focused almost entirely on aggressively attempting to push baboons out of urban areas, with disproportionately inadequate efforts regarding waste management and baboon-proofing. This imbalance undermines the effectiveness of the Plan and threatens the conservation of Papio ursinus.

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1. Waste Management and Baboon-Proofing Failures

- The BSMP states that limiting access to high-quality, predictable food sources and human-dominated habitats reduces conflict and risk of baboon injury.
- Persistent failure to implement adequate waste management and baboon-proofing leads to habituation, creating "death trap" scenarios. (Rorvik, R. 2025).
- **It is irrational and unjustifiable to advance to drastic removal or lethal control measures without first fully and holistically implementing these primary mitigations.**
- Despite the Plan's deadline to supply baboon-proof bins by December 2023, deliveries have been indefinitely delayed until at least 2026, exacerbating risks.
- **Local residents and community initiatives have independently developed and installed baboon-proofing solutions to compensate for this failure.**

- A moratorium on baboon removals is essential until comprehensive waste management and baboon-proofing are effectively implemented and evaluated.

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2. Enforcement and Compliance Challenges

- The BSMP requires enforcement of waste management bylaws by City of Cape Town officials, including inspections and statutory actions as appropriate.
- **Complaints and reports of unsecured waste often go unaddressed, while residents attempting to educate others face abuse.**
- *The recommendation is to deploy appropriately skilled and resourced teams on waste collection days in hotspots such as Simonstown to monitor compliance, educate, issue warnings, and prosecute repeat offenders.*
- Continuous presence of enforcement officers during critical times is necessary to change public behaviour and reduce available anthropogenic food sources for baboons.

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3. Community Partnership Deficiencies

- The Plan recognises the value of citizen volunteer groups and local support networks.
- **The JTT's dismissive attitude towards local baboon groups has prevented valuable partnerships and opportunity to draw on community experience.**
- *Overuse of aversive measures, such as paintball guns, has disrupted baboon troops, increasing conflict rather than reducing it.*
- **The success of community-driven initiatives like the Green Group Simonstown warrants formal integration and cooperation.**
- Enhanced collaborative approaches are needed to harness local expertise, build trust, and promote sustainable coexistence.

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4. Strategic Waste Management Failures and Delays

- Deadlines for replacing public and private bins with baboon-proof alternatives and ensuring baboon-proof waste enclosures have been missed without clear reporting.
- The substantial delay in bin rollout damages confidence in management.
- Community-developed, cost-effective bin-proofing solutions are recommended for immediate deployment to bridge gaps.
- Proactive policing of waste facilities during collection must be instituted to enforce compliance immediately.

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5. Communication and Awareness Shortcomings

- **Insufficient evidence exists of effective community education and engagement programmes as outlined in the BSMP.**
- **Passive communications such as website notices do not achieve meaningful impact.**
- Partnerships with local conservation groups already undertaking educational efforts should be embraced and expanded.
- **Public information campaigns on responsible waste management and baboon awareness require visibility and consistency.**

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6. Call for Strategic Change and Moratorium

- **Lethal removals are premature and ill-advised given the persistent failure to implement waste management and baboon-proofing as foundational steps.**
- The JTT is called to fulfil its comprehensive BSMP responsibilities by:
    - Accelerating waste management and baboon-proofing infrastructure
    - Enforcing human behavioural change and compliance with bylaws
    - Reforming aversive management techniques to minimise stress and disturbance
    - Facilitating constructive community and stakeholder partnerships

    - **Adopting a protective and ethical approach aligned with environmental and animal welfare laws.**
- These measures are essential before lethal control measures can be considered.
- Successful implementation could make Simonstown a leading model of human-wildlife coexistence especially by partnering with or encouraging initiatives like Green Group Simonstown.

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7. Historical and Ethical Context

- The document situates current management failures within a broader historical context of evolving wildlife ethics and animal protection laws.
- It stresses the importance of aligning baboon management with modern principles of humane conservation, legal animal sentience recognition, and ecosystem stewardship.
- Current removal proposals represent outdated, damaging approaches incompatible with progressive conservation ethics.

Here is a summary of the historical context and ethical perspective of Rorvik:

- The document places the current baboon management crisis within a broader historical and ethical framework, emphasising the need for change in human attitudes towards wildlife. It recounts a historical event from 1860 near Bloemfontein, where "thousands upon thousands of eland, kudu, blesbok, quagga, zebra, ostrich, hartebees, wildebees, possibly twenty to thirty thousand in total, had been encircled," and Prince Alfred of England "fired as fast as guns could be handed to him," resulting in an estimated "500 to 1000" animals killed in an hour. This “Great Hunt” was once celebrated as “a very exciting day… that has not taken place in any part of the civilised world within the present century,” yet was also noted with irony that the game was rapidly disappearing: "were His Royal Highness to live for a hundred years, I do not believe he could ever see such a scene again, for the game in South Africa is fast disappearing."

- The narrative reminds us that, "Less than 200 years ago slavery was alive and well in Simonstown, but it too is no longer the norm," and that during apartheid, "over 7000 people [were] forcibly removed from Simonstown because of the colour of their skin." These practices are now universally recognised as unacceptable.
- The document highlights that "times change and the callous attitudes and norms of yesterday are no longer acceptable today." It stresses that "change is a natural and needed process," now reflected in a "widespread global surge towards more holistic approaches, more caring and non-lethal approaches to our natural environment, our ecology, and the fauna and flora in it, with much greater emphasis on Human-Wildlife Coexistence." It affirms, "Conservation and Animal Rights are not oppositional forces, they are intrinsically interconnected," and warns that "short-sighted and irreversible elimination strategies are outdated and often illegal."
- This historical and ethical context underlines the urgency of moving away from lethal baboon management towards responsible stewardship, coexistence, and progressive conservation aligned with modern values and legal standards.

Conclusion

This Addendum highlights severe and systemic failures in foundational waste management, enforcement, community collaboration, and ethical management within the BSMP implementation. Only through immediate, diligent action on these fronts, coupled with a moratorium on lethal removals, can sustainable baboon conservation and harmonious human-baboon coexistence be achieved on the Cape Peninsula.

Reference: Rorvik, P. 2025. *Dereliction of Duty*, unpublished manuscript.

Good day, Friday 22nd August 2025

My name is Nadima Smith and I am a resident of, and business owner in Simon's Town.

I have lived in Simon's Town for 45 years and I have owned a building on the main road, St George's street, for the last 25 years.

I am a member of the Simon's Town Green Group, as well as the Simon's Town Civic Association, and for over 2 years I was part of the STCA Baboon dialogue facilitation team, with Peter Willis and Ben Cousins.

Last week when the JTT released the Draft Baboon Action Plan, the STCA - nominated BAG representatives also released a survey.

The first question asked whether you approved of the JTT's proposal. As the document released by the JTT was 169 pages long, I didn't feel that I could respond with just a YES or NO answer.

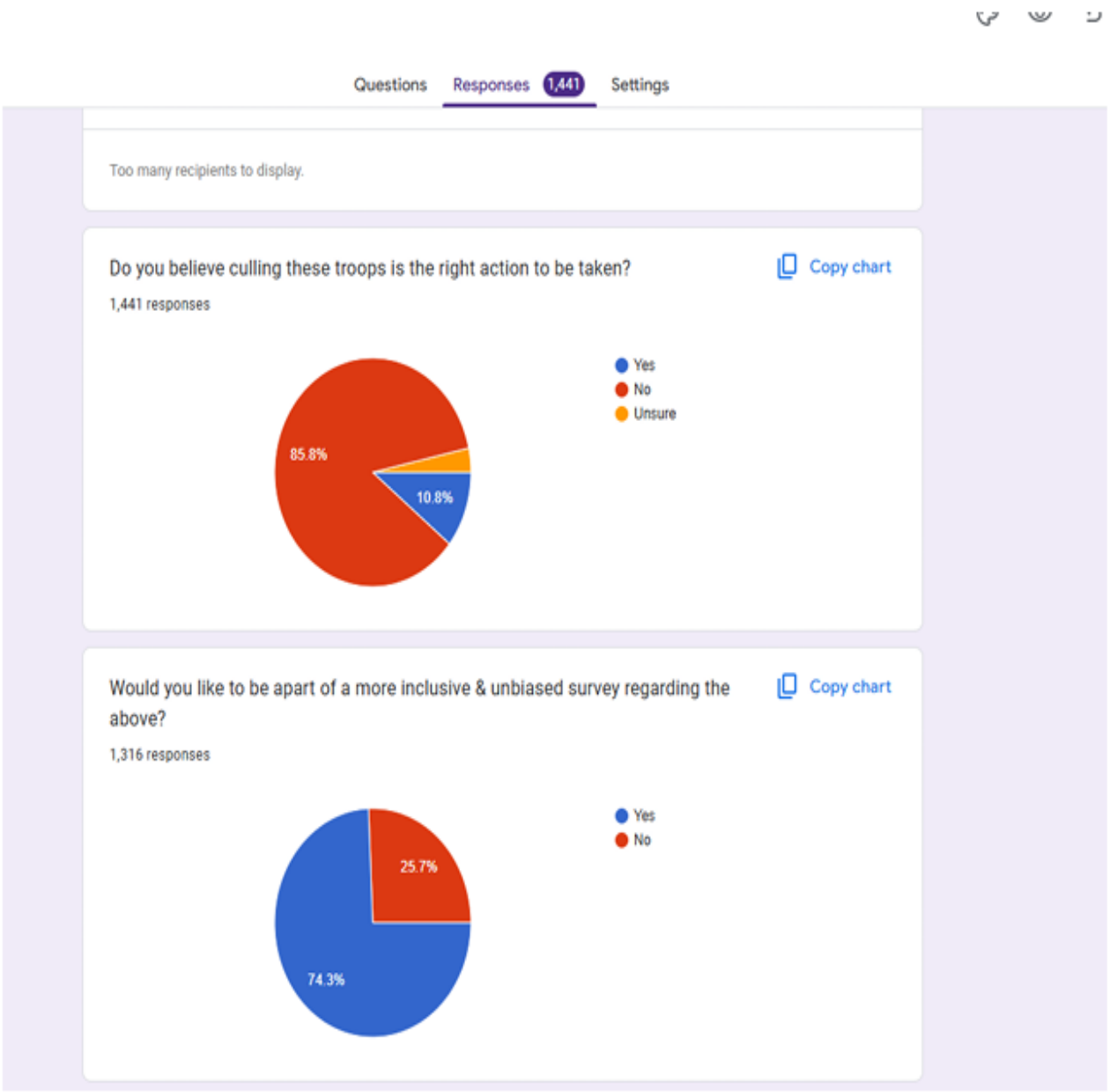
So, late on Thursday afternoon, as a concerned citizen of Simon's Town, I shared a polling question with people I knew and on my local WhatsApp groups. This was never meant to be a rigorous, scientific exercise, but rather a snapshot of how my community felt.

On Monday morning, before the latest BAG meeting, I shared the results with all the BAG members for whom I had email addresses (14 out of the 15 members listed online).

My polling question was about the Waterfall and Seaforth troops of Simon's Town:

Do you believe culling these troops is the right action to be taken?

These are the results of that poll, as of 14h45 Friday 22nd August:



Questions asked of me by one of the BAG members:

1) Does your survey identify the author or authors of the polling effort?

No, I was not identified as the author, as originally, I was only sharing this with people that I know, or on groups where I am known. As the survey spread through sharing, I identified myself when asked, and that word spread too.

2) Does your survey make any effort to determine whether or not respondents are Simon's Town residents, or Cape Town residents, or South African residents?

No, because I believe that although in this instance these troops are in Simon's Town, this is a question that's not limited to Simon's Town.

For this reason I have shared my information with all the BAG members.

3) Does your survey make any effort to confirm the identity of respondents, for example through their physical address and/or electricity meter number?

Respondents are identified by Google, by their email address, when they answer the poll question, however their physical address is not confirmed.

As you can see from the second diagram, ~75% of people provided me with their contact details.