



# APPENDIX F OF THE 2025 ACTION PLAN TRANSLOCATION AS A MANAGEMENT METHOD

**THE CAPE PENINSULA BABOON MANAGEMENT JOINT TASK TEAM**

v.1  
FINAL  
OCTOBER 2025

**Contact:**

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

## F1 DEFINITION

Translocation is broadly defined as capturing and moving a free ranging animal (or group of animals) from one location to a new location significantly distant from their original home range or established territory.

## F2 RATIONALE

Translocation is typically used as a wildlife management method when there is a need to reestablish populations of endangered species, for enhancing the genetic diversity of populations, and stocking species in formerly occupied habitats. However, translocation can also be used to remove specific individuals that cause damage to property or to reduce the total number of individuals in an area to reduce damage from a given species in an area.

## F3 KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Determining individuals can be responsibly translocated requires knowledge of their taxonomic identification, conservation status, parameters of the source population, health, welfare and disease, and behavioural suitability of the translocation candidates, and the status of taxon-specific conservation translocation programs, suitable release habitats, parameters of the receiving population and resources for translocation implementation and post-release monitoring and support. All translocations require consultation with local communities (both source and receiving) and compliance with applicable local, regional, national legislation and conventions.

## F4 TRANSLOCATION TO REDUCE NEGATIVE INTERACTIONS AND CONFLICT AMONGST STAKEHOLDERS

It is a very common refrain amongst members of the public that troops of baboons on the Peninsula that routinely enter urban areas and cause damage to property in addition to suffering injuries and death, should be permanently removed without harming the offending individual(s). The capture and moving of individuals is thus often proposed as a management option by the public despite seldom being supported by wildlife professionals.

### **Can translocation reduce negative interactions?**

The capture and removal of an entire troop may provide long term relief from negative interactions with baboons. However, this is only possible when the troop was living in a geographically isolated area with no neighbouring troops. Historically (1980s/90s) troops were removed from the City bowl, Chapman's Peak drive, Kalk Bay and Kommetjie. No troops have returned to the first three areas but a splinter from the neighbouring Da Gama troop re-established in Kommetjie. All negative interactions were eliminated (>30 years) in areas where the removed troops had no neighbouring troops.

## **F5 WHY ARE WILDLIFE PROFESSIONALS OPPOSED TO THE TRANSLOCATION OF DAMAGE-CAUSING SPECIES THAT ARE NOT ENGANGERED?**

### **F5.1 Stress to the animals**

The capture, solitary holding, transport and release of baboons into a novel environment are all stressful events associated with extreme welfare harms (Caspers, 2025). Together these stressors may cause short and long-term impacts to the behaviour and physiology of individuals making them more prone to pathogens, parasites and predators, post-release. Upon release into a new environment the troop will have no knowledge of the distribution of critical resources including food, water, roosting sites and local threats including novel predators (Kerley et al 2018). Additionally, they are likely to face aggression from resident baboon troops and people unaccustomed to habituated baboons while both resident baboons and people may experience stress and anxiety at the arrival of a new troop in their area.

### **F5.2 Liability**

Those who move wild animals may be liable for damages associated with that animal or any diseases they may spread. This is particularly relevant to the translocation of Peninsula baboons that are known to cause damage to property with any subsequent physical harm or property damage likely to be for the cost of those who translocated the individuals to a new area.

### **F5.3 Pathogens and parasites**

When animals are moved, the external and internal parasites, viruses and bacteria that commonly live on or in association with them are also moved. This is of particular concern with baboons that have been repeatedly exposed to human food waste and houses as this can lead to novel diseases appearing in previously unexposed wildlife populations. Scientists, wildlife managers, and public health professionals concerned about the spread of disease among wildlife and people do not recommend the use of translocation.

### **F5.4 Transmission of undesirable behaviours**

Peninsula baboons have acquired behaviours that result in negative interactions with people, including approaching people and buildings to obtain human derived foods. If Peninsula baboons are released into a site with buildings and people, then they will seek food in these areas and resident troops that observe such behaviour may in turn learn to associate humans and buildings with food. Furthermore, males from the translocated troop may disperse into resident troops and continue to seek food from buildings and people so transmitting undesirable behaviours to other troops with negative consequences for both the local human and baboon population.

### **F5.5 Competition for resources**

Resident populations can be harmed by the addition of translocated individuals that cause social disruption or increased competition for limited food, territory, mates, or other habitat resources. Responsible translocations follow the precautionary principle, meaning that there is negligible risk that released organisms, and their offspring will cause harm to resident conspecifics or ecosystems,

domesticated animals, or humans. For habituated baboons that associate humans and human constructs with foraging opportunities the risk of negative interactions in the released site is high. Additionally released baboons are likely to be exposed to legal hunting on rural land.

## F5.6 IUCN decision tree for responsible translocation of animals

in following the decision tree several branches lead to the recommendation that the translocation of Peninsula baboons to other parts of the Western Cape is not recommended. These include:

**1) Does the organism have any diseases that pose medium risk to wild conspecifics, other wildlife or humans?**

Peninsula baboons have tested positive for antibodies to Hepatitis A, Epstein Barr and Cytomegalovirus which are all recognised human pathogens (Drewe et al. 2011). Additionally, Peninsula baboons have numerous endo parasites including the human whip worm (*Trichuris trichuris*) (Ravasi et al. 2012).

**2) Does the organism exhibit behaviours appropriate to its age (finding wild food, defending itself from predators and threats, moving through its natural environment), and appropriate social behaviour with conspecifics?**

Peninsula baboons are naïve to natural predators such as leopard (*Panthera pardus*) which are prevalent throughout the Western Cape which would be the receiving environment, and which routinely predate on baboons (Mann et al. 2019).

**3) Is there a release site in the current range of the species that is protected from threats to the organism and where its release will not pose a medium or high risk to conspecifics or the ecosystem?**

There are potential release sites within the range of the species but none where there is protection from threats (e.g., farmers and natural predators) or where they will not pose a risk to conspecifics through the transmission of disease and undesirable behaviours.

**4) Can potential conflicts between humans and translocated individuals be avoided or mitigated?**

The reason for the translocation of Peninsula troops is that negative interactions between the baboons and humans could not be prevented despite a well-resourced and professional management program of non-lethal deterrents and barriers. No other receiving environment in South Africa has similar resources and hence it would not be possible to avoid or mitigate negative interactions with people in the receiving environment.

## F6 ASSESSMENT OF TRANSLOCATION INTO TANKWA-KAROO NATIONAL PARK

An assessment of the feasibility, sustainability and key risks of translocating baboons from Cape Town into the remote Tankwa-Karoo National Park was undertaken (refer to **Annexure 1** below). The results indicate that this is not recommended as a routine conflict-management option. The IUCN

translocation guidelines require that translocations must provide a measurable conservation benefit for the species, population or ecosystem, which is not the case here because Chacma baboons are listed as Least Concern and translocated urban animals would not add conservation value. Moreover, substantial welfare, epidemiological, ecological and social risks exist (stress, disease spread, transmission of human-habituation behaviours, competition and liability for damage), and Tankwa's arid and specialised Succulent Karoo habitat offers limited and patchy resources that make successful long-term establishment unlikely without heavy and long-term human support and monitoring.

## F7 SUMMARY

In situations involving damage causing species, priority should be given to finding solutions for protecting them and people in their natural habitats rather than removing them. Preventive actions and mitigation measures are the preferred solution to address continued negative interactions rather than translocation which invariably simply displaces the damage causing individuals to a new area. In some cases where the displaced individuals have been habitually causing damage to property and people, translocation to an identified suitable habitat with no buildings and people is possible if assessment studies show it would have low risk of negative impacts to the local conspecific population. However, the prevalence of human pathogens and parasites in Peninsula baboons places both baboons and humans in the receiving environment at risk.

**Following the IUCN steps, it was concluded that translocated baboons cannot be responsibly translocated with minimal welfare and survival risks to themselves, conspecifics and humans in the receiving environment.**

## F8 REFERENCES

Caspers, C. (2025). Conflict and coexistence: an assessment of welfare outcomes for the methods used to manage chacma baboon (*Papio ursinus*) on the Cape Peninsula, South Africa [MSc thesis, University of Cape Town].

Drewe, J. A., O'Riain, M. J., Beamish, E., Currie, H., & Parsons, S. (2012). Survey of infections transmissible between baboons and humans, Cape Town, South Africa. *Emerging Infectious Diseases*, 18(2), 298. doi: 10.3201/eid1802.111309

IUCN/SSC (2013). Guidelines for Reintroductions and Other Conservation Translocations. Version 1.0. Gland, Switzerland: IUCN Species Survival Commission.

Kerley G.I.H. S.L. Wilson and D. Balfour (eds.). (2018). Livestock predation and its management in South Africa: a scientific assessment. Centre for African Conservation Ecology Nelson Mandela University Port Elizabeth.

Mann, G. K., Wilkinson, A., Hayward, J., Drouilly, M., O'Riain, M. J., & Parker, D. M. (2019). The effects of aridity on land use, biodiversity and dietary breadth in leopards. *Mammalian Biology*, 98(1), 43-51. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.mambio.2019.07.003>

Ravasi, D. F., O'Riain, M. J., Adams, V. J., & Appleton, C. C. (2012). A coprological survey of protozoan and nematode parasites of free-ranging chacma baboons (*Papio ursinus*) in the southwestern Cape,

South Africa. South African Journal of Wildlife Research, 42(1), 35-44.  
<https://hdl.handle.net/10520/EJC121987>

## **F9 ANNEXURE 1: TANKWA KAROO NATIONAL PARK SUITABILITY AND FEASIBILITY INVESTIGATION**



## **Assessment for the translocation of urban baboons into Tankwa-Karoo National Park**

**Mzileni, N., Chenay, M. and Ferreira, S.**

### **Summary**

Translocating urban, damage-causing Chacma baboons (*Papio ursinus*) from Cape Town (Table Mountain National Park and surrounds) into a remote national park such as Tankwa-Karoo National Park is not recommended as a routine conflict-management option. The IUCN translocation guidelines require that translocations must provide a measurable conservation benefit for the species, population or ecosystem, which is not the case here because Chacma baboons are listed as Least Concern and translocated urban animals would not add conservation value. Moreover, substantial welfare, epidemiological, ecological and social risks exist (stress, disease spread, transmission of human-habituation behaviours, competition and liability for damage), and Tankwa's arid and specialised Succulent Karoo habitat offers limited and patchy resources that make successful long-term establishment unlikely without heavy and long-term human support and monitoring.

### **Scope, Objectives and Regulatory Context**

The purpose of this document is to assess the feasibility, suitability and key risks of translocating damage causing baboon(s)/troop(s) from Table Mountain National Park into Tankwa Karoo National Park as a measure to remove local conflict and damage. Other national parks in the Cape Region are unsuitable locations for a translocation mainly due to proximity to urban edges and the likelihood of negative behaviours being perpetuated leading to continuation of the human-baboon conflict.

The species status of which the Chacma baboons are listed as Least Concern must also be noted (Sithaldeen, R. 2019). Some of the key constraints include the IUCN guidelines which indicate that translocations must aim for conservation benefit and follow strict assessment, risk-analysis, quarantine/welfare, and post-release monitoring protocols (Sherman, J., *et al.*, 2025). Translocation for purely human-conflict reasons must still meet IUCN risk and welfare standards. Translocation of this species provides negligible conservation benefit at range scale. The recommendation of Tankwa-Karoo National Park as a translocation site must comply with SANParks management plans, protected area legislation and stakeholder consultation.

### **Site/ecosystem Suitability - Tankwa Karoo National Park**

Chacma baboons occupy a wide array of habitats across southern Africa, including semi-arid areas. However, urban Cape troops are habituated to human food and structures and may not readily switch to sparse succulent karoo resources. TKNP's low primary productivity, patchy water and specialized flora make it a marginal match for sustaining a released urban troop without intervention.

Tankwa Karoo National Park is located within the Succulent Karoo Biome and is characterised by the lowland Tanqua Karoo and upland Western Mountain Karoo. Vegetation includes sparse dwarf shrubland and succulent communities; many endemic and range-restricted plant taxa; high botanical conservation value. The vegetation types conserved by the park include Central Tanqua Grassy Plain, Roggeveld Shale Renosterveld, Tanqua Escarpment, Succulent Karoo, Roggeveld Karoo, Tanqua Wash Riviere, and Nieuwoudtville Roggeveld Dolerite Renosterveld (Tankwa Karoo National Park — SANParks management plan). Remote areas have been designated on some of the smaller koppies, such as the Leeuberg, Sterretjiesberg, Potkleiberg and Poukop due to their high sensitivity values of the plant species.

The landscape has a mix of deep sands and shallow rocky soils; many microhabitats but large areas of low biomass — limiting for high-density omnivores. The park supports ~780 plant species and ~44 mammal species of which there are existing baboon troops occurring in the park. TKNP supports existing mammal communities including baboon troops and the sudden addition of a troop could cause competition for scarce patches (especially water and roost sites), social disruption and possible aggression with resident troops.

TKNP cannot sustain high-carrying-capacities of wildlife given that resources are seasonal and widely dispersed. Succulent plants, bulbs, insects, a few small vertebrates form natural baboon diet components in arid Karoo, but the quantity and seasonality are limiting particularly for urban-fed baboons which may quickly create nutritional stress or concentrate around park infrastructure/water points. There are two perennial rivers (Renoster, Tankwa) and one man-made dam (Oudebaaskraal dam) but overall the landscape is arid with patchy water availability therefore borehole/water use must be carefully managed. Any translocated troop would quickly need to find reliable water and forage, or suffer welfare decline and increased movement and potential conflict with park neighbours.

Predators such as leopards or brown hyena occur regionally and a released troop unfamiliar with predator patterns faces elevated predation/welfare risk. Conversely, extra baboons may alter predator-prey dynamics locally.

Given this context, TKNP is a marginally suitable habitat and resource limitations in addition to conservation value of other species in the park make TKNP a poor match for urban baboons unless intensive support is provided. Ecological trade-offs can be expected should this lack of suitability be neglected.

## **Feasibility Assessment**

Although technically possible but expensive and high-risk; welfare and institutional/legal hurdles make the translocation to Tankwa Karoo National Park unjustifiable.

### *Logistical feasibility*

Capture, sedation, transport and release of an entire troop is technically possible but complex and requires experienced wildlife veterinarians, sedation protocols, transport crates/vehicles, quarantine and a secure acclimation enclosure. Large social groups complicate capture and increase stress and mortality risk. It is noted that TKNP remoteness increases transport times (stress/heat risk) and costs; post-release monitoring would require long travel times and sustained resources.

### *Legal / institutional feasibility*

The movement of wildlife such as baboons requires permits from provincial authorities, SANParks approval, veterinary inspection, and compliance with wildlife health and NEMA/NEMPAA frameworks. SANParks management intent and stakeholder consultation must be satisfied. However, the translocation of damage causing animals falls outside the scope and is counter to the SANParks Damage Causing Animal Policy, Wildlife Management Policy, SOP for the Lethal Management of Wildlife in South African National Parks.

#### *Financial feasibility*

The financial feasibility for capture, veterinary tests (disease screening), transport, acclimation facilities, long-term monitoring and potential supplemental feeding or water provision if animals cannot adapt. This has not been accounted for in budgets and would require motivation, mobilisation of funding.

#### *Welfare feasibility*

The ethics and welfare concerns for the capture and isolation cause severe stress. Urban-habituated animals may fail to adapt due to dependence on high caloric human food. In addition to the diet constraints and the act of translocation, stress raises disease susceptibility and mortality risk.

### **Risk Assessment**

#### *Animal welfare & mortality risk*

Stress and severe welfare harm from capture, novel environment holding and transport of the troops can be induced. There may be challenges and the inability to find resources (water and forage) post-release should a hard release method be chosen. The potential for injury from fights with resident troops could lead to welfare challenges. Urban baboons have not been exposed to the scope of higher predation risk that could be experienced in Tankwa Karoo. The risk of disease outbreaks.

#### *Pathogen and parasite transfer*

Urban baboons are exposed to human waste, domestic animals and anthropogenic pathogens (bacterial, viral, parasitic). Moving them risks introducing pathogens to naïve wildlife and human communities. The IUCN guidelines requires disease risk analysis and quarantine (Sherman, J., *et al.*, 2025).

#### *Transmission of human-habituation behaviours*

Urban baboons that are used to raiding houses and garbage will likely seek human food sources if released into areas with buildings (offices), farms or visitors (rest camps). Such behaviour can be socially transmitted to resident troops, creating new conflict zones.

#### *Competition & ecological impact*

Increased pressure on scarce water and forage and the potential to displace resident species or alter vegetation (rooting, bulb-digging) and negative impacts on sensitive plant communities and ground-nesting birds. TKNP contains range-restricted succulent flora therefore could lead to risk of localized damage.

#### *Human social risk & liability*

SANParks may be legally liable for subsequent property damage (e.g., baboons moving outside the park and causing damage). This can strain relations with neighbours and disrupt ongoing corridor and expansion plans.

### *Genetic and population consequences*

If translocated animals interbreed with resident populations, there may be genetic mixing, but for a Least Concern, widespread species this is not a conservation benefit and is not a strong justification (Sithaldeen, R. 2019).

### *Management & long-term commitment risk*

If translocated baboons become problematic in the park (raiding park structures, rest camps, outside the park), managers will need to invest in long-term mitigation or remove the group — cycling the problem and increasing costs.

## **IUCN translocation guidance & ethics**

Key IUCN points to apply include the primary objective requirement of the translocation which should have an explicit conservation objective (population recovery, reintroduction, or ecosystem benefit). Moving problem animals for human convenience does not meet this objective unless the move also advances conservation. A complete risk assessment which includes ecological, health, welfare and socio-economic aspects must be conducted before translocation consideration only if risks to recipient ecosystem and baboon populations are negligible or manageable. Animal welfare and ethics in the form of stress, suffering and likely mortality must be minimized and if this is not feasible then alternatives such as *in situ* mitigation, sterilisation, captive sanctuary placement should be preferred if welfare risk is high. The nature of the human-baboon conflict requires that stakeholder engagement and legal compliance consultation with local communities, managers and authorities be mandatory. Consequently, because TKNP provides no clear conservation benefit for baboons, and because the welfare and ecological risks are high, moving urban baboons into TKNP would be inconsistent with the IUCN guidelines unless done as part of a very well-justified, fully funded, professionally executed translocation program with clear conservation objectives and long-term monitoring (Sherman, J., *et al.*, 2025).

## **Translocation considerations**

Tankwa Karoo National Park is approximately ~300–400 km away from the capture site of the baboons on Table Mountain National Park and the surrounding urban edges. The consideration for the translocation includes pre-removal health screening & quarantine for a minimum of 30 days which would include a full parasite and pathogen screening (bacterial, viral, protozoal), treatments as needed. Given the social structures of baboons, it would be important to document and capture troops as a whole and cohesive social unit. Costs and timeframe are high and need to be incorporated into a budget. Capturing whole troops without fracturing social bonds is very difficult and requires observations of the troop to understand behaviours and dynamics. In the event that complete troops are not captured, individuals isolated from the troop could experience increased stress. Therefore, captive holding must mimic social structure. The distance of the translocation site from capture site requires transport over long distances which exposes the baboons to heat, motion stress and sedation risks. The release site chosen must be in an area within TKNP with the closest match to troop needs such as water availability, suitable sleeping roosts which is not feasible given the different ecological conditions between peri-urban and succulent karoo landscapes. If a soft release is selected as the option for release, then the troop will require time for acclimation to the boma with supplementary water and food until troops learn natural food and water locations which

would defeat the purpose of removal and imposes ongoing costs and impact. Post-release monitoring and contingency until the troop settles and the offspring survival has been assessed, could take up to at least 2–5 years of monitoring which would require GPS collars, behavioural observation by a baboon monitor and contingency plans for removal if failure occurs. This leads to high cost and staff time. Given these considerations the likely outcomes could either be (a) troop fails to adapt and welfare outcomes are poor, (b) troops concentrate around park infrastructure/water causing new conflicts and ecological damage, or (c) troops disperse, cross private lands causing liability and human–wildlife conflict.

### **Ethical and biodiversity considerations**

The literature review of ethics consideration is thorough and has been investigated in Appendix G of the Baboon Management Action Plan. Moving social animals into an environment where they face high stress, unfamiliar predators, and likely dietary shortage raises welfare questions. IUCN ethics require minimising harm and preferring *in situ* solutions where possible. The biodiversity consideration of Tankwa Karoo which protects high botanical endemism and unique low-productivity ecosystems. Introducing human-habituated omnivores risks localised vegetation damage, spread of novel behaviours and threats to resident fauna (including birds and specialist plants). The conservation value of the urban adapted baboons is not justified on species-conservation grounds. Essentially the translocation would be moving animals for human convenience rather than ecological benefit.

### **Recommendation**

It is not recommended that Tankwa Karoo National Park or Cape Region National Parks be considered as the translocation site for urban damage causing baboons. The combination of animal welfare, disease, ecological and liability risks, plus the lack of conservation benefit, makes this an inappropriate solution in several circumstances. It provides no conservation benefit for a Least Concern species, poses high welfare and disease risks, threatens sensitive TKNP biodiversity (specialist succulent flora and birds), is expensive, legally complex and may create new conflicts and liability. Consideration and inclusion of other management actions such as *in situ* conflict mitigation to improve waste management, baboon-proof bins, exclusion fencing, removal of attractants, community education, deterrents and rapid response teams must also be taken into consideration. These options reduce the incentive for baboons to raid and reduce the number of individuals requiring removal. Additionally, the inclusion of a behavioural and/or fertility control, where feasible and ethical, through contraception or sterilisation programs targeted at problem individuals can reduce troop growth and conflict. The ongoing targeted capture for severely conditioned individuals that cannot be rehabilitated, placement in accredited rehabilitation or education centres or sanctuaries (not release into remote parks) may be less ecologically risky. It is rather recommended that rather focus on proven *in-situ* conflict mitigation and consider non-release options (secured sanctuaries) for individuals that cannot be managed *in-situ*. Translocation of damage causing baboons into a national park is counter to the SANParks Damage Causing Animal Policy, Wildlife Management Policy, SOP for the Lethal Management of Wildlife in South African National Parks.

### **References:**

Sherman, J., Menon, V., Kock, R., King, T., Luz, S., Ashraf N.V.K., Soorae, P., Moehrenschrager, A. (2025). Guidelines on responsible translocation of displaced organisms. Gland, Switzerland: IUCN.

Sithaldeen, R. (2019). *Papio ursinus* (errata version published in 2020). *The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species* 2019: e.T16022A168568698. <https://dx.doi.org/10.2305/IUCN.UK.2019-3.RLTS.T16022A168568698.en>. Accessed on 13 September 2025.

Park Management Plan, Tankwa Karoo National Park (2014 – 2024), SANParks.