APPENDIX J OF THE 2025 ACTION PLAN

MANAGEMENT METHODS CONSIDERED INEFFECTUAL OR INAPPROPRIATE

THE CAPE PENINSULA BABOON MANAGEMENT JOINT TASK TEAM

v.0
DRAFT
27 JUNE 2025

Contact:
Cape Peninsula Baboon Management Joint Task Team (CPBMJTT) at cpbmjtt@capenature.co.za

J1 BACKGROUND

The concept of provisioning baboons to keep them out of urban areas was proposed in comments received on the BSMP during the public participation process. The JTT replied to these comments with the following information:

"CPBSMP not amended. Additional/artificial feeding will result in an increase in population growth. Artificial feeding results in increased internal troop aggression and has negative impacts on troop behaviour. Artificial feeding increases close interactions and/or the habituation of baboons that has long term negative impacts on baboon troops. Artificial feeding has knock on effects for other wildlife and can promote disease spread. Thus, the CPBMJTT does not support the feeding of baboons as this is not an ecologically sustainable solution for the reasons mentioned above."

This, and other information is elaborated below:

J2 PROVISIONED FOOD AT FEEDING STATIONS

J2.1 Increased growth

Provisioned food will be much higher in calories than the natural indigenous vegetation (fynbos) which is oligotrophic (Lewis, 2015). Females with access to high calorie foods reach sexual maturity sooner and are thus able to become pregnant sooner (Strum, 2010). It also allows them to wean their infants and become pregnant again sooner (Strum, 2010), meaning that provisioned baboons can have more offspring in their lifetime than natural feeding baboons. Together these factors increase the growth rate of the troop which across all troops will increase the population size. This is evident in the Northern subpopulation of the Peninsula which have access to crops (viz., grape vines and barley) and exhibit sustained high growth rates of up to 8.8% per annum over the last 5 years (Urban Baboon Programme Annual Population Census, 2024).

J2.2 Increased aggression

Supplementary feeding impacts baboon social behaviour. Baboons have very strict feeding hierarchies, which dictate troop feeding behaviour (King et al., 2008). As such, rates of aggression amongst troop members increase in response to calorie rich foods in concentrated areas (King et al., 2008; Kaplan et al., 2011). Feeding stations are unlikely to provide sufficient for all troop members (i.e. top-ranking will attempt to monopolise stations), while causing an elevated level of aggression and increased rates of injury amongst troop members (Berman et al., 2007).

J2.3 Lack of conservation value

By providing food to baboons, they have minimal, if any, incentive to fulfil their ecological roles. Without performing their ecosystem services, they provide limited conservation value to the ecosystem.

J2.4 Impacts on flora & other fauna

Setting up food stations will have numerous unwanted impacts on the flora and fauna in the area. Provisioned food will attract other wildlife, which will detract from them fulfilling their ecological role, could lead to increased disease exposure due to higher densities of animals seeking out this food

source, could promote seed dispersal of non-indigenous plant species, and could introduce plant diseases into the fynbos. Providing food to wildlife also creates a reliance on these foods, which can disrupt spatial movement, behaviour and fitness, and can create health issues as native fauna have evolved to consume native vegetation exclusively.

J2.5 Feeding baboons is illegal

Feeding wildlife is strictly prohibited within Table Mountain National Park boundaries under the National Environmental Management: Protected Areas Act, 2003. Feeding of wildlife is in violation of the City of Cape Town Coastal Bylaw, 2020 and the Animal Keeping Bylaw, 2021. Feeding baboons is a violation of CapeNature Ordinance 19 of 1974.

J3 A PLANTING OF VEGETATION

J3.1 Fruit trees

The planting of non-indigenous vegetation such as fruit trees is strictly prohibited within Table Mountain National Park. Even if permission to do so was granted much of the Cape Peninsula region used by baboons is characterised by extremely poor nutrient soils that would not sustain exotic fruit trees. Trees would thus need to be artificially watered and fed with nutrients over a large area to sustain baboon troops and this would change the natural ecology of the area, including the ecology of many other fauna and flora.

J3.2 Alternative fynbos

Suggestions to plant more productive indigenous vegetation, such as strandveld, are also unfeasible. Strandveld vegetation is more productive than for example sandstone fynbos but it only grows in alkaline or neutral coastal soils that are more productive. Baboons show a strong preference for foraging on strandveld but because it is limited in distribution, the troops invariably must include plants that grow on nutrient poor soils too. In essence therefore one cannot change the vegetation type without altering soil types on the Peninsula and altering soil types is not only impractical from a cost and feasibility perspective but would fundamentally disrupt the entire ecology of the National Park and hence would not be permitted because it would adversely impact the indigenous and endemic fauna and flora on the Peninsula.

Furthermore, independent of whether the new vegetation could establish and grow, the new vegetation would need to be planted over a considerably large area to sustain baboon troops, which would require the clearing of existing fynbos in the area and would take several years before the vegetation would be mature enough to be a productive and reliable food source for baboon troops.

J4 WASTE MANAGEMENT

A recent study showed that even when waste management is almost 100% effective and comprises less than 1% of a troop's diet in a 12-month period, the baboon troop continued to visit the urban area daily to feed predominantly on fynbos vegetation and exotic grasses on private and public properties (Mormile, 2024). Importantly, non-food related features in urban areas also make these spaces attractive. These include but are not limited to wider access to drinking water from roads, gardens and swimming pools, and anthropogenic structures to shelter from wind, rain and sun and to utilise as sleeping sites closer to favoured foraging locations. Despite the minimal impact improved

waste management will have on encouraging highly habituated baboon troops to remain in natural areas, it remains an important goal of the baboon programme because of the high risk of pathogen transmission and other health issues associated with wildlife foraging on urban food waste.

J5 GREEN CORRIDORS

Green corridors unite fragments of natural habitat which have been divided by human transformation, such as cities, roads, or agriculture. Their main objective is to assist the movement of animals, facilitate seed dispersal, and expand vegetation cover. The Cape Peninsula baboon population is isolated from other baboon populations through intensive urban sprawl. This urban sprawl spans appropriately 50 kms from the mountains in Tokai to the nearest mountain range to the east (Figure 1). To assist in the dispersal of male baboons from the northern Cape Peninsula subpopulation, green corridors which extend this distance have been suggested. This suggestion has been made to aid in increasing the reproductive opportunity of these dispersing males in an unrelated baboon population. While genetic spread is an important conservation consideration, the establishment of a green corridor across the intensely urbanized landscape and across such a considerable distance is not feasible from both a logistical and financial perspective. In addition to these limitations, baboons are in no way guaranteed to utilize or survive utilizing a green corridor of such considerable length, given that the corridor would run through urban areas with countless human-derived food attractants and extensive urban-related threats. The assisted movement of dispersing male baboons to increase genetic diversity is however under consideration and warrants research investigation.

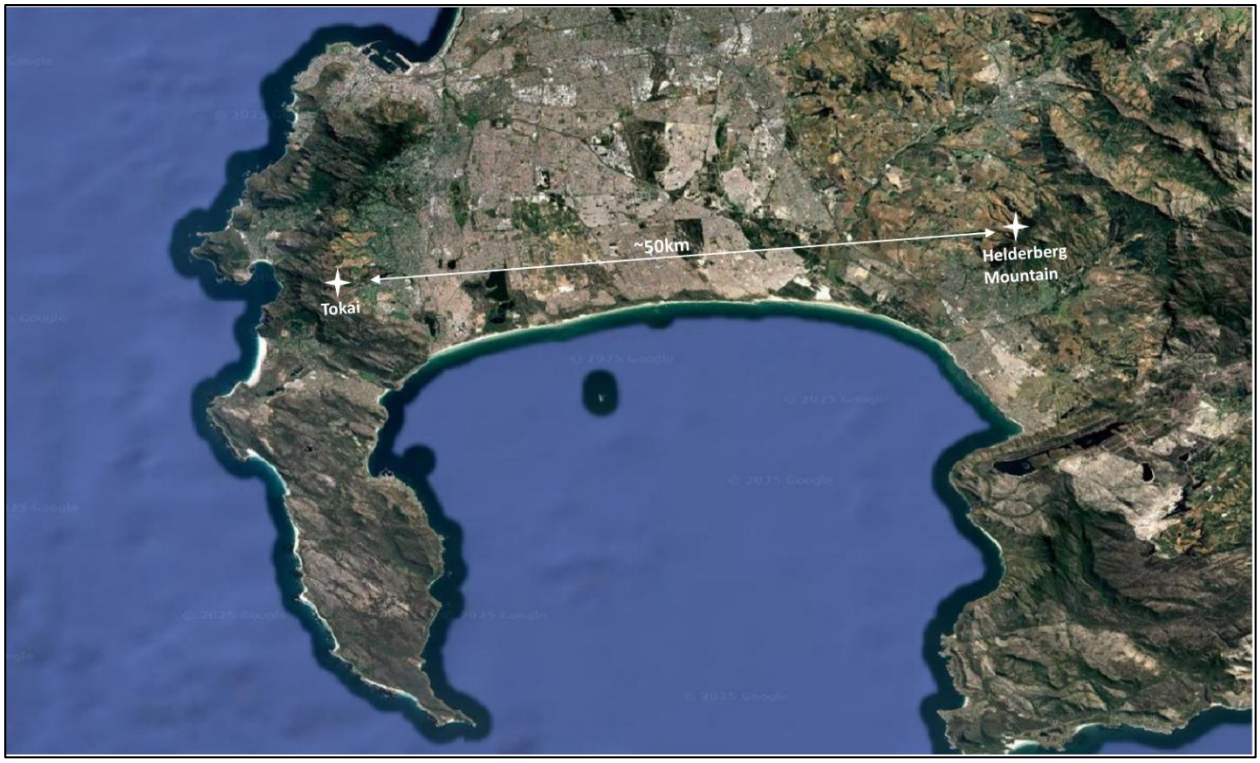

Figure 1: Map illustrating the ~50km of dense urbanization between the Cape Peninsula baboon population and the next nearest baboon population.

J6 PENINSULA-WIDE FENCING

The suggestion that baboon-proof fencing be established throughout the entirety of the Cape Peninsula Mountain range to prevent baboons from entering urban areas is not feasible. This suggestion would be prohibitively expensive both from an installation and maintenance perspective. Additionally, numerous characteristics of the landscape including anthropogenic and natural features (e.g. roads, wetlands) preclude perimeter fencing throughout the entirety of the Cape Peninsula. Importantly, this management approach would disrupt the ease of accessibility to Table Mountain National Park, which is classified as an 'open access' park.

J7 NOTE ON FINANCIAL LIMITATIONS

The JTT budget for implementing management solutions with regards to the Cape Peninsula baboon population is not unlimited. All three authorities must justify financial expenditure against the full spectrum of social and environmental needs on a municipal, local and national level.

J8 REFERENCES

Berman, C.M., Li, J., Ogawa, H., Ionica, C. & Yin, H. (2007). Primate tourism, range restriction, and infant risk among *Macaca thibetana* at Mt. Huangshan, China. *International Journal of Primatology*, ***28***(5), 1123–1141. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10764-007-9199-4

Kaplan, B.S., O'Riain, M.J., Van Eeden, R. & King, A. J. (2011). A low-cost manipulation of food resources reduces spatial overlap between baboons (*Papio ursinus*) and humans in conflict. *International Journal of Primatology*, ***32***(6), 1397–1412. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10764-011-9541-8

King, A.J., Douglas, CM. S., Huchard, E., Isaac, N.J.B. & Cowlishaw, G. (2008). Dominance and affiliation mediate despotism in a social primate. *Current Biology*, ***18***(23), 1833–1838. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cub.2008.10.048

Lewis, M.C. (2015). *Behavioural and isotope ecology of marine-foraging chacma baboons (Papio ursinus) on the Cape Peninsula, South Africa* [PhD thesis, University of Cape Town].

Mormile, J. (2024). An interdisciplinary study on the human-baboon interface in Rooiels, South Africa [PhD thesis, University of Cape Town].

Strum, S.C. (2010). The Development of Primate Raiding: Implications for Management and Conservation. International Journal of Primatology, 31(1), 133–156. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10764-009-9387-5

Urban Baboon Programme Annual Population Census. (2024). City of Cape Town.