



**RAIDERS:** An open window and a packet of nuts beats foraging in the veld for the baboon in this 2012 picture. But the kind of raid Canadian tourist Alexandre Casias experienced at Millers Point is far less common now because of effective management measures.

Picture: SCHALK VAN ZUYDAM

'SPENDING UNSUSTAINABLE'

# Budget cut could see rise in baboon raids

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BABOONS raiding houses in the southern peninsula could flare up again as a result of the city council's R2 million budget cut to the baboon management programme, says the Baboon Liaison Group.

Graham Noble, spokesman for the group, said yesterday the baboon management programme, under Phil Richardson, had been a bigger success than anyone had imagined, with baboon troops being kept out of the urban areas for 99.6 percent of the time.

"The city has a fantastic

success on their hands. They should be trumpeting what they have achieved. Instead they cut the budget by 27 percent," Noble said.

The three-year contract with Richardson's company, Human Wildlife Solutions, ends next month and a tender for a new contract has been published.

This financial year's budget of R10.5m will be reduced to R8.4m for the next year.

Noble says with inflation, this worked out to a 27 percent cut. He said the budget should have been increased to R11m.

The management team uses a variety of techniques to keep

the animals out of urban areas, including "bear bangers", which make a loud gunshot noise designed to scare off animals without harming them, and shooting them with paintballs. This method is controversial. Noble said the baboons experienced a "sharp, minor pain" which they grew to associate with being near urban areas.

Noble said: "One idea is to get the tourism industry to put the money up for approved artificial feeding stations where tourists can pay to watch them and the money goes to managing them. Another is game fences. But these options have

not gone anywhere."

Julia Wood, head of the city's biodiversity management branch, said the council was not able to sustain spending R10m a year on managing 400 baboons in 10 troops, so it "was deemed appropriate" to cut the budget. The city had many competing demands on the biodiversity budget.

"Furthermore, baboon management has been successfully achieved and stabilised over the last 20 months," she said.

Wood said the suggestions from the Baboon Liaison Group had been submitted to the Baboon Technical Team which was investigating them.