

Statement by Kogelberg Villages Environmental Trustees issued 06 September 2023

A letter from the Overstrand Municipality (OM) has been received in response to the letters by Cullinan and Associates on the 26th August 2023 and further letter on the 28th August 2023 which was sent in association with Kogelberg Villages Environmental Trustees, Pringle Bay Rewilding, Pringle Bay Conservation Group and the Betty's Bay Baboon Action Group.

Cullinan and Associates Letter 26th August 2023 -

<https://emsfoundation.org.za/urgent-legal-objection-to-the-overstrand-municipality-threat-of-the-forced-removal-of-blue-tag-baboon-from-pringle-bay/>

Cullinan and Associates Letter 28th August 2023 -

<https://emsfoundation.org.za/pringle-bay-baboon-management-an-urgent-request-for-public-consultation/>

The letter from Mr. DGI O'Neill OM Municipal Manager:

PRINGLE BAY BABOON MANAGEMENT: MEDIA STATEMENT REGARDING REMOVAL OF "BLUE TAG" BABOON FROM PRINGLE BAY TROOP

Your letter in the above regard, dated 26 August 2023, has reference.

At the outset we are not going to respond to each and every statement and allegation made by you and should this not be interpreted as an admission thereof, but rather a denial.

The decision to remove the male baboon, referred to as "Blue Tag", from the Pringle Bay (PB) troop and to relocate him to the Gordons Bay (GB) troop, was taken after having considered the factual position "on the ground", i.e., that he has, since his arrival in PB, not fully integrated with the PB troop in that he mostly moves/roams and sleeps alone. To this end this has been observed and confirmed by a ranger dedicated to move with him.

But apart from the above, Blue Tag has also, on many recorded instances, taken food from humans, entered motor vehicles while humans were inside, entered a room occupied by humans and also broke into and entered a motor vehicle and a building, which traits classify him as a "damage causing baboon" in terms of the Western Cape Baboon Management Guidelines – DCB Category 3, which Category in fact permits such a baboon to be euthanised.

In view of the above, the Overstrand Municipality has decided not to euthanise Blue Tag, but to return him to his home range in GB, in accordance with the Western Cape GO4 Guidelines for Dispersing/Displaced Male Baboons in Urban Areas.

We are therefore of the opinion that by having decided not to euthanise Blue Tag, but to relocate him, his wellbeing was indeed considered by the municipality, as required by the judgement of the North Gauteng High Court, referred to you in paragraph 3.5 of your letter.

We therefore consider this matter closed.

Yours sincerely, MR DGI O'NEILL - MUNICIPAL MANAGER

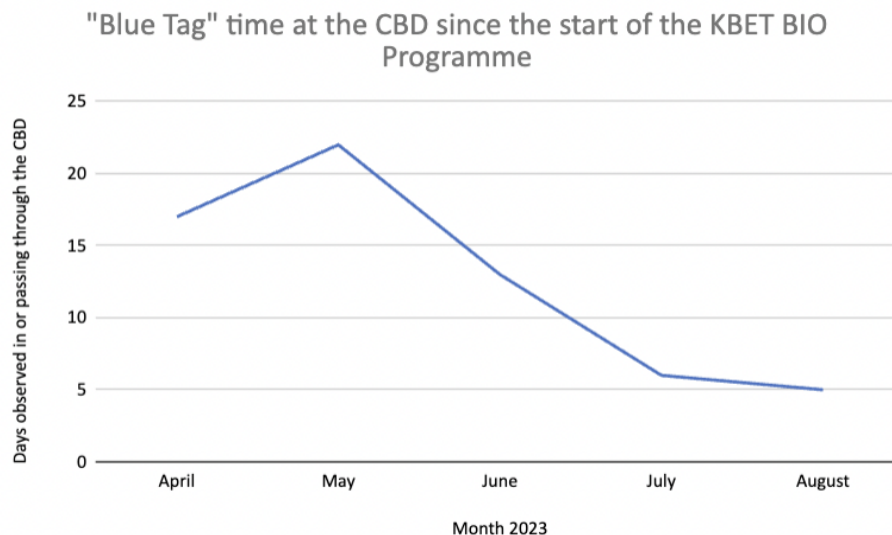
Herewith the response from KVET to the statements made in the letter from Mr. DGI O'Neill OM Municipal Manager as follows:

1 - "he mostly moves/roams and sleeps alone"; It must be stressed that he is not the only baboon, or even male for that matter, that wanders off from the troop at times and he has gone to the same sleep sites as the troop regularly. KVET would also like to understand, how is full integration qualified or determined according to the OM?

2 - "entered a room occupied by humans"; It is important to state that KVET has been monitoring this baboon for more than five months daily and has no record of him ever entering a building including any shop or restaurant.

3 - "broke into and entered a motor vehicle"; It is important to state that KVET has been monitoring this baboon for more than five months daily and has not seen him physically open a door or window, not even in the CBD.

4 - "taken food from humans"; This has been noted in the past but since the KVET BIO Programme started in the CBD where attempts are blocked, he has been less present in the CBD and has more often been observed at the poorly managed local garbage dump and KVET has footage to support this. The KVET BIO team have further made huge efforts and strides in ensuring he is blocked from the dump which has resulted in him being seen to happily forage in the surrounding areas with the BIOs as observers.



This graph shows a noted decrease in the time this individual spent visiting the CBD since the start of the KVET BIO Programme.

It is very important to note that it is not always easy to identify the individual baboons within the troop and residents and even the OM Eco Rangers can misidentify the baboons, even the four resident males. KVET representatives on the ground have seen and heard this happen and there have been false claims of the whereabouts of individual baboons on numerous occasions. We must therefore state that not all the obtained information can be taken as accurate. It is also extremely important to know if the OM have photographic evidence to back up the information as stated.

This baboon in question is a product of mismanagement by HWS who pushed his troop onto the R44. Once he arrived in Pringle Bay (PB) HWS management and monitors did nothing to prevent him coming into the CBD but filmed everything to build a case against him. There is a point of view in the management of baboons that some groups believe in one male troop for management purposes even though the correct male to female ratio is one male to 2.8 females. Family groups are integral to harmonious and stable baboon troops. We are already seeing calmer baboons without HWS in town, the Rooiels troop is the brilliant model we should be following in the biosphere NOT the HWS model.

There have been multiple observations of Kanye ('Blue Tag') mating with at least one female in the troop in the last year and it is widely accepted that there is a good chance that he has at least one infant in the troop, and should the troop be left to sort themselves out the current alpha will most likely accept the other males into the troop. We must also understand that for the well-being of the troop, it is very important to have new DNA and bloodlines which is one of the more important tasks that Kanye has done.

Please note that if Kanye is taken back to Gordons Bay (GB), he will no longer fall under the Overstrand moratorium set by the mayor, but under CoCT which allows for the killing of baboons as a management tool. It must also be noted that NCC who is in charge of management in the GB area is not averse to using that as a management tool. We also want to ensure that the individuals and residents in the community who called for his removal understand that they will very likely be responsible and sign his death warrant. A very important fact and guideline is that Kanye has been resident in PB for more than 12 months being first observed on the 25th July 2022 he cannot be removed as he no longer qualifies as a dispersing baboon.

Kanye is settling into the PB troop and is integrated and mating with females. There is evidence and data that will confirm that the taking of food and incursion rate in the CBD by this baboon has drastically declined. He can no longer be considered the problem that he was. It is important to understand if it is the direction of the OM monitors to request that certain baboons continue to be 'removed'; and we would like to understand the experience OM monitors are drawing on to reach such conclusions.

Issued by: Kogelberg Villages Environment Trustees

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