

**TROOP MANAGEMENT: 'FORCE DARTED'**

# A post-mortem for the dead baboon

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**T**HE alpha male of the Smitswinkel Bay troop, who died after being darted to replace the battery on his radio collar, was earmarked for death last year ("No reprieve for baboons", *People's Post*, 26 June).

SWB3, known unofficially as Force, died on Saturday 4 May.

Last year, Force and Merlin were said to be known raiding cars and stealing food from motorists and tourists. At the time a CapeNature spokesperson said both males also "continually raided the Black Marlin Restaurant".

For several months they evaded the authorities, and then "a reprieve was put in place due to an improvement in their behaviour".

The Baboon Technical Team (BTT) says the 11-year-old baboon was darted under the supervision of a veterinarian.

Radio collars are worn by most alpha males so rangers can monitor the movements of each troop.

According to the BTT, the battery was changed and SWB3 was moved to the Westlake recovery unit.

They say: "SWB3 did not wake up and his death was sadly confirmed late on Saturday. An urgent post-mortem is being conducted to ascertain the cause of death."

Veterinarian Dr Elzette Jordan, of the City of Cape Town, says: "Like (with) humans that undergo a full anaesthetic dur-



**STANDING IN:** With Force away from the troop, Merlin took over the care of Grace, one of two juveniles.

PHOTO: SUPPLIED

ing a medical operation, there are risks, however small.

It had been noticed that SWB3 had lost weight over the last six months, but the darting was routine, the death unexpected and the community of baboon managers is deeply saddened by his passing," she adds.

Cape of Good Hope SPCA senior inspector Brett Glasby says they believe all care was taken, adding there was always an

"inherent risk" when anaesthetising animals.

The BTT says the absence of SWB3 leaves the troop without an alpha male, but adds there are two resident adult males who could fulfil the social function of the alpha male. The Smitswinkel Bay baboon troop is one of the 11 managed troops on the Cape Peninsula.

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