



BRIEFING DOCUMENT 2

THE HEALTH AND WELLBEING OF BABOONS IN HERMANUS

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Introduction

The EMS Foundation has, very recently, commissioned a small, expert KVET team to observe the Fernkloof baboon troop, particularly those individuals that visit the Voelklip area.

These baboons were also previously “managed” by an organization called *Human Wildlife Solutions* (HWS) at great expense to the Overstrand Municipality and Overstrand ratepayers – almost R40 million in total). The management period ended in December 2024.

Hermanus has many threats to baboons, including residents who are breaking the law by using pellet guns and air guns in an urban area.

A female baboon was shot and killed by a resident on the 22nd March 2025. This matter is supposedly under investigation by the Hermanus Police Services.

Areas of Increasing Concern

The Urgent Need to Remove HWS Collars

Some of the Fernkloof troop, managed by HWS, were forced to wear intrusive collars. Even though more comfortable collars were available, HWS used the cheaper variety which are enormous in size. These collars were apparently used to track the movements of these baboons. These baboons continue to wear these bulky collars which is unacceptable.

The HWS contract was terminated by OM in December 2024. At the time we questioned why the Overstrand Municipality did not, insist on the removal of these collars, during the negotiation of a new contract, and before HWS departed.

The EMS Foundation would be happy to pay for these collars and or tags to be removed by our qualified wildlife veterinarian. Each baboon will have to be darted and the collar carefully removed. There are at least four collars that need to urgently be removed.





Improve Human Waste Management System and Enforce Existing Bylaws



A better waste management system, with an early warning system, and early collection, needs to be implemented, if baboons are to be deterred from coming down the mountain into the urban area of Hermanus.

Existing bylaws pertaining to effective baboon proof bins needs to be implemented.

It is not rocket science, baboons are attracted to discarded human food. Baboons were seen targeting garbage and bins that were left outside for garbage removal days. The bins supposedly have baboon clips on, but there is no spring system to keep the latch from moving if a bin is flipped on its side. We observed several baboons tipping over the bins and rolling them over until the lid simply popped open.

Untreated Severely Injured Baboons

We are greatly concerned for the wellbeing of a number of the Hermanus baboons.

The KVET observations clearly show that one baboon has been severely injured on its right hind leg. The wound was open, exposing the flesh, the baboon has also suffered hair loss on the lower back that we assumed it had sustained as a result of the injury.

One baboon seems to have been caught in a snare and is missing skin on his ankle, much like a sock that's been pulled down.

Another is the juvenile that was apparently hit by a car. He has a severe wound on the right leg, and the wound reveals the tendons and muscle.



Even though there are several baboons with serious injuries, the OM does not appear to be intervening. It is also not known if the OM team reports these injuries to OM management or whether management on the ground has a strategy for wildlife rehabilitation or aid. On the face of it, it seems this is not the case.

The EMS Foundation is also willing to assist with this.

Baboon Traffic Control



The baboons move down from their sleep sites in the direction of the ocean. This is an historical range. On their route there is a very busy thoroughfare — 7th Street, Voelklip. This is a real risk as a baboon may be hit by a vehicle. People in vehicles are also at risk as hitting a baboon at speed could cause severe damage to themselves and to the vehicle. There are no wildlife crossing signs on this road. It was brought to our attention that the injury to the juvenile was as a result of a vehicle hitting the baboon. The mandated OM team on the ground is a combination of OM and law enforcement. Apparently, the OM team have not been given flags or any other equipment to facilitate wildlife movement over the busy roads.

Working With OM for People and Wildlife

Over and above our offer to provide veterinary assistance, the EMS Foundation, in conjunction with OM, would also like to craft an effective, sustainable and humane baboon management plan that ensures harmonious coexistence and human and baboon wellbeing and which is also compliant with the *Animal Protection Act* and the *National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act*.