Vervet Monkeys
- victims of human persecution

A Save Our Planet publication
Compiled by Elle Durow
For wild animals, each day is a struggle to survive, so their every sense must remain on high alert. In the case of Vervet Monkeys this is also true.

Vervet Monkeys evoke mixed feelings in people. To some, they evoke a sense of love and affection. In others there is a sense of hatred.

Those who see them as creatures to be loved and protected are able to live in complete harmony with these highly intelligent, social and inquisitive creatures.

However, it is those who bear a deep hatred of them who are responsible for some of the horror stories of the cruelty that is inflicted on these creatures.

The aim of this short book is to inform people about this fascinating species which shares our world with us. Hopefully it will help to get some of the monkey-haters to change their ways and learn to live in harmony with monkeys and all the other creatures who share our planet with us.

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Introduction and acknowledgements

Over the past few years I have received countless reports which, together, convinced me that there are a large number of individuals out there who are totally intolerant of the Vervet Monkeys who share the world with us. Some of the reports which I received and which I read in the local news media and on public forums such as Facebook told of the horrific injuries that people had inflicted on the monkeys. These reports came in from all provinces in South Africa. I have taken some of them and have included them in Chapters 4 and 6.

I also encountered people who believed and made statements about Vervet Monkeys – and the so-called damage that they cause – which were extremely biased and which were based on folklore and not on fact. Anyone who was even remotely familiar with these highly intelligent and fascinating animals would have been able to refute the allegations made against the monkeys. I have included a number of these misapprehensions in Chapter 5.

Of course, there are a large number of people who love and adore our Vervet Monkeys and who are doing great work in saving and protecting these animals who are so like us humans.

This book will be useful to those who want to find out something about these creatures, to educators, learners, and those who would like to get involved with their care and rehabilitation.

I would like to thank all those who provided me with information that I could use in compiling this book and for giving me permission to use information which they provided on their websites. In particular I would like to thank Dave duToit of the Vervet Monkey Foundation, Dawn Magowan of APES, Sue Ettmayr an independent reporter, Bruce Barry Cronk of WATCH, Melanie Sammons of Primate Africa, Jean Senogles of WESSA and many others in the Vervet Monkey community.

I have decided that this book will be sent via email to anyone who requests a copy. It will also be available for free download from the following websites:

http://www.eco-focus.info
http://www.ecofocusnews.com
http://www.save-our-planet.org
http://www.primates-world.net
Chapter 1

Vervet monkeys: Background information

Vervet Monkeys are perhaps the most persecuted and maligned of all the animals in South Africa. However, there are some people who simply love them and devote their whole life to caring for them, rescuing them and providing them with a home in which they can live out the rest of their lives in peace and tranquillity.

Description

Vervet Monkeys belong in a genus of medium-sized primates from the family of Old World monkeys. There are six species currently recognized, although some classify them all as a single species with numerous subspecies. Either way, they make up the entirety of the genus Chlorocebus.

Confusingly, the terms "vervet monkey" and "green monkey" are sometimes used to refer to the whole genus Chlorocebus, even though they also refer more precisely to species Chlorocebus pygerythrus and Chlorocebus sabaues, respectively, neither of which is the type species for Chlorocebus. This publication uses the term Chlorocebus consistently for the genus and the common names only for the species.

The native range of these monkeys is sub-Saharan Africa from Senegal and Ethiopia south to South Africa. However, in previous centuries, a number of them were taken as pets by slavers, and were transported across the Atlantic Ocean to the Caribbean islands, along with the enslaved Africans. The monkeys subsequently escaped or were released and became naturalized. The descendants of those populations are found on the West Indian islands of Barbados, Saint Kitts, Nevis, Anguilla, and Saint Maarten. A colony also exists in Broward County, Florida.

Physical description

The dorsal fur of Chlorocebus monkeys varies by species from pale yellow through grey-green brown to dark brown, while the lower portion and the hair ring around the face is a whitish yellow. The face, hands, and feet are hairless and black, although their abdominal skin is bluish. Males have a blue scrotum and red penis.

The monkeys are sexually dimorphic, wild adult males range from 42 to 60 centimetres (17 to 24 in) and females are 30 to 49.5 cm (12 to 19.5 in), including a tail measuring 30 to 50 cm (12 to 20 in). Males weigh from 3.9 to 8 kg (8.6 to 18 lb) and females weigh from 3.4 to 5.3 kg (7.5 to 12 lb).

Behaviour and habitat

Unlike the closely related guenons, Chlorocebus species are not primarily forest dwellers. Rather, they are semi-arboreal and semi-terrestrial, spending most of the day on the ground feeding and then sleeping at night in the trees. However, they must drink each day and are dependent on water, so they are never far from rivers, springs, dams or lakes. Like most other Old World monkeys, they have cheek pouches for storing food. They are diurnal, and are particularly active in the early morning and in the later afternoon or early evening.
Chlorocebus monkeys live in multiple male/multiple female groups, which can be as large as 76 individuals, although the size of groups has declined in recent years, as have the numbers of the total population. The group hierarchy plays an important role: dominant males and females are given priority in the search for food, and are groomed by subordinate members of the group. They exhibit female philopatry, a social system whereby the females remain in the same home range where they were born, and males leave once sexually mature. These monkeys are territorial animals, and a group can occupy an area of approximately .06 to 1.78 square kilometres (6Ha to 178Ha), (0.023 to 0.69 sq.mi). They use a wide variety of vocalizations. They can warn off members of other groups from their territory, and they can also warn members of their own troop of dangers from predators, using different calls for different predators. Monkeys scream when they are disciplined by members of the troop. Facial expressions and body posturing serve as additional communication tools. Their social interactions are highly complex. Where alliances can be formed for benefit, deception is sometimes used. Physical affection is important between family members.

Chlorocebus monkeys are, along with chimpanzees and baboons, the most omnivorous of the primates. They will eat leaves, gum, seeds, nuts, grasses, fungi, fruit, berries, flowers, buds, shoots, invertebrates, bird eggs, birds, lizards, rodents, and other vertebrate prey. Their preferred foods are fruit and flowers, a seasonal resource that is varied to cope with changes in food availability. They will commonly enter houses to steal food and brightly coloured alcoholic drinks left within sight inside houses. Many people have also found out these monkeys will deliver a powerful bite in self-defence if they are cornered or threatened. They are not aggressive and will only attack in self-defence or in defence of a member of the troop. In Africa, the documented attacks by these monkeys are extremely rare as compared with dog attacks, in spite of living very closely with humans and often being threatened by humans and their dogs.

To signal mating readiness, the female presents her vulva to the male. Since groups are made of several more females than males, each male mates with several females. Generally, the male will display a striking, light-blue scrotal pouch, most prevalent during the mating season. Males do not take part in raising the young, but other females of the group (the “aunties”) share the burden. The dominance hierarchy also comes into play, as the offspring of the more dominant group members get preferential treatment. The gestation time is, according to different observers, about 5.5 to 7 months, and births are typically of a single young. The births usually happen at the beginning of the rainy season in spring, when there is sufficient food available. The young are weaned at about six months of age and are fully mature in four to five years.

Females usually fall pregnant every second year, although some may do so every year.

The life expectancy of the vervet monkeys is 11–13 years in captivity (Silke von Eynern, form the Bambalela Sanctuary estimates a life expectancy of 17 – 25 years in captivity), and about 11 - 17 years in the wild.

Human interaction

Interactions between humans and monkeys are sometimes problematic. Farmers complain about the monkeys damaging their crops, and many try to find ways to keep them at bay.

In Africa, many monkeys are killed by electrocution on powerlines, dogs, vehicles, shooting, poisoning, and hunting, both as a food source and as a source of traditional medicines. Added to this, there is an increase in desertification, and loss of habitat due to agriculture and urbanisation. As a result, the population numbers in troops are declining in both urban and rural areas to an average of between 15 and 25 individuals, with many troops disappearing altogether.

Many humans hate vervet monkeys and inflict horrific injuries on them and also torture them. You can read some of the accounts of inhuman treatment of monkeys in the chapter titled Human ill-treatment of Vervet Monkeys.

Use in scientific research and vaccine production

The African vervet monkey has been the focus of much scientific research since the 1950s, and cell lines derived from its tissues are still used today to produce vaccines for polio and smallpox. Chlorocebus species are also important in studying high blood pressure and AIDS. Unlike most other non-human primates, they naturally develop high blood pressure and simian immunodeficiency virus (SIV), the ancestor of human
immunodeficiency virus (HIV), both of which are widespread throughout wild populations.

Vero cells are a continuous cell line derived from epithelial cells of the African vervet monkey kidney, and are widely used for research in immunology and infectious diseases. Similar cell lines include buffalo green monkey kidney (BGMK) and BS-C-1.

Classification and species

The classification of the Chlorocebus monkeys is undergoing change. They were previously lumped together with the medium-sized arboreal African monkeys of the Cercopithecus genus, the guenons, where they were classified as a single species, Cercopithecus aethiops. More species and subspecies are expected to be identified as scientists study this genus further.

- Genus Chlorocebus
  - Green monkey, Chlorocebus sabaeus
  - Grivet, Chlorocebus aethiops
  - Bale Mountains vervet, Chlorocebus djamdjamensis
  - Tantalus monkey, Chlorocebus tantalus
    - Chlorocebus tantalus tantalus
    - Chlorocebus tantalus budgetti
    - Chlorocebus tantalus marrensis
  - Vervet monkey, Chlorocebus pygerythrus. This is the common South African species.
  - Malbrouck, Chlorocebus cynosuros

References


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Chapter 2

The role that Vervet Monkeys play in Nature

A large number of people are of the opinion that Vervet Monkeys exist only to be a nuisance and make human lives a misery. Nothing could be further from the truth. Vervet Monkeys play an extremely important role in the environment and natural ecosystems as you will discover as you read this chapter.

A prime function of Vervets in the ecology of the area in which they live is the dispersal of seeds which comprise a large portion of the Vervet's diet. They eat the seeds, which then pass through the monkey's digestive system, to be excreted some distance away from where they were originally consumed. These seeds are encased in the monkey's excreta which is a natural fertiliser when they germinate. In a study of the rehabilitation of the mined areas near Richards Bay, it was found that Vervet Monkeys played a major role in ensuring that the indigenous vegetation was re-established in those mined areas where the vegetation had been completely destroyed in the mining process.

The seeds of some plants have a chemical inhibitor in their outer coating and first have to pass through the digestive tract of some bird or animal in order for these chemicals to be broken down by the digestive acids in the stomach so enabling them to germinate. It has been found that seeds collected from the droppings of monkeys and baboons have a far higher germination percentage than those collected from the tree or plant.

Vervet Monkeys fulfil three of the criteria that are necessary for the rehabilitation of disturbed areas:

1. The colonisation of these areas with new indigenous species;
2. Restoration of the biotic state of the affected area; and
3. Ensuring the sustainability of the rehabilitated area. This results from the presence of nuclei from natural forests that provide seed sources and dispersal agents to move the seed into the open areas to be rehabilitated. Vervet Monkeys and birds are ideal dispersal agents.

You can download the full report about the dispersal of seeds in the mined area at Richards Bay from this website: http://www.ceru.up.ac.za/downloads/Seed_dispersal_vervet_monkeys.pdf.

Vervet Monkeys spend a large portion of their time foraging for, and consuming insects, their eggs and larvae. Their time spent digging around, scratching and poking is often rewarded with a tasty morsel which provides the monkey with much needed protein and fat in its diet. They will also jump around in grassy areas to flush out hidden insects so that they can catch them and eat them. Vervets are territorial and soon get to know where to find the most insects and food within that area. One of their favourite foods are flying ants (termite alates) and they will check out known termite colony's holes so that they can catch a large number of the flying ants as they emerge. The highest ranking male will check the best spots and ensure that only he is allowed to catch the emerging alates.
There are some people who are convinced that where vervet monkeys exist in an ecosystem the bird population will be decimated. This is not the true situation. In areas where all species of birds, primates and other species are strictly conserved one will find that there is likely to be both healthy bird and monkey populations. I must stress, however, that vervet monkeys perform a useful role in controlling the populations of birds which nest in colonies, such as weavers and certain finches.

In some areas, particularly in urban and some monoculture regions, finches and weaver birds have become a problem as a direct result of the eradication of Vervet Monkeys from the riverine breeding areas of these birds. Vervet Monkeys relish bird eggs and will decimate finch and weaver nests as they pull them apart to search for the eggs. Research has shown that the Vervet Monkey has been eradicated from those areas where finches and weavers are a problem.

Vervet Monkeys are also good pollination agents. They love the nectar in flowers and feed on them. Having furry coats, the pollen sticks to the hairs and is deposited in the next flower that the monkey visits.

Vervet monkeys jumping through the trees also helps certain trees release their pollen especially those that are wind pollinated.

They also help to aerate and invigorate the trees. By jumping around they break off dead wood and branches thereby helping with improving air circulation and growth.

Monkeys aid with the selective picking of fruit. By moving around on the branches they help knock down fruits that have not formed properly or been pollinated properly. This allows the tree to deliver more energy to the good fruit making it grow bigger, better and healthier.

They form a vital role in insect control eating parts of fruit that has become prematurely ripe due to an insect sting thereby removing the eggs and larvae and preventing further damage.

During the foraging of fruit they also knock down ripe fruit aiding ground feeders the opportunity to eat these delicacies of nature.

As you will realise, Vervet Monkeys are not the destructive, useless creatures that some people think that they are. They are, in fact, vital components in the maintenance of the biodiversity of our delicate ecosystems.
Chapter 3

Social behaviour of vervet monkeys

A vervet monkey troop spends most of its time foraging for food and can roam over an area of about 7 km in radius. In areas where there are many troops, the size of the area in which they forage for food will be less. Because troops are territorial, foraging can become a desperate affair when food is scarce (within a drought-stricken rural area or a city for instance). Raiding homes for food is therefore the most natural thing for a monkey to do - he needs food, you've got it, it's his area - he wants some!

Some people are under the impression that vervets carry fleas, nothing could be further from the truth. Vervets do not carry fleas. This is due to the meticulous grooming habits which occur between troop members. Grooming reaffirms bonds and is a sign of respect and affection.

Vervet monkeys - like all primates - are gregarious animals and have well defined social structures. The highest ranking member, the 'Alpha male' (often mistakenly referred to as the bull), uses his vigilance to protect and defend the troop. It is he who you most often hear 'barking' in the distance, signalling a threat and notifying neighbouring troops that he is in charge.

The Alpha is the only male in the troop who is allowed to mate with his 'harem' of sexually mature females. However, other males will also mate with females if given the chance, but the Alpha male defends this right very fiercely. Other adult males are allowed to remain under his protection as long as they appear to make no advances toward the females. Lower ranking males will humbly comply because they realise the benefit of safety in numbers.

The troop also has a second-in-command, or a scout in the form of the 'Beta male'. His task is to search for sources of food as well as to warn the troop of impending danger. Many people have seen the Beta male and believed him to be a lone outcast. Without knowledge of the important function he plays in his troop, some people have often resorted to wrongfully shooting him and thereby disturbing the troop's social structure.

The 'harem' of adult females as well as the juveniles are governed by an 'Alpha female' and a few assistants. She is usually responsible for sorting out 'domestic' disputes which occur in the troop. This she does with an intimidating stare with raised eyebrows and a show of teeth. In some cases the reprimand consists of a sharp pull and nip of the miscreant's tail.

The knowledge of the troop is carried around by the females because they know where the food and water sources are and which areas to visit for ripe fruit and they are the ones who defend their territory - The male is the protector and will defend the troop with his life, if born in a troop he will only remain until the age of 5 or 6 and then move on to find a new troop after that he will migrate to other troops every 2 years to prevent in breeding.

Juveniles reach sexual maturity at the age of 4 years. Females give birth to live young after a 5.5 month gestation period. Mothers are fiercely protective of their young, in spite of the fact that the rest of the troop constantly wish to shower the infants with affection.
Note: The actual gestation period seems to vary according to different observers. Shesh Roberts of the Tumbili Primate Sanctuary in KwaZulu-Natal has reported a gestation period, in captivity, of 7 months from copulation to birth of the baby. Other observers such as Dave du Toit of the Vervet Monkey Foundation report a gestation period of 5.5 months.

The majority of infants are born in early spring (September/October). Much of the gestation period occurs over the winter months which, due to food scarcity, is usually a very stressful time for expectant mothers.

The actual birth of a Vervet usually occurs at night or in the early hours of the morning. Video footage of a live birth has revealed that expectant mothers suffer all the same symptoms of labour as humans do - from the diarrhoea prior to, through to the process of severing the umbilical cord after labour. A 'midwife', usually the mother's teenage daughter, is present throughout to assist with the birth itself, as well as to clean up and discard the afterbirth.

After 2 or 3 weeks, mothers relax their guard somewhat and allow themselves to be groomed. While this is taking place babies are often taken from their mother's arms by over-eager juvenile nannies who wish to rehearse the roles they will be playing in the coming months as the infants learn to become more independent. Such behaviour is often associated with high pitched squeals from the babies who are searching for their mother's reassuring embrace. There is also a lot of interaction between the male monkeys in the troop and the babies.

As time passes babies become increasingly inquisitive of their surroundings and spend more time away from their mothers, choosing instead to join their cousins in climbing the branches on their own. The nannies play an important role in looking after the mischievous children. When reassurance is sought, a squeal will always bring the mother to the rescue.

Through watching and playing with the juveniles, babies learn a great deal about being a monkey. Some of these lessons include finding out which fruits are edible and what action to take when danger is spotted. Depriving orphan babies (e.g. a single pet) of the opportunity to interact with older monkeys causes irreparable psychological damage. Rehabilitation of such monkeys is extremely difficult.

Young monkeys love chasing each other playing a type of "catches" game. When young human children run away from monkeys it is usually the young monkeys that run after them as part of a "catches" game.

Depending on the individual monkey personalities, swimming may form part of their normal behaviour. This phenomenon is well documented among other primates as well.

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Chapter 4

Human ill-treatment of Vervet Monkeys

Vervet monkeys are having a very hard time of it. It’s bad enough, from their perspective, that humans have moved into their areas, but as we humans introduce more security measures and are increasingly intolerant of the presence of their troops, they suffer increasingly cruel human-related injuries and deaths especially in urban areas.

Steve Smit was previously an intelligence agent for national security and later an estate agent. Carol Booth was a teacher. Both gave up their day jobs and now work to help the much-maligned monkeys of Durban and Pietermaritzburg and surrounds, and anywhere else where they are needed. Most of their monkey rescues take place in urban and peri-urban areas.

According to Steve Smit, Monkey Helpline, which they run, receives far too many calls from people who have found monkeys that have been shot with pellet guns and says that if, out of every 100 homes in a suburb, only one person is using a pellet gun on monkeys and other animals, this has a devastating effect.

He cited a recent case in Chase Valley, Pietermaritzburg in KZN, where a mother monkey had been shot with a shower of pellets. One entered and exited her body and then struck her five-week-old baby (which was left clinging to her dead body for days before they rescued it) in the face.

“The mother died an agonising death. We often find some monkeys with 10 to 15 pellets in their bodies.”

Monkeys can linger in agony for up to two weeks before dying when they are shot with pellets. Over 80% of monkeys rescued by the Monkey Helpline for whatever reason, are found to have pellets from pellet guns lodged in their bodies. Pregnant mothers with dead babies in their wombs have been encountered, with X-rays showing they had been shot with pellet guns and the unborn baby had actually been killed by the pellets.

This, despite the fact that the Firearm Control Act makes it a criminal offence to discharge an airgun, or any other firearm or crossbow, in a built-up area or public place, without good reason to do so. In terms of the Animal Protection Act and the provincial conservation ordinance, it is an offence to shoot and injure monkeys, and Steve Smit encourages people to report those who do so to the authorities or to him.

Carol Booth and Steve Smit have nursed and rehabilitated hundreds of vervets, taking them into their home to do so, but they have also had monkeys die in their arms. Their scorn of people who shoot pellet guns at monkeys or poison them is understandable when they relay stories of the suffering that these creatures had to endure.

Power lines, electric fences, razor wire, jagged glass-topped walls and palisade fences also endanger the vervet monkey population.

“Burns from power lines and transformers are all too frequent. They get a massive shock, then fall down many metres and if they survive they die a lingering death as the shocked limb, or limbs, decay and toxic infection sets in. Many survive the electrocution but lose one or even two limbs.”

This beautiful young female Vervet monkey was shot and killed with a pellet gun after being knocked from a garden wall by a stone thrown at her by a construction worker who wanted to eat her. The owner of the house walked up to the disabled and screaming monkey and shot her. Charges have been laid in terms of both the Firearm Control Act and the Animal Protection Act.

Photo: Monkey Helpline

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This adult male vervet was shot through the abdomen with an arrow. When he was rescued he had been suffering for a few days and had to be euthanased. People shooting monkeys with bows, cross-bows and airguns cause their victims to suffer in pain and often these monkeys die of infections caused by their wounds and are never found.

Photo: Monkey Helpline.
Steve says that roads are also a major threat to monkeys, with fatal injuries from cars an all too common occurrence. They are forced to cross busy roads countless times each day as they move around their territory.

“Dogs cause huge problems for them too. Monkeys really are suffering and need our help.”

Steve recoils in horror when speaking of the effects of poison on monkeys. He cites a case in Hilton, KZN, where a woman allegedly laced a banana with Temic poison to kill monkeys, but it was instead eaten by a man who later died.

“That person died because of her intolerance. It is cruel and vindictive. She must be firmly dealt with by the law, so much so that it sends a clear message to any person contemplating the use of poison.”

Carol Booth says that it is often people who are wealthy enough to implement other measures or who should be educated enough to realise that poison has a ripple effect, who lay out poison for monkeys.

“If a monkey eats poison and dies, its body may be eaten by a Crowed Eagle, which will also then die. Or a pet dog, perhaps belonging to the person who set out the poison, may come along and chew on the monkey’s carcass and die.”

There are massive misconceptions about monkeys, which lead to irritation and anger and because of this only one out of four monkeys that are born actually make it to adulthood, says Carol Booth.

“People say that monkeys are breeding out of control and that their populations are increasing because their so-called natural predators have been eradicated. It’s simply not true. Humans have introduced power lines, vehicles, pellet guns and firearms, vicious dogs, poison, snares, traps and razor wire that are non-selective and far more lethal. We rescue an average of three or more monkeys every day.

“No population can sustain such high losses. Urban monkeys could be extinct by the time our children reach adulthood. Almost all the troops that we monitor are slowly decreasing in size from one year to the next.”

Smit says that despite the perceptions people have of monkeys invading our gardens, we humans in fact have invaded their territory.

Smit says that the Monkey Helpline often gets calls from people wanting them to relocate troops elsewhere. “We can’t just dump them somewhere else. Troops are territorial and it’s very difficult to find a suitable place which is not already occupied by another troop.”

Smit lambastes those responsible for the torment that monkeys face, from homeowners to conservation authorities, farmers and even bird lovers and school children with pellet guns.

“They are the minority of society, but their impact on monkeys is enormous.”
Chapter 5

Answering people’s misconceptions about monkeys

“Commercial farmers are experiencing considerable damage to their sugar cane crops by monkeys, bushpigs and warthogs”

Monkeys may feed on sugar cane as they roam through their territory foraging for food, however it is extremely doubtful whether they would cause “considerable damage” to the sugar cane as it does not fully satisfy their dietary requirements and would, in any case, cause them to suffer from upset stomachs if they were to eat large quantities of it. It is far more likely that the “considerable damage” is the result of bushpigs, warthogs and porcupines.

Should the cane be infested with the *Eldana saccharina* borer larvae, monkeys may tear the cane open in order to eat the borer grubs which they are likely to relish as insects and insect larvae form a large part of vervet monkey’s diet.

“I farm sugar cane and when I first bought my farm birds were plentiful, however, now that monkeys regularly visit my garden most of the birds have disappeared.”

If this farmer is typical of the average sugar farmer he has, most probably, cleared his land of all its natural vegetation and planted it all to sugar cane, thereby creating a green desert which is devoid of almost all life other than a few cane rats, mice and snakes. Sugar cane lands are not a suitable habitat for birds, or monkeys for that matter, and they will look elsewhere for suitable places in which to live, roost and feed. In order to prevent the total displacement of birdlife, corridors, at least 150m wide should be established in a connected network to allow birds and other wildlife to move through the property and to provide them with shelter, breeding areas and food. Birds, and other forms of wildlife will not live in areas where they do not have suitable natural habitats in which to live, feed and migrate.

Furthermore, in order to protect his crop of sugar cane from the ravages of the *Eldana saccharina* borer, he most probably sprays his lands, either from the air, or using backpack sprayers with insecticides which are not selective and are persistent (despite the claims of manufacturers to the contrary) in the soil and on all plants that receive the mist. Birds eat the killed insects and this causes them to either die or cause them to store the poisons in their fatty tissue. These stored poisons are then passed on to their offspring in even more concentrated doses causing them to either be infertile or for their offspring to die in their eggs or shortly after hatching. This cycle causes a local extinction of most bird life.

The disappearance of the birds is not due to the monkeys but due to the farmer’s own actions in destroying all natural vegetation except for a few exotic trees and shrubs in his garden which do nothing to attract indigenous birds.

Loss of wildlife habitat and fragmentation due to human development are the leading causes of declining bird populations.

However, scientists now list invasive species, including cats, as the second most serious threat to bird populations worldwide. Habitat fragmentation provides cats and other predators easier access to wildlife forced to live on smaller tracts of land. Rather than havens for wildlife, these areas can be death traps.

“The growing numbers of vervet monkeys is due to people feeding them and this causes them to breed three or four times a year.”

Feeding monkeys does not cause them to become more fertile and to “breed three or four times a year”. Monkeys only have one baby at a time and give birth during spring when the natural food supply starts to grow. Artificial feeding will only provide them with the nourishment that they require and will tend to keep them close to the source of food. Furthermore, monkeys are extremely territorial and only one troop will occupy a particular area. If another troop tries to enter another’s territory a fight will ensue.
Recent counts of monkeys in troops indicate that the number of monkeys is not growing at all. In fact, the size of troops is actually decreasing in most areas due to members being shot, killed in motor vehicle accidents, trapped for human consumption and the “muthi” trade, electrocutions on ESKOM power lines, being savaged by domestic dogs and the natural hazards that they face on a daily basis such as being eaten by leopards, jackal, caracal and eagles. They are also being displaced from their territories due to urban expansion, and the clearing of lands for agricultural crops.

The only primate that is breeding out of control is humans. We have reached over 7 billion and are responsible for deforestation, habitat loss, pollution, over breeding, global warming and we have the audacity to continue blaming animals.

It is time we started facing facts - the wildlife is not increasing it is decreasing at a rapid rate and if we do not start showing a bit of concern for our environment and appreciation for what is left we soon won't have any, so maybe we should be asking what have we done to make this a better place for us all.

People say monkeys are breeding out of control but it is just because they see babies being born and think there are more and more each year, however monkeys only have one baby, every second year and 70% of them do not make it to adulthood.

"We used to hear a large number of bushbabies at night but these primates have disappeared due to monkeys eating their babies.”

Bushbabies such as the Thick Tailed Bushbaby which occurs in KZN normally breed in hollow tree trunks such as Syringas. The entrance hole is usually too small for vervet monkeys to enter. Other nesting places are in thick creepers which may be covering trees. These creepers are usually alien invader plants such as the Balloon Vine which may have been eradicated as part of the government sponsored alien clearing campaign. If both Syringas and alien vines have been cleared from a farm this may have caused the bushbabies to leave the area and seek shelter elsewhere.

In areas where monkeys abound it has been found that, where conditions are right, bushbabies also continue to live and thrive.

Another factor that as to be taken into account is the use of insecticides and herbicides in their habitats. There are no “safe” insecticides or herbicides – both poison insects which form part of bushbabies diets and both can cause infertility problems and the local extinction of these delightful little primates. Recent research has found that herbicides such as Roundup (glyphosate) can also cause cancers in animals coming into contact with the spray.

Bushbabies do not call throughout the year and not hearing their cries does not mean that they are not there. They only move out of their hiding places at night from half an hour after sunset to an our or so before sunrise. So, seeing one is extremely rare unless one is looking for them at night with a bright light.

“Monkeys should be killed because they are aggressive.”

Monkeys are not aggressive creatures, however aggression begets aggression . . . every cornered animal is dangerous, whether it be a vervet monkey, an antelope, or a domestic dog. Instinctively, with vervet monkeys, flight is preferred to fight but it is also instinctive for an animal to protect his own. During the breeding season when mothers are carrying their young babies, the monkeys will be a lot more nervous than normal and aggression can be invoked far more quickly. The troop are only acting to protect their babies. Who would want it any other way! However, most of what people interpret as “aggression” is actually a game of “bluff” where the monkeys will make “aggressive” noises and make mock charges at the person or animal threatening them.

Monkeys do not go out of their way to bite humans, but give warning postures and vocalisations to scare people away if they feel threatened. Its the same with a scared dog, it will growl and show its teeth but its main objective is to get away.

Remember that in the animal world, sudden movement is interpreted as an indication of attack, a show of teeth in a grimace is a sign of aggression, direct eye contact with the raising and lowering of the eyebrows is a challenge - be aware of your own body language when approaching any wild animal!
Wounds which vervet monkeys receive from fights and skirmishes are part of the natural course of events and people should not interfere - allow nature to take its course.

“Monkeys are dirty and carry rabies and are therefore a danger to humans and pets.”

As far as can be established, not a single case of rabies in a wild vervet monkey has ever been confirmed or even reported. Monkeys, like all warm-blooded animals, are capable of contracting the rabies virus if bitten by an infected animal (just like you or your dog!) but it is certainly not true that the virus is rampant among wild vervet populations! Being primates, just like us humans, if monkeys contract rabies they die and do not pass it on to other species. And monkeys are very meticulous groomers – so they're not dirty and do not carry fleas or ticks.

“Vervet monkeys are breeding out of control and their numbers are increasing rapidly.”

This is completely false! In fact, the opposite is true.

Thirty to forty years ago the common size of monkey troops was close to 100 animals, however, nowadays one seldom comes across a troop with more than thirty animals, usually less. This is due to the fact that their numbers have been drastically reduced through them being shot, attacked by domestic dogs, poisoned, and by being captured for scientific experiments. Furthermore, their natural habitats, and hence their food supply, are being destroyed through property developments for human residential, industrial and agricultural purposes.

Vervet monkeys only breed once a year in early spring and each mature female will only give birth to a single baby. The reason that people are observing more monkeys is because of the loss and transformation of their natural habitat for urban and agricultural developments. In urban areas they are spending more time around houses.

We must try to educate people on how to live with our wildlife.

It is simply not an option to eradicate everything that we think is giving us problems, killing these creatures also damages the ecosystem.

Be aware of what is around you, enjoy it and regard it as something special and unique.

We should be promoting how fortunate we are to live in an area which contains these wonderful creatures.

We should also start having a look at finding ways to preserve some of their habitat. Take the time to study the troops in your area, get children involved in trying to count how many there are, how many males and females, juveniles, etc.

We should note what time of day they visit and once you get to know them they will be easier to live with and you will have a better understanding of this fantastic animal we call a vervet.

There are far more positives than negatives of living near wildlife, people just need to change their perception and take time to enjoy rather than accuse them.

Humans are not the only species on this planet and we are all part of the wonderful web of life.

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Chapter 6

Some stories of the cruelty inflicted on vervet monkeys

Daily reports are received by the Save Our Planet Network about the wanton cruelty that is inflicted on vervet monkeys and other primates in South Africa. Some of the cruel treatment that these highly intelligent animals suffer is at the hands of people who are driven by superstition, but the vast majority of the cruelty is inflicted by so-called "civilised" people who hate monkeys being in their area. Here are some of the stories:

Monkey burned to death by superstitious mob

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa — Animal welfare groups in South Africa have condemned the “barbaric” killing of a vervet monkey by a mob of township residents who said it was a talking witch.

The monkey was beaten, pelted with stones, shot at and then doused with petrol and burned to death in Kagiso near Johannesburg, by residents chanting “Kill that witch!” reports South Africa’s Star newspaper.

The vervet monkey had reportedly wandered into the township after becoming separated from its troop. Residents said the monkey had been going around Kagiso “talking to people,” and believed it was linked to witchcraft and would bring them bad luck.

They pelted the monkey with stones, and the monkey fled into a tree but was pulled down, put in a bucket and doused with petrol.

Kagiso resident Tebogo Moswetsi confessed that he climbed the tree and grabbed the monkey.

"I was curious to see this monkey that people claimed could talk, and when I saw a group of people chasing after it, I joined them," he said. "When it went up the tree, I climbed after it and brought it down because I was curious as I found it unbelievable that a monkey could talk.

"I feel guilty. I shouldn't have taken it down from that tree. I dropped it down after someone poured petrol on it. I had no choice," Moswetsi said. "Someone struck a match. The monkey got out of the bucket and dropped down dead. They continued throwing stones at it."

Baby vervet monkey violently assaulted by pellet gun wielding man

This report, from Monkey Helpline, deals with a ten week-old baby Vervet Monkey, Ginger, who was violently assaulted by a pellet gun-wielding psychopath in Hillcrest, KZN.

This is an extract from an article about the incident, written by Carol Booth and Steve Smit, and sent to the community newspapers, Highway Mail and Hilltop.

Monkey Helpline’s Carol Booth has expressed outrage at the cowardly shooting of a baby monkey in Hillcrest this week.

"On Saturday morning we received a call from a concerned resident of Surprise Ridge, Hillcrest, to tell us about a tiny monkey foraging alone in his garden. He said that the monkey was struggling to walk because of wounds clearly visible on both an arm and a leg. Initially we believed that the baby monkey, a girl, had been injured during skirmishes between monkeys, but closer inspection at the vet revealed what looked suspiciously like a pellet wound in the monkey’s right side. X-rays confirmed that the monkey had been shot twice with a pellet gun. One pellet was lodged in her
lower abdomen, and the other in her left thigh."

Steve Smit Monkey Helpline coordinator has made an impassioned plea to the public to immediately report anyone they know or suspect of shooting at monkeys, or any other animal, with a pellet gun.

"Anyone discharging a pellet gun in a built up area or anywhere else where there is a risk of injury or damage to another person or property is committing an offence and can be prosecuted in terms of the Firearm Control Act, and in many cases also the Animal Protection Act," said Smit. "We rely heavily on the public to help us stop this cruelty and to bring these criminals to book. The cruel and cowardly behaviour of a person who would maliciously shoot two pellets into a ten week-old baby monkey is a danger to everyone who lives around him or her. We need to eliminate the danger these people pose to our safety including that of our children and our pets."

Imagine for a moment, if you can, the terrible shock, pain and fear she must have felt when first one, then two, blunt-ended lead pellets smashed viciously into her frail little body. All alone, without the protection and comfort of her mother and siblings, she had to try and follow the route her troop had moved along, the excruciating pain in her abdomen and leg almost too much to bear. As infection set in she was getting weaker by the hour, this exacerbated by thirst and hunger because she was not getting the nutrition of mother's milk. And she must have been terribly confused and frightened by all the challenges she suddenly had to face on her own as well as being handicapped by her injuries.

**Another incident involving the shooting of a monkey with a pellet gun**

A few days after this incident, Monkey Helpline was called out to Redhill, Durban North to rescue another small monkey who had, according to the caller, been bitten by his dog. "We arrived to find a one year old little female Vervet who was hardly able to move, with numerous old injuries on her back and legs", said Carol. "These appeared to be the result of monkey bites and were of such a nature that the monkey would not have been able to escape from a dog should such an attack have occurred, as the caller said it had. As soon as I picked up the monkey I could see that she had been shot into her head with a lead pellet from a pellet gun. The shooter must have shot her as she sat on the ground, because as an x-ray later revealed, the pellet had entered just below her right temple and travelled downward along the inside of her skull, finally lodging up against the skull at the right back of her brain. In her already injured state the little monkey was helpless and must have sat terrified as the shooter approached her, took aim and fired the pellet into her head".

The little monkey was taken to Dr Kerry Easson at Riverside Vet in Durban North where she was treated and then taken to the Monkey Helpline "high care" where she is being cared for whilst under observation to see how she responds to the effects of the pellet in her brain.

Monkey Helpline has launched an international campaign to get the private ownership of air guns banned in South Africa. For more information on this campaign or to report shooters, contact Monkey Helpline on 082 659 4711 or 082 411 5444, or on steve@animalrightsafrica.org or carol@animalrightsafrica.org .

**Veterinarian accused of cruelty to vervet monkey**

JOHANNESBURG – A vervet monkey was discovered by NSPCA inspectors in Springs, Gauteng, which had been operated on by a veterinarian and then kept chained in the bedroom by a second vet.
NSPCA spokesman Jaco Pieterse said one of the vets, from Springs, apparently operated for unknown reasons on the stomach of the small, black-faced monkey. He allegedly amputated the two back limbs and a front forearm and then kept the animal alive.

An independent veterinarian described the operation as "a butcher's job".

The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals said it would lay criminal charges against the vet in terms of the Animals Protection Act.

Charges would also be laid against a second vet, who allegedly kept the monkey in a bedroom. The two had been reported to the SA Veterinary Council.

Pieterse said that when officials went to remove the monkey from the vet's premises, they found it chained by the remaining limb in a cage.

"[The monkey's] quality of life was so compromised that it was deemed cruel to keep her alive... the Vervet monkey was humanely euthanised and her body has been sent for a post-mortem examination," Pieterse said.

Killing of a monkey by UKZN students

Cruelty to vervet monkeys is carried out at all levels of society. In the following incident it involved students from an institution of higher learning, the University of KZN.

On the 18th of September 2011, the killing of a monkey on the Howard campus was reported. Witnesses reported seeing four of five male students trapping a monkey inside a communal kitchen inside one of the campuses halls of residence. The students were alleged to have started beating the animal with a stick, continuing to do so until they thought it was dead. Witnesses said the animal then began to crawl away with a broken spine, the students were alleged to have continued hitting the monkey until it was dead. One witness said 'monkey was screaming so loudly that it could be heard inside some of the residence blocks'.

The incident lead to a 'national outcry' and protests at the entrances of the Westville and Howard campuses. The protesters demanded that brutality against animals to stop at the university and that the university bring justice to those to have committed the alleged killing. A similar incident in 2005, involved students cooking a cat alive in a microwave further aggravated the situation, as this was seen as a further example of animal cruelty by students of UKZN. The university was smashed for turning a 'blind eye' to animal cruelty and the university was criticised for not disciplining the alleged culprits.

The University reported that the perpetrators claimed that they were "unaware that beating the monkey constituted cruelty to animals". There was also uncertainty about whether the monkey was killed or not but students at the university who witnessed the incident were adamant that the monkey was in fact dead when the beatings stopped, and stated that the perpetrators were "obviously denying that they killed it".

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The above incident is not an isolated one. A man from La Lucia phoned the Primates Africa call centre to report that he had battered a monkey to death with a broomstick after trapping it in his bathroom. He wanted them to send someone to fetch the body.

Vervet monkey shot in face with airgun

A primatologist from Riverside Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre was contacted by a resident of Modjadjiskloof to help another wounded vervet monkey.
According to Bob Venter, a primatologist from Riverside Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre, the resident said that the he spotted the monkey two days ago. The vervet sat in a tree at his house without moving for two days. On inspection the resident found that the monkey was blind in his right eye and did not want to move. The resident gave the primate some food on a stick that was consumed immediately. The monkey clearly had no sight.

The animal was presumably shot by a young boy that received an air rifle (pellet gun) as a gift a few weeks ago. The boy has been spotted in the vicinity with the firearm according to the resident.

Venter took the monkey to Dr Pieter Cordier, a local vet at Tzaneen Animal Clinic for x-rays. The x-rays indicate that the monkey had been shot in the right eye and that the pellet was lodged in its brain.

The vervet had to be put down by Dr Cordier to relieve it from its suffering.

Venter, president of the South African Wildlife Rehabilitation Board, would like to appeal to the public after recent events, to reflect on their actions and consider the horrendous acts of animal cruelty committed.

Venter says, 'Local laws clearly state that no person is allowed to discharge an air-rifle or any other firearm in a residential area. It is illegal and big fines are involved.'

'The vervet monkey is listed as a protected species and the consequences of shooting these animals without a permit is a R 25 000 fine, jailtime or both,' says Venter.

Venter has been appointed as wildlife inspector by local chief magistrate, James Norval, and he will not hesitate to act against those who disobey the laws.

These specific incidents of animal cruelty cost rehabilitation centres like Riverside Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre and the Vervet Monkey Foundation tens of thousands of Rands every month in veterinary fees for x-rays, treatment and sadly euthanisations.

These are non-profit and non-government organisations that do not receive funding from the state.

**Baby Vervet Monkey shot repeatedly with air rifle**

AN eight-month-old baby vervet monkey was rescued by the Vervet Monkey Foundation, in Tzaneen, after being shot at least three times with an air rifle on September 17.

The young female named Jarvis has a pellet in her leg causing a permanent limp and two others in her abdomen that luckily did not damage her vital organs.

Two incidents have been reported to the Foundation in the Aqua Park residential area in Tzaneen in the last month.

'What people don’t realise is that this causes long term suffering for the animal and is extremely cruel,’ said Dave du Toit, founder and chairman of the Vervet Monkey Foundation.

Lead poisoning is a big concern for Du Toit as the pellets cannot be removed from Jarvis’ body.

A second vervet monkey, a large male, was repeatedly shot with an air rifle in Aqua Park. A pellet was lodged in his spine causing paralysis. The incident was reported to the Foundation on October 13 and sadly the animal had to be euthanised.

‘The problem is that the culprits will not hesitate to shoot other pets if they become a so-called nuisance,’ says Du Toit.
Apart from the cruelty, it is also illegal to discharge an air rifle or any other firearm in a residential area in South Africa.

'We live in a rainforest area and vervet monkeys are a part of the indigenous wildlife that occur here. We cannot tell monkeys not to visit houses and residential areas and there is a lot of indigenous bush and trees in Tzaneen which is their habitat but people can change some things to accommodate the wildlife,' said Du Toit.

**Gut-shot monkey found in stable**

On the evening of 17 November 2012, Marc Webber from Manderston found a weak vervet monkey lying huddled in the corner of their horse stable. Being a person who loves and cares for monkeys, Marc picked the emaciated monkey up and examined it. The monkey, at this stage was extremely weak and offered no resistance. Marc examined the poor creature and found that it had been shot in the stomach with a small calibre rifle.

Marc and his wife, Carina, took the monkey to Shesh and Malcom Roberts at the Tumbili Primate Sanctuary where Malcom, a dentist, examined it and administered an inter-muscular pain-killer and a strong antibiotic injection.

Gunshot wounds to the stomach are nearly always fatal, and in this case, this proved to be true as the poor monkey passed away in the early hours of the morning.

According to Carina, she has been having trouble with a neighbour who had threatened to shoot all of the monkeys in the troop. She had laid criminal charges against him but the Camperdown Police Service never took any action.

The shooting of vervet monkeys with small calibre firearms is an offence in terms of the provincial Nature Conservation Ordinance which specifies that only firearms with a calibre of greater than .22 may be used. In addition a permit is required for a landowner to hunt any protected animal on his land. In KwaZulu-Natal all wild animals are classified as being protected. Its a pity that the authorities don’t enforce these laws.
Chapter 7

The keeping, rehabilitation and release of Vervet Monkeys back into the wild.

At the outset it should be realised that those people who have, or want to, become rescuers, rehabilitators and conservationists of our Vervet Monkeys – or any other species of our wildlife – must possess special qualities. They must, above all else be compassionate, loving, physically and mentally strong, and be prepared to forgo many of the pleasures that so many people indulge in. Rescuing, healing, rehabilitating and caring for Vervets is a full-time job that has to be practised 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and 365 days a year. It is not for the faint-hearted – those who enter this world will have to face many situations and make many soul-destroying decisions that can cause considerable mental anguish.

Legal issues

Rehabilitation centres and the work and facilities that are involved must comply with certain legal procedures, norms and standards as legislated in the different provinces in South Africa. These differ from province to province but all contain some basic requirements.

Firstly, all rehabilitation centres require permits and/or licences to operate. These can be obtained from the provincial nature conservation authority in the province. Contact details are given in the Appendix.

Secondly, cages, enclosures, etc must conform to certain sizes and standards as specified in the norms and standards that have been drawn up by the provincial nature conservation authority.

Thirdly, meticulous records must be kept of all rescues, animals in captivity, cages and enclosures, euthanasias, and releases of monkeys back into the wild. Some provinces require separate permits for the capture, transport, keeping and release of each animal – check with your provincial nature conservation permit office for what is required in your province.

Establishment of rehabilitation facilities

The procedures and rehabilitation of vervet monkeys differs between the different rehabilitation centres throughout South Africa. However, it should be borne in mind that, whatever method is used, it should always be ethical and in the best interest of the casualty or orphan.

The availability of adequate financing always plays a major role in rescue and rehabilitation operations. Veterinary and medical costs increase by the day, as does the price of food, and construction materials. So, the best option for the specific case should be applied.

You should not even contemplate the setting up of a rehabilitation facility unless you either have sufficient financial resources to do so or have access to such funding. The construction of the facility is only a small part of the costs and the greater portion of the costs can cost tens of thousands of rands each month for food, veterinary and medical expenses, transport, staff, and maintenance.

Situation

The situation of rehabilitation centres should, preferably be in an area which is similar to the natural habitat where the monkeys came from. Rehabilitation centres should not be built in small urban backyards. If built in urban areas the yards should be large and the cages should be shielded from neighbours by dense vegetation to block out the noises and calls of the monkeys, in addition to creating a natural “feel” for the monkeys. In addition, rehabilitation facilities must be kept away from trafficked areas to prevent the monkeys from being harassed and becoming too used to human presence.

Resources

Depending on the financial capabilities of the rehabilitator, a number of physical resources are required. If one of the aims of the centre is the rescue of orphaned and injured monkeys, the following facilities are
High care cages in an enclosed area such as a bedroom, garage or shed. These will be used for housing baby monkeys and for keeping injured monkeys in until their wounds have healed sufficiently for them to be released into larger outdoor cages. These cages should be large enough to allow the monkeys room to exercise and small enough to enable them to be caught for feeding and nursing. There should also be an adjoining surgery and medicine storage room where veterinary procedures can be carried out, wound dressings can be applied and changed, and medicines and other first-aid supplies can be stored. A suitable, easy to clean, examination table and sufficient lighting should be provided.

A number of large outdoor cages should be situated a fair distance away from the main living quarters. These are where recovering monkeys will live until they are ready to be released back into the wild. The provincial norms and standards give the minimum sizes that these cages should conform to. In any case they should be large enough to allow the monkeys sufficient room to climb and play and to socialise with other monkeys who are also awaiting reintroduction to the wild. It must be stressed that monkeys, or any other normally wild creature, should not be kept caged for longer than is absolutely necessary keeping them caged seriously affects their whole psychological development. It should be borne in mind that the larger the cage is, the better for the welfare of the monkeys. A cage approximately 5m wide, 5m long and 5m high will most probably suffice for a small troop of monkeys. The entrance to the cage should be via a “trap” cage with separate doors for entering the trap and for entering the cage. This will prevent any monkeys from sneaking past the carer and escaping.

The cages should contain items which will provide mental and physical stimulation for the monkeys. These can be in the form of rope ladders, ropes dangling from the roof, hollow logs with holes in which food tit-bits can be hidden, hammocks made from strong shade cloth, and so on. Before building your own cages and enclosures visit successful rehabilitation centres in your province to see what they are doing for the monkey's stimulation.

If space allows, a large fenced enclosure should be available where monkeys can live as close to nature as possible. This enclosure should be fenced with a high wire mesh fence, topped with a few strands of electrified wire to prevent the monkeys from escaping into the surrounding neighbourhood. The mesh fence should be at least 1,8m high with electrified strands, 50mm apart, to a total height of 2.5m above it. The strand's electrical polarity should alternately positive and negative. At the Vervet Monkey Foundation the enclosure fence consists of a 600mm high mesh panel at the bottom and electric fencing spaced 50mm apart above with total height of the fence being 2.5m. No trees or high poles should be near the fence to prevent monkeys from jumping over it. The electric fencing power unit should have battery back-up in case of mains power failure which are all to common in South Africa today. As with the holding cages, the enclosures should also be fitted with double entrance trap gates to prevent the monkeys from escaping.

The fenced enclosure should have natural vegetation growing in it consisting of trees, shrubs, undergrowth, grass, etc. to give the enclosure a natural feel for the monkeys. Shelters, in the form of plastic “igloos”, dog kennels, box shelters, etc, should be mounted in the trees for the monkeys to sleep, and take shelter from the weather, in. The entrances to these shelters should face away from the prevailing winds and weather.

It is important that cages, enclosures, etc are constructed of good quality, strong wire mesh, large diameter preserved poles (CCA treated poles last longer than creosote poles), doors must be fitted with heavy-duty hinges and lockable barrel bolts. Where possible, all metal parts and wire must be heavy galvanized so that rust does not deteriorate the strength of the structures.

Overcrowding of cages should be avoided at all costs in order to avoid health problems and fights.

**Care of captive monkeys**

The most important requirement in the care of any captive animals is that their quarters should be kept clean and as free of excreta as possible. The sweeping up of excreta and old food should be a daily morning chore. Excreta and old food lying around attracts flies and can cause disease breakouts among the monkeys. In order to make the cleaning up of excreta and old food easier, the floors of the cages should be covered with a good layer of clean river, or sea sand.

Just as important as the cleaning of the cages is, is the serving of the monkey's food in clean dishes or bowls. In this regard stainless steel bowls should be used as they are easy to clean and sterilize daily. Dirty
bowls can cause mould and fungi to breed which is unhealthy.

The aim of any rehabilitator should be to be able to release the monkeys back into the wild as soon as possible. This means that human contact should be kept to a minimum. Monkeys which have bonded to humans are extremely difficult to return to the wild as they will often seek human company and habitation and this could result in them becoming problem animals and lead to them having to be put down. Remember, vervet monkeys should be returned to the place where they belong – in the wild where they can socialise with others of their own species, not with humans.

The food that is fed to captive monkeys should be of high quality and a varied diet should be supplied. This can be very expensive and should consist of a mix of fruit, vegetables and insects. Cooked fruit and vegetables should be avoided as this could result in them raiding kitchens and pantries when they are eventually released into the wild. The following are suitable foods for captive monkeys:

**Fruits:** All fruits are suitable and they relish the following fruits; apples, pears, citrus (oranges, naartjies, manderines), bananas, paw-paws, lychees, etc.

**Vegetables:** Monkeys enjoy the following vegetables; carrots, avocado pears, cabbages, green beans, peas (in the pod).

**Nuts:** Peanuts (in the shell), cashews, etc.

**Insects:** Insects are a valuable source of nutrition and meal worms can be bred to provide a stimulus when they are hidden in hollow logs for the monkeys to find. Flying ants are also relished and they can be attracted to fall into a large container under an outside light when they leave their colonies during November and December each year. They supply the monkeys with much needed fats and protein. Crickets, ordinary grasshoppers, maize stalk borers are also enjoyed.

Fruit and vegetables should be cut up into fairly large pieces. A number of feeding bowls of food should be provided in each cage or enclosure to prevent fighting and domination of lower ranked animals by the higher ranked ones.

The captive monkeys should be observed every day so that sick or injured animals can be detected timeously and removed to the high care facility for treatment.

**Release of vervet monkeys back into the wild**

**Note:** According to some provincial ordinances and regulations it is illegal to release any animal into the wild without obtaining a release permit from the relevant nature conservation authority. The contact details of the various conservation authorities can be found in the Appendix section of this book.

No monkey or other wild animal or bird should be kept in captivity for longer than is absolutely necessary. However, there are some cases where captive animals cannot be released into the wild. Some of these cases are:

- The animal was born in captivity or was taken from its mother at a very young age and has become totally humanised. If the animal is fully mature and has never come into contact with, or been able to socialise with others for its own species it may be incapable of fending for itself or being integrated into a troop which is being formed and prepared for release. However, it is sometimes possible for the domesticated animal to become self-sufficient and to be taught “monkey manners” by other monkeys who are awaiting release.
- The animal has a physical deformity or impediment due to an injury which would result in its being unable to survive the rigours of being able to cope on its own or as a member of a troop in the wild.

Despite the fact that some monkeys have been totally humanised when kept as pets it is sometimes possible to prepare them for release into the wild by using other monkeys to teach the to be monkeys again.

Those monkeys who can’t be released into the wild should be housed in a large cage or enclosure which will allow them to live out their lives in conditions which are as close to the natural world as is possible to achieve
with the resources that are available to the rehabilitation centre or sanctuary. Some sanctuaries do have these large enclosures which have large canopy trees, natural undergrowth, grass, a filtered flowing stream, stones, and everything that a monkey would want. Some of these enclosures are a hectare (10,000 square metres) or more in area.

Those monkeys which have been completely healed from their injuries within a short time can be released back into their original troops, if they are known. They should not be released into the territories of other troops as this can result in their being killed.

The rehabilitation of monkeys that are suitable for release, and who were not recently part of a wild troop can be a long process which can take up to two or three years before they are ready. These monkeys could have been orphaned, suffered serious injuries from which they took a long time to recover, or were kept as pets but have managed to be integrated into a captive troop being prepared for release.

The process of preparing the monkeys for release starts with the building up of a core troop which have a couple of mature monkeys as the core. Gradually other monkeys are introduced to this troop, but never directly. The monkeys being introduced to the troop being formed should be placed in an adjoining cage where they can come into contact with, and communicate with the troop that is being formed. This allows the monkeys to get used to each other an form bonds through the wire so to speak. When it is noticed that the two groups of monkeys are freely communicating and grooming each other an adjoining door can be opened which will allow the two groups to freely intermingle with each other. Under no circumstances should the group of monkeys being introduced to the core troop be chased into the main troop's cage as this could lead to possibly fatal fights taking place. It should be emphasized that the monkeys being prepared for release should have minimal contact with humans and domestic animals.

When the number of the core troop that is being prepared for release gets to approximately 15 to 25 individuals they can be transferred into a large enclosure containing vegetation types similar to the area where it is intended to release them. The purpose of this is to get them to be independent of human help and to teach them to be able to find food on their own. Their food should be placed in the enclosure during hours of darkness in such a way that they "discover" it as they roam through the enclosed area.

When they are ready for release they should be transferred to another enclosure which is situated in the area in which they are going to be released so that they can get used to their future home. After a few weeks, the electric fencing should be switched off so that they can come and go as they wish. Feeding should be slowly reduced in quantity as they learn where the natural food supplies are to be found.

Released troops should be monitored for a few months to ensure that they are coping well in their new ecosystem habitat.

**Choice of suitable release sites**

Release sites should be chosen that are not near human habitation, or where crops are growing which may tempt the monkeys to raid them, or in an existing monkey troop's territory. There should be plenty of natural sources of food available in the form of Acacia seed pods, fruiting trees and shrubs, dead and rotting trees which are harbouring edible insects, a good water supply in the form of a river, stream or spring, and rocky areas where the monkeys can search for insects under the stones.

By observing monkeys in the wild you will be able to easily identify suitable monkey habitats.

**A few notes from one of South Africa’s successful vervet sanctuaries**

The following points are a few of the release considerations that are taken into account and procedures that are followed by the team at the Bambalela Wildlife Care and Vervet Monkey Rehabilitation Farm in Limpopo Province:

- Troop size: 15-30 monkeys with a minimum of 3-4 generations preferably with their own babies “first generation”, 2-3 adult males and 2-3 adult females minimum.
- Release site inspection: safety, vegetation sustainability, whether other monkeys are around is a must.
• Release proposal and Permits from Nature Conservation, trapping, vaccinations: Tetavax, and safe transport.

• The monkeys spend ten to twenty-one days in a pre-built release cage before opening doors/gates. The caretakers and volunteers camp out with the monkeys, and living out with the monkeys for a minimum of 6 weeks before breaking down their camp.

• Once the camp is broken down, the team visit the troop two to three times per week for four weeks and then reduce the visits to one to two visits per week for three to six months.

• Alternative feeding spot is maintained (usually their “exotic food” gets left to rot as the monkeys (once free) seem to prefer natural food.

• Feeding is maintained throughout the first winter and supplemented during the second winter.

• The release site is checked at six monthly intervals.

• Data collection with the landowners co-operation takes place throughout the year and during years to come.

The total release costs are between R40,000.00 – R60,000.00 (depending on distance traveled and troop size).
Chapter 8

Vervet Monkey Rescue, Rehabilitation Centres and Sanctuaries

There are a number of legal NGOs which offer services for the rescue of orphaned and injured Vervet Monkeys, their nursing, care and rehabilitation in South Africa. Most of these bodies also offer educational programmes for school children and adults.

In this chapter these NGOs have been listed under sub-headings according to the provinces in which they operate. Each entry includes a short description of where they are situated, what services they offer and contact details.

There is no government or municipal funding of wildlife rehabilitation centres or sanctuaries in South Africa and all of the existing NGOs survive on private funding by their owners, occasionally supplemented with donations of cash and supplies. Without the valuable work done by those running these centres, our wildlife, especially the monkeys, would be in dire straights.

Readers should note that all wildlife, including monkeys, should live in the wilds where they belong. No wild animals should be captured and kept as a "pet" and that the keeping of wild animals in captivity without a valid permit, issued by the relevant provincial nature conservation authority is a serious offence and can lead to the person being sentenced to a hefty fine, or imprisonment, or both.

Only registered and licensed rehabilitation centres are allowed to catch and keep injured and orphaned wild animals in captivity.

Kwa-Zulu Natal:

The controlling body in Kwa-Zulu Natal is Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife who issue permits for the capture, keeping, rehabilitation and release of wildlife.

Contact details:

Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife
KZN Wildlife permits Office
P O Box 13053
Cascades 3202

Sharron Hughes or Wendy Cowley
permits@kznwildlife.com
sharronh@kznwildlife.com

Tel: +27 (0)33 845 1324
Fax: +27 (0)33 845 1747

Primates Africa

Primates Africa does not directly run a rehabilitation centre, but they do run a hotline service for the public to call - 7 days/ week. They are based in the Umhlanga area and also provide an education program to educate the public and school children. They also have many brochures available. They raise funds for their education costs and for assisting other monkey rehabilitators by holding fund-raising projects and attending markets to sell monkey related products while, at the same time, educating the public.

They have been instrumental in the research of human - monkey conflicts and solutions thereof as well as population studies. They participate in development plans and try to assist in planning to accommodate the monkeys.

The following information was gleaned from the Primates Africa website:
About Us

1. We teach people how to live in harmony with monkeys by:
   - Running a HOTLINE 084 4329974 for people to phone when they need information about monkeys like:
     - how to deal with them if they are coming into their house
     - How not to be afraid of them
     - What to teach your children about being around monkeys
     - How do deal with your pets when monkeys are around
     - What to do if monkeys are eating your crops/destroying your garden
     - How to feed/not feed them
     - What to do if there is an injured monkey
     - Understand how the monkey thinks
     - Whether it is feasible to remove monkeys or not
     - What to do if neighbours are cruel to monkeys

   - Arranging PRESENTATIONS at schools, clubs, social gatherings
   - Arranging PERSONAL VISITS to people who have serious problems with monkeys
   - Arranging OUTREACH PROGRAMS for people who have not been exposed to primate conservation
   - Using the various MEDIA FORMATS on a regular basis to educate
   - Inviting people to become a MONKEY MONITORS for Primates Africa. Notes are made by volunteers about the monkeys that visit their home and this information is sent to Primates Africa on a monthly basis to be collated so that we can establish the distribution and population sizes of troops in South Africa. Phone the hotline for more information
   - Producing a quarterly NEWSLETTER

Other important activities:

1. Facilitate RESCUES OF INJURED MONKEYS. Simply phone the Hotline for help.
2. Arrange for the TREATMENT AND CARE OF RESCUED MONKEYS.
3. FUND-RAISE for:
   - The cost of treatment of injured animals
   - Other organisations and individual that care for injured monkeys
   - The cost of our education programs

Contact details:

Chairperson: Jane Avis
Cell: 0798 604 3739

PRIMATES AFRICA
P O Box 2335 M.E.C.C.
Mount Edgecombe 4301
South Africa

Monkey Hotline 08 44 32 99 74 (08.00-17.00)
Website: http://primatesafrica.co.nr/

APES: the Animal Protection and Environmental Sanctuary

The APES sanctuary is situated approximately 14km from Greytown in Kwa-Zulu Natal and is run by two partners, Dawn Magowan and Rodney Pendleton.

APES had its beginnings in 1992 when Dawn became involved in the rescue and rehabilitation of baby vervet monkeys.
Over time more and more casualties arrived and departed. Through word of mouth people got to know about APES and soon they were being called for help and advice, rescue of sick and injured Vervets and to give educational talks at schools and in local communities.

All this work has been done with their own funds, which are Government pensions. They also rely on and collect left over fruit and donations. If they have volunteers it is a bonus. The volunteers are encouraged to experience the pleasure of rural life Zulu culture and their traditions and with the benefit of Dawns fluent Zulu and the support of the Chief and his family who welcome these volunteers. They are encouraged to attend any of the community's functions and are also able to stay over in a traditional Zulu home if they wish so that they can participate in the day to day rural Zulu life. Fortunately, APES have built a network of friends and associates - kind people who help make a difference, offering veterinary services, food, hands-on help and moral support.

The monkeys are Dawn and Rod's prime concern, however although no animal is turned away, either wild or domestic. Some of the creatures under their care include cows, goats, geese, chickens, etc, which all have to be treated if ill, fed, etc. There own animals include 9 dogs and 14 cats which are all neutered. These animals all come from the NSPCA or have been abandoned by their owners.

No wild animals are kept in a cage indefinitely but are released back into their own former territories as soon as possible.

Dawn and Rodney's greatest wish is to be able to expand their facilities and help more of these now endangered creatures return to their natural habitat and areas, to re-introduce troops to areas where they once roamed, to eradicate the senseless cruelty we see daily, and to educate people of all age groups to help them understand and protect their natural heritage before it is lost for all time.

Contact details:

APES
P.O.Box 443,
Greytown 3250
Kwa-Zulu Natal

Cell: 072 306 5664
Email: apes1@gom.co.za

Website: http://www.apes.org.za.

Monkey Helpline

Monkey Helpline is a private initiative which is run by Steve Smit and Carol Booth. It is based in Westville, Durban and Steve and Carol respond to more than 750 rescue callouts every year – an average of at least two monkeys rescue callouts under their care include cows, goats, geese, chickens, etc, which all have to be treated if ill, fed, etc. There own animals include 9 dogs and 14 cats which are all neutered. These animals all come from the NSPCA or have been abandoned by their owners.

Many are babies who are orphaned or injured when mother monkeys are attacked by dogs or other monkeys, or are severely injured or killed in human-related incidents. Over eighty percent of the monkeys that Monkey Helpline rescue, irrespective of the reason why, have got air gun pellets lodged in their bodies. Lead pellets cause terrible pain, suffering and a lingering death and no person, adult or child, should ever shoot monkeys with a pellet gun. As the only dedicated monkey rescue project in KwaZulu-Natal, the Monkey Helpline is available to do rescues 24 hours a day, every day!

Rescue callouts originate from members of the public, various other animal care organisations, veterinary practices, the police, municipal offices, etc. For access to the latest information about Monkey Helpline rescue callouts and rescues, click on the following link – Facebook Group Monkey Helpline South Africa

On any given day they have twenty to seventy monkeys in their home-based “high-care unit”. Once they have recovered from their injuries these monkeys are released back into their home territory, transferred to a

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On any given day they have twenty to seventy monkeys in their home-based “high-care unit”. Once they have recovered from their injuries these monkeys are released back into their home territory, transferred to a
rehabilitation facility or placed in a sanctuary.

Contact details:

Steve Smit: 082 659 4711
Carol Booth: 082 411 5444

Website: http://monkeyhelpline.wordpress.com/

Tumbili Primate Sanctuary

Tumbili – a sanctuary with a soul and a conscience – owned and run by Dr. Malcolm and Shesh Roberts who are passionate about primates and who share the great belief of Albert Schweitzer that all life is sacred!

Tumbili, which is the Swahili word for Vervet, is primarily a primate sanctuary offering a safe and loving haven for those unfortunate monkeys whom have been irreversibly maimed and damaged by humans yet are capable of leading full qualitative lives – are able to experience relative freedom, nurturing and sociable lives whilst having the protection and security of a sanctuary – where they will never ever experience fear, terror, hunger or suffering again!

Both Malcolm and Shesh are totally committed to the welfare of all living animals and creatures and will offer a safe and loving home to any soul that needs refuge and tender care.

Malcolm and Shesh also share their home with seven dogs – most of them rescues, two rescued goats, two bull calves, two very large Leopard tortoises, two parrots and a little cockatiel. They also have two rescued Wildebeest and a tame Gray Duiker.

Malcolm and Shesh feel privileged to be able to live amongst Giraffes, herds of a large variety of antelope, zebra, jackals, bush babies and genets to name but a few of the beautiful wildlife that reside on the game farm.

Contact details:

Shesh Roberts: +2782 651 0088
Malcolm Roberts: +2782 325 1914

Email: tumbili@edelnet.co.za

Postal address:
    PO Box 81
    Mkondeni
    3200
    KwaZulu Natal
    South Africa

Website: http://tumbili.co.za/

Crow

CROW is the Centre For Rehabilitation Of Wildlife situated in Yellowwood Park, Durban. It is a wildlife hospital that cares for the injured and orphaned wild animals and birds in Kwazulu Natal. CROW has 12 depots in and around the Province and is considered to be one of the leading rehabilitation Centres in South Africa.

Almost 90% of animals admitted to CROW, have sustained injuries due to human negligence. It takes time and dedication to rehabilitate these animals and to prepare them to be re-introduced in their natural environment. Some animals' injuries are so severe that they cannot be rehabilitated and therefore become permanent residents at CROW. Animals that are currently being rehabilitated are placed in enclosures far away from human activity. CROW tries to create enclosures that are similar to their natural environment to give them a "feel" of what their world is like. Orphaned antelope are often only released in Nature Reserves, where there are no predators, as they do not know what a predator is.
CROW's vision is to be an independent, pioneering force in the protection and rehabilitation of orphaned and injured wildlife, while promoting the preservation of their natural habitat.

CROW is committed to the rescue, rehabilitation and release of orphaned and injured wildlife, and believes in action and education with regard to the protection of all natural resources.

Contact details:
Centre for Rehabilitation of Wildlife (CROW)
P.O.Box53007
Yellowwood Park 4011
Durban
KZN, South Africa
Email: info@crowkzn.co.za
Telephone: 031 462 1127
FAX: 031 462 9700

Ishona Langa Wildlife Sanctuary
Ishona Langa Wildlife Sanctuary, was established as a place where wild animals that have been traumatised could find a refuge while they are rehabilitated, and is situated just 8km's outside Pietermaritzburg in Kwa Zulu-Natal.

Situated in the beautiful Mpushini River Valley, Ishona Langa is a 350 acre large savannah and bushveld property and is home to a host of animals, birds, fauna and flora. Ishona Langa is also a registered Primate Sanctuary.

Contact details:
Contact person: Victor Hugo
Telephone: 033 3262 1746
Cell: 082 440 0078
Email: victor@pmbnet.co.za
Website: http://www.ishonalanga.co.za

FreeMe KZN
With the ever increasing human population and resultant development, indigenous wildlife throughout the world is coming under threat as a result of conflict with people in the race for space and resources to survive. South Africa is no exception. Indigenous animals are injured and orphaned as a result of human activities at an ever increasing rate. It is for this reason that our centre, FreeMe Wildlife Rehabilitation KZN (FreeMe KZN) was established, along with many others spread throughout South Africa. FreeMe KZN aims to rehabilitate these animals so that they may be released back into the wild, in areas free from poaching and with reduced human activity.

FreeMe KZN, situated just outside Howick, opened their doors on 1 January 2008, prior to this, the centre was operating out of temporary facilities on the neighbouring reserve while their clinic was under construction. The centre as a whole still needs many structures to be erected before we can be fully operational.

The Objectives of the Centre are:

• To provide first aid and stabilisation facilities for compromised indigenous wildlife.
• To rescue, raise, rehabilitate and release cases back into a natural habitat, in consultation with stakeholders.

• To play a role in the education of local inhabitants of the area, the public, learners at educational facilities and volunteers in the principles of conservation and international wildlife rehabilitation practices.

• To provide a research facility for educational institutions, where needed.

FreeMe’s vision is to be a world-class, self sustaining rehabilitation facility for indigenous wildlife in Southern Africa.

They aim to rehabilitate and release indigenous wildlife back into a natural habitat, whilst maintaining the highest ethical standards and furthering conservation by playing a role in education of wildlife professionals, volunteers, learners and members of the public.

Contact details:

Tel: 033 330 3036 (Office Hours) or
Cell: 071 228 9082 (Emergency 24 hours)

The Hamptons Wildlife Care Centre

The Hampton's Wildlife Care Centre is situated in the village of Byrne near Richmond in KZN. They will accept with any wild animal or bird and ensure they are returned to the wild or sent on to a specialist centre for treatment and rehabilitation. However, their primary purpose is the rehabilitation of Vervet monkeys, particularly neo-natals and babies. They actively build troops of monkeys (one troop at a time) over a period of 2 to 3 years for release by WATCH in Northern KZN.

Over the past 10 years they have rescued and reared approximately 300 orphaned Vervets. This does not include the birds and other wildlife which they often have to deal with. Each year they get more "tinies" and it is getting more important to save these little ones as up to 3,000 Vervets are killed yearly in the KwaZulu Natal Province.

They receive orphaned Vervet monkey neo-natal babies from various sources, and the neo-natals range from a few hours to a few weeks old and they keep them until they are weaned and independent, at approximately 7 months old. They then go out to the outdoor enclosures where they join other, older monkeys to form a troop. This troop is then kept for a further 2 years so they can bond and form their own hierarchy before they are taken to Wild Animal Trauma Centre and Haven (WATCH), the Rehabilitation Centre which they are affiliated to, where they are kept for up to a further year before being released into the wild, far away from human habitation.

The centre is registered and permitted by Ezemvelo KwaZulu-Natal Wildlife to carry out this work. The South African SPCA have also inspected their premises and the centre is recommended by them as the primary Centre in KwaZulu-Natal to take neo-natal Vervet...
babies. We are also members of the Primates Ecology and Genetics Group (PEGG).

In the season of 2008/9, they had 24 vervet monkeys (18 neo-natal, 5 juveniles and 1 adult) which is more than they have ever had in any previous year. These were transferred to WATCH.

For the 2009/2010 season they had 20 neo-natals plus 14 adults and juveniles. These will form the core troop which we will keep for up to two years.

Contact details:

Jan & James Hampton
The Hamptons Wildlife Care Centre
P.O. Box 539
Richmond
3780

Tel: 033 212 4173 (Home)
Cell: 082 300 8337 (Jan)
Cell: 076 781 5758 (James)
Email: jhampton@venturenet.co.za
Website: www.thehamptons.org.za

Umsizi Umkomaas Vervet Rescue Centre

The name “Umsizi” is taken from the local South African Zulu language meaning “helper” or “helping hand”.

Established over five years ago in Umkomaas (KZN South Africa), Umsizi, run by Tracey Rowles, provides an important service to both Vervet Monkey and Human alike, who often occupy the same urban area.

Rescues of injured and/or orphaned Vervet Monkeys are a daily part of Umsizi’s routine.

Other aspects of rehabilitation for these wondrous, misunderstood primates includes the twice daily cleaning of rehabilitation cages and the four times daily purchase and preparation of a nutritious feeding programme.

Medical attention, petrol costs, baby formula, and maintenance of the rehabilitation cages are all funded from within the organisation by donations from the public.

Umsizi Umkomaas Vervet Monkey Rescue Centre operates 24/7 to assist and help these beautiful but misunderstood primates.

Due to the increase of building developments in the Vervet Monkeys natural habitat, the services of Umsizi Umkomaas Vervet Monkey Rescue Centre is increasing in demand daily.

Contact details:

Box 619,
Umkomaas,
KwaZulu Natal,
South Africa

Phone : 039 973 0074
Cell: 072 833 5119
Email : info@umsizi.za.org
WATCH

The Wild Animal Trauma Centre and Haven (WATCH) in Vryheid, KwaZulu-Natal takes in vervet monkey for a full rehabilitation programme which ends in the release of the monkeys back into the wild.

The centre takes in rescued Vervet Monkeys from all around the country. The work they do is genuinely to help the monkeys, so there is little hands-on work because it's important that the monkeys aren't human-habituated. This would significantly reduce the possibility of being able to release them back into the wild - which is the centre's primary aim.

The Vervets are kept safely in enclosures until such time they are ready to be released into the wild, far from human habitation. This usually takes about two to three years but, depending on the amount of human contact the monkeys have had, the de-humanising could perhaps take a little longer.

During this time the monkeys are gradually weaned from close human contact and the troops are built up to ensure that they form a coherent relationship. Vervets are very social animals and cannot be released individually.

The releases start to take place from September (which is Spring in South Africa) and continue through the summer months. After they have been released, the Vervets need supplementary feeding for two to three weeks until they learn to completely fend for themselves. They are also monitored for two to three months after their release.

Contact details:

Email: watch@crazyweb.co.za

Limpopo:

The controlling body in Limpopo is the Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism Limpopo who issue permits for the capture, keeping, rehabilitation and release of wildlife.

Contact details:

Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism Limpopo
P.O.Box 55464
POLOKWANE
0700
E-mail: Permits@Ledet.gov.za
(For CITES enquiries, contact) Hiadee von Well: VonWellHM@Ledet.gov.za
(For Permit enquiries, contact) Rosa Moloto: MolotoMR@Ledet.gov.za
Tel: +27 (0) 15 290 7000
Fax: +27 (0)15 295 5018

Riverside Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre

Riverside Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre (RWRC) near Letsitele in the Limpopo Province of South Africa was established to accommodate and provide temporary sanctuary for wildlife casualties, rehabilitate them to a point of self-support and the ultimate release and introduction into nature where they naturally belong. Scientifically based vervet monkey (Cercopithecus aethiops) and other wildlife rehabilitation that started at the end of 1992 at another location was transferred and introduced at RWRC during 1995.

Because of the exploitation and abuse of these monkeys and other wildlife species, the Riverside Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre (RWRC) was founded and developed. With a specially designed program they provide a temporary sanctuary for vervet monkeys and other wildlife casualties that have been taken out of the wild and kept in captivity or being used as pets. It is common knowledge that wild animal species do not make
good household pets especially the vervet monkey biting the family, friends and breaking nearly all ornaments and other valued household items. At this point they lose their cuteness and the owners must get rid of them, with very limited options. Either to be handed over to the Authorities and other organizations to be killed or to be used in bio-medical research laboratories.

In Riverside's rehabilitation program they use the natural instincts of adult females to assist with the fostering of babies in the program. They went further and developed electrified steel wire mesh enclosures incorporating natural plants, trees and shrubs, in which they are able to rehabilitate the vervet monkeys and other wild animals in a close to natural environment.

Introducing this method they have opened a window into the vervet monkey (*Cercopithecus aethiops*) and other wildlife species' behaviour. This window allows us to observe the secret life of this remarkable yet most misunderstood non-human primate, and other species undergoing rehabilitation.

Their projects demand long studies especially with the vervet monkeys. Their initial study of the vervet monkey troop and other species dynamics was the classroom in which they gained hands-on experience from which their introduction techniques were developed. RWRC is committed and devoted to the study of the vervet monkey and other wildlife species. In return they can use and offer this knowledge for the betterment and survival of any vervet monkey or other wild animal species once becoming endangered.

Because of their wildlife rehabilitation success rate they identified the need to educate the human species who are the main cause of the depletion of nature and its inhabitants. Therefore RWRC does not only deal with the welfare of wildlife, it is committed to educate the public, especially the youth, underprivileged and disabled as well as international students and volunteers in sustainable utilization of all natural resources.

With natural rehabilitation enclosures each measuring more than 6 Ha and presently housing more than 500 monkeys and other wildlife species RWRC is not only the biggest primate rehabilitation centre in South Africa, but the biggest vervet monkey rehabilitation centre in the world, the only privately owned centre which does not receive Corporate or Government funding!

**Contact details:**

Riverside WildlifeRehabilitation Centre  
P.O. Box 161  
Letsitele 0885  
Limpopo Province, South Africa  

Phone: +27 877501892  
E-mail: info@primate-sa.org  
Website: [http://monkeyrehabilitation.com/](http://monkeyrehabilitation.com/)

**Vervet Monkey Foundation:**

Rehabilitation, Education, Sanctuary - The Vervet Monkey Foundation is a non-profit organization (#020 694 NPO) established in 1993. The centre is based in Tzaneen in the Limpopo Province of South Africa. They rehabilitate and provide sanctuary to over 500 primates, orphaned, injured, abused, ex-laboratory or unwanted pets. In addition to this they provide:

- A program to rehabilitate orphaned and injured primates.
- A program to research the claims of damage and problems caused by vervet monkeys and offer possible solutions to co-existence.
- An education program to inform the public of the role that the vervet monkey plays in the eco-system and how to prevent human - vervet conflict.
- A sanctuary for primates unfortunate enough to be unreleasable but still able to have a quality of life to be ambassadors for their species.
- An opportunity for volunteers to study the life style and environment of the vervet monkey primate species.
- A project for volunteers to become involved in the conservation and rehabilitation of this unique indigenous primate.
- Opportunities for volunteers, veterinary nurses, gap year students and those involved and interested
in primate conservation.

• More recently, the promotion of a vegetarian, ultimately vegan lifestyle to help sustain the environment, prevent habitat loss, animal suffering and to make a contribution towards helping many of the world’s issues.

Contact details:

Vervet Monkey Foundation
PO BOX 415
TZANEEN 0850
PLOT 35
CALIFORNIA TARENTAALRAND LETSITELE

Email: info@vervet.za.org
Dave Du Toit (Director & Co-Founder)
Cell: 083 454 5381
From overseas: +27 83 454 5381
Email: dave@vervet.za.org
Website: http://www.vervet.za.org

Bambelela Wildlife Care and Vervet Monkey Rehabilitation Farm:

Bambelela is a privately owned and operated wildlife rehabilitation and conservation farm in the Waterberg district. It is well known and especially well regarded for its exceptional work with Vervet monkeys. Bambelela offers a volunteer programme and Field Guide Association of Southern Africa [FGASA] based courses for theory and practical studies.

The committed team at Bambelela works tirelessly so that every animal has a second chance at a wild life. It's a long process of finding release sites (and land owners who are committed to conservation), getting the necessary release permits from wildlife officials, preparing the site and rehabilitating the animals for reintroduction into the wild, and monitoring their progress for years after. The team work hard towards this goal - because captivity isn't any place for wild animals, especially primates.

The Bambelela team works with injured, orphaned and ex-pet monkeys. They provide the following for the monkeys in their care:

• Medical attention (surgery by a veterinarian, recovery, release)
• Hand raising orphans (integration into rehabilitation troops)
• Ex-pet (they pair them, group them, and integrate them into viable troops)

The rehabilitation programme for a monkey takes around 3-4 years (sometimes even longer).

On average it costs Bambelela over R7,000.00 (excluding any medical costs by vets) to care for a vervet monkey from pinkface hand raising to release back into the wild. The team at Bambelela Wildlife Care and Vervet Monkey Rehabilitation Farm, believe that even the handicapped monkeys deserve a second chance to live free again, where possible or, at least, be ambassadors of their species. They also try to inform and make the public aware of the requirements of vervet monkeys and to educate. Non-releasable are used for this purpose and the monkeys also enjoy a good quality of life and can enjoy “Troop life” at Bambelela Sanctuary.

Contact details:

Bambelela Wildlife Care & Guest Farm
P O Box 724
Bela-Bela [Warmbaths]
0480 Limpopo South Africa

Tel: +27(0)14 736-4090
Western Cape

The controlling body in the Western Cape is Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife who issue permits for the capture, keeping, rehabilitation and release of wildlife.

Contact details:

Cape Nature
Private Bag X29
Rondebosch 7701
www.capenature.co.za

Danelle Kleinhans
dkleinhans@capenature.co.za

Application form
Deon L. Hignett (Manager)
dhignett@capenature.co.za
Tel: +27 (0)21 659 3400
Fax: +27 (0)21 659 3415

Darwin Primate Group:

As the only primate rescue centre in the Western Cape, this project is concerned with the rescue of vervet monkeys who have been orphaned and injured in the Western Cape. They are based in The Crags along the Garden Route.

Their objectives are to raise awareness about the ongoing conflict between humans and other primates in South Africa, develop, publicise and advocate constructive methods to protect primate species and to work towards a safe and protective environment where these primates can be released.

Species such as the vervet monkey, chacma baboon, caracal, bushpig and jackal have been historically treated as "vermin" under extremely cruel legislation in . Their status has changed from "vermin" to "problem animals" to "damage causing animals" with slight changes in legislation making no difference to the way these animals are persecuted.

Contact details:

Cellphone: +27 72 8434653
Email: karinsaks@gmail.com
Website: http://www.darwinprimategroup.blogspot.com/

PEGG (Primate Ecology and Genetics Group)

PEGG (Primate Ecology and Genetics Group) was established to provide a forum for individuals interested in primate ecology, behaviour and evolution to discuss and share information. They encourage scientific research, education, conservation and conservation oriented management of species of non-human primates found in Southern Africa. Membership is open to individuals involved in academics, nature conservation and wildlife management, living or working in Southern Africa. Students are actively invited to participate.
Their goals are:
  • Increase educational awareness of primate diversity in southern Africa
  • Encourage research on primates in southern Africa
  • Encourage conservation-oriented management of primate populations in southern Africa

PEGG is an affiliate of the *International Primatological Society* and hold a meeting each year in South Africa.

**Contact details:**

Email: [peggweb@gmail.com](mailto:peggweb@gmail.com)

Trudy Turner, Ph.D., University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee: [trudy@uwm.edu](mailto:trudy@uwm.edu)

Judith Masters, Ph.D., University of Fort Hare: [jmasters@ufh.ac.za](mailto:jmasters@ufh.ac.za)

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# Appendix: List of contacts for the issue of permits in South Africa

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROVINCE</th>
<th>ADDRESS</th>
<th>CONTACT NAME</th>
<th>TEL / FAX</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EASTERN CAPE</td>
<td>Private Bag X5001 Greenacres Port Elizabeth 6057</td>
<td>Alan Southwood</td>
<td>Tel: (041) 508 5813</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Fax: (041) 508 5865</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Fax2Email: 086 519 7698</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FREE STATE</td>
<td>Free State Department of Tourism, Environmental &amp; Economic Affairs</td>
<td>Werner Böing</td>
<td>Tel: +27 (0)51 400 9534</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agricultural Building 98 Zastron Street. Bloemfontein 9300</td>
<td>André Schlemmer</td>
<td>Cell: 072 992 1574</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Fax: +27 (0)51 400 9523</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Private Bag X20801 Bloemfontein – 9300</td>
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<td>Call Centre: 086 110 2185 - Fax: +27 51 400 9523</td>
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<td><a href="http://www.freestatetourism.gov.za">http://www.freestatetourism.gov.za</a></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GAUTENG</td>
<td>Permits office GDACE PO Box 8769, Johannesburg 2000</td>
<td>Application forms</td>
<td>Tel: +27 (0)11 355 1207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All applications must be submitted by fax or post</td>
<td>Coming soon: Application process</td>
<td>Fax: +27 (0)11 355 1239/1100</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>done over the internet.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>KWAZULU-NATAL</td>
<td>Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife KZN Wildlife permits Office P O Box 13053</td>
<td>Sharron Hughes or Wendy Cowley</td>
<td>Tel: +27 (0)33 845 1324</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cascades 3202</td>
<td><a href="mailto:permits@kznwildlife.com">permits@kznwildlife.com</a></td>
<td>Fax: +27 (0)33 845 1747</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:sharronh@kznwildlife.com">sharronh@kznwildlife.com</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Application form details</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIMPOPO</td>
<td>CITES and Permit Management Department of Economic Development, Environment and</td>
<td>E-mail: <a href="mailto:Permits@Ledet.gov.za">Permits@Ledet.gov.za</a></td>
<td>Tel: +27 (0) 15 290 7000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(For CITES enquiries, contact) Hiadee von Well: <a href="mailto:VonWellHM@Ledet.gov.za">VonWellHM@Ledet.gov.za</a></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tourism Limpopo
P.O.Box 55464
POLOKWANE
0700

(For Permit enquiries, contact)
Rosa Moloto:
MolotoMR@Ledet.gov.za
Fax: +27 (0)15 295 5018

MPUMALANGA
Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency
Private Bag X11338
Nelspruit
1200

Blackie Swart
ludwich@mtpa.co.za
dorothy@mtpa.co.za
Tel: +27 (0)13 759 5329
Fax: +27 (0)13 759 5490

NORTHERN CAPE
Dept of Tourism, Environment and Conservation
Private Bag X6102
Kimberly
8300

Marietjie Smit
msmit@half.ncape.gov.za
Collecting permit application form
Transport permit application form
Tel: +27 (0)53 807 4800
(switchboard)
Tel: +27 (0)53 807 4804 (direct line)
Fax: +27 (0)53 831 1035

Preferred fax:
0866 597 032

NORTHWEST
Contact different regional offices, depending on which area is to be collected in.
Department of Agriculture, Environment and Tourism
P.O.Box 6649
Rustenburg
0300

Anuschka Barac
abarac@nwpg.gov.za
Tel: +27 (0)18 389 5201
Fax: +27 (0)18 389 5640

Bojanala region / Eastern region
Alma Jonker (Brits)
014 – 592 7378
Fax: 012 – 592 7249
Tebo Ngapodi (Brits)
012 – 252 0737/8
Fax: 012 – 252 0751
Ephraim Selebalo (Koster)
014 – 592 7378
Fax: 014 – 592 7249
Edward Vilane (Swartruggens)
014 – 544 0262
Fax: 014 – 544 0024

Southern Region
Gustav Engelbrecht (Potchefstroom)
018 – 299 6500
Fax: 018 – 294 6008
Johannes Mmusi (Wolmaranstad)
018 – 596 1996
Fax: 018 – 597 1996

Vryburg region (Bophirima)
Wimpie Weidemann
053 – 927 6196
Fax: 053 – 927 2904

Central region
Theo Illanga (Marico)
018 – 381 0222/4
Fax: 018 – 381 7020
Steve Maqoboza (Mafikeng)
018 – 381 0222/4
Fax: 018 – 381 7020
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