



APPENDIX H OF THE 2025 ACTION PLAN UNFEASIBLE MANAGEMENT METHODS

THE CAPE PENINSULA BABOON MANAGEMENT JOINT TASK TEAM

v.1
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H1 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:

H2 PROVISIONED FOOD AT FEEDING STATIONS

H2.1 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).

H2.2 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).

H2.3 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.

H2.4 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.

H2.5 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.

H3 PLANTING OF VEGETATION

H3.1 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.

H3.2 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.

H3.1 Ecological buffering and reforestation

Ecological buffering refers to areas created to mitigate the negative impacts of human activity on the natural environment. Targeted restoration or enhancement of habitat adjacent to or surrounding areas of baboon conflict (such as the urban edge), with the aim of reducing wildlife movement into human-dominated spaces, is not considered feasible on the Peninsula. Fynbos evolved on nutrient poor soils and is consequently oligotrophic with defence mechanisms against herbivory. These factors in part explain how the remarkable diversity evolved in the Cape Floristic Kingdom. Transforming the upper slopes of the mountain into resource rich habitat suitable for one species

cannot be argued as the best approach to preserving this biodiversity and hence would not be considered a viable management option in TMNP.

H4 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.

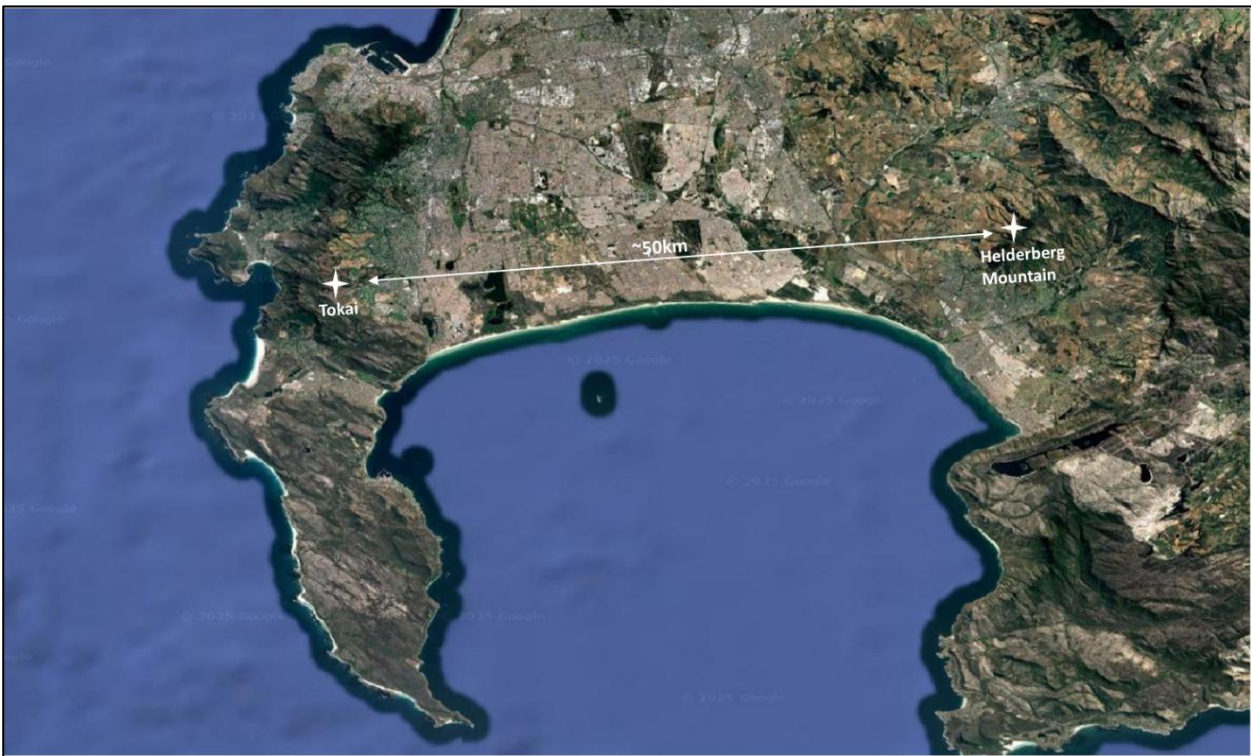


Figure 1: Map illustrating the ~50km of dense urbanization between the Cape Peninsula baboon population and the next nearest baboon population.

The peninsula mountain chain does provide a green corridor already connected from Table Mountain to Cape Point and any baboon can, should it choose, move from one end to the other in natural habitat. Unfortunately, most baboons attempt to move through low lying urban areas that use the higher lying mountain corridor.

H5 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.

H5.1 Fencing off Boulders Beach penguin colony

The penguin colony occurs across 2.31 km along the coast from the Institute for Maritime Technology in the North to Frank's Bay in the South directly within a residential area and includes 8 different sites, one within SANDF property, five sites in City of Cape Town property and two sites inside SANParks property. The area also receives over 100 000 visitors per month. To install a baboon fence through this environment is not possible or desirable.

H6 MODEL OF HARMONIOUS COEXISTENCE

Humans and baboons do and will continue to coexist on the Peninsula. However harmonious sharing of space in urban areas is unachievable and does not align with the natural behaviour of baboons. Continuing to allow baboon troops to extensively use urban environments is not sustainable and will always lead to poor outcomes for both baboons and people. Where baboons spend large amounts of time in urban areas it is:

- Demonstrably bad for baboons
- Has demonstrably poor animal welfare outcomes
- Demonstrably bad for residents and people
- Demonstrably bad for community relations and conflict
- Has a high management cost with low outcomes

The AP provides a rationale for the continued coexistence of baboons and people on the Peninsula in perpetuity, but this coexistence does not mean sharing urban space.

H7 EXCLUSION OF LETHAL MANAGEMENT

Non-lethal deterrents have been in use since 2000 and have evolved to the current toolbox. However highly habituated troops no longer respond to these methods and in areas where fencing cannot be feasibly implemented within an acceptable time frame then removals are considered essential. Additionally, when authorities reduced lethal management the mortality in urban areas increased. The rate of increase in urban causes of death was proportional to the rate of reduction in management deaths i.e., a one-to-one ratio. Urban causes of death are associated with severe suffering and thus not removing individuals humanely often results in their removal inhumanely. Furthermore, given the Peninsula population is geographically isolated with no natural predators it is predicted to continue to grow and exceed the finite management resources available. In this scenario unmanaged troops will once again face severe welfare harms and cause extensive

damage in urban areas. Thus, humane lethal management of baboons must remain a management option at all times.

H8 NOTE ON WASTE MANAGEMENT

While urban waste management is an acknowledged and important tool in reducing baboon human conflict, baboons are naturally highly opportunistic animals and the urban and residential environment offers multiple attractants and resource opportunities. This wide variety of attractants and resources in the urban environment are amplified where there is an associated reduction or lack of available low lying resource rich habitat such as experienced in Simon's Town, Constantia, and Seaforth.

H9 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.

H10 REFERENCES

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