

BRIDGETOWN OFFICE

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Per email:

Michele Pickover

EMS Foundation

Executive Director

Email: info@emsfoundation.org.za

Dear Ms Pickover

Thank you sincerely for your detailed and thoughtful letter regarding the current baboon management program operating in the Overstrand Municipality.

We appreciate the proactive stance taken by the EMS Foundation and other stakeholders to engage constructively in matters that concern the wellbeing of both wildlife and the human communities within our Province.

Please rest assured that the wellbeing of all wild animals (including baboons) as well as the safety of human residents and domestic animals in affected areas, is always a central consideration in the assessment and issuing of permits such as the one referenced in your correspondence. We always strive to achieve a responsible and balanced approach in often highly complex human-wildlife conflict scenarios.

We do note the concerns raised in your letter. However, at this time, no evidence has been submitted to CapeNature indicating that the baboon management program as implemented by the Overstrand Municipality is causing harm or unnecessary suffering to the baboons in question. It is our firm view that preventing baboons from entering urban areas, where they are at serious risk of injury, death, and exposure to unhealthy food sources, is an essential step in safeguarding their long-term wellbeing. The objective of the current programme should be precisely that: to discourage baboon incursions into urban spaces where outcomes are often fatal to the animals themselves.

Regarding your references to the Animals Protection Act, we must note that the applicability of this Act in the context of the baboon management programme is arguable, particularly considering the definitions contained in the Act and the scope of the Act. Moreover, roles for the enforcement (and interpretation) of this Act does not rest with CapeNature. We respectfully suggest that the EMS Foundation approach the local SPCA or the NSPCA, who are the appropriate authorities in terms of this legislation and should be able to address any welfare concerns.

Similarly, your interpretation of section 28 of the National Environmental Management Act (NEMA) is acknowledged. We have not received any evidence to support the claim that the methods currently in use are violent, harmful to the troop, or resulting in ecosystem degradation in the Pringle Bay area. Should the EMS Foundation be in possession of such evidence, we would encourage you to share it with us so that we may investigate further.

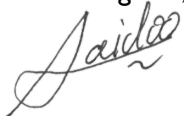
We also note your reference to possible contraventions of the existing permit conditions. At this time, no legal argument or supporting evidence of such contraventions has been presented that would warrant the summary withdrawal of the permit issued to the Overstrand Municipality. Again, should the EMS Foundation have relevant information in this regard, we urge you to submit it to us so that we may consider it as part of our ongoing monitoring process.

Noting too and most importantly, that upon submission of such evidence and information in this regard and prior to any administrative action, which may lead to the withdrawal of a permit, that CapeNature is obliged to follow a process that is reasonable, justifiable, and procedurally fair in terms of prevailing administrative justice legislation in this regard.

CapeNature remains committed to promoting collaboration between all stakeholders in addressing the complex challenges posed by human-baboon interactions. We strongly encourage local communities, civil society organisations, and NGOs to continue working alongside the Overstrand Municipality in building humane and effective solutions that serve the best interests of both residents and baboons.

We are grateful to the EMS Foundation for its continued advocacy, concern, and dedication to both animal welfare and environmental integrity. We welcome further engagement and look forward to working together in pursuit of shared values and constructive solutions.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Ashley Naidoo', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Dr Ashley Naidoo

Chief Executive Officer