



Coexisting with baboons in Rooiels through shared responsibilities

Rooiels Indaba, Pringle Bay Community Hall

20 November 2021, 9 am – 1 pm

Outcome document

Executive Summary

- About 45 Rooiels and residents and stakeholder participated in the half-day Rooiels Baboon Coexistence Indaba, 20 November 2021. Participants shared diverse perspectives through open, respectful and constructive discussions.
- A survey administered by the Rooiels Baboon Task Team established by RERA/REC in July 2021 revealed that the majority of respondents support coexistence with baboons in Rooiels. 163 separate households who reside or own in Rooiels that completed the survey. As in the past, some residents consider baboons to be a problem.
- Given the wealth of written comments provided in the Survey, a more in-depth analysis of results could be valuable. The Survey also revealed that more than 50 Rooiels residents are willing to volunteer to support further action to strengthen coexistence.
- The Indaba confirmed the importance of the 9 action topics proposed in the background discussion document prepared by the Rooiels Coexistence Task. Valuable suggestions were provided at the Indaba on each topic. The suggestions will be integrated in the final version of the document to be available in January 2022.
- The work and existing activities of the current REC/RERA committees to support coexistence with baboons were appreciated. This includes waste management activities, support of the CBD area during the holiday period, and putting together an information package for newcomers.
- Further action campaigns are, however needed to address challenges of coexisting with baboons in Rooiels. The new REC and RERA committees to be elected in December 2021 are encouraged to review the action items featured in the final discussion document and put in place action campaigns on selected priority topics through broad participation of Rooielsers.



About the Indaba

Rooiels is a Conservancy located in the transition zone of the UNESCO designated Kogelberg Biosphere Reserve. For several decades, Rooiels citizens and baboons have coexisted in Rooiels and diverse lessons have been learned on how co-existence is possible. Yet, incidents occur where baboons raid unprotected waste bins, or enter homes of residents to search for food. Given the influx of visitors and many new residents to Rooiels and the construction of many new buildings, challenges have emerged creating the need for an open dialogue through an Indaba.

On 20 November 2021, some 45 Rooiels residents and stakeholders gathered for a half-day Indaba to exchange views on coexisting with Baboons in Rooiels. 8 participants joined by Zoom. It was the first time in Rooiels history that a blended meeting of in-person and virtual participation took place. Virtual participants linked in several continents, including Australia and Europe.

The Indaba was organized by RERA and REC, with support of a Task Team which included 15 residents. Specific objectives included to

- Provide an open forum for listening, engaging and learning
- Identified good practices that support coexistence
- Fostered a sense of joint responsibility among participants
- Mobilize commitment by residents and stakeholders

The Indaba featured a combination of presentations, plenary discussions and working groups. In advance of the Indaba, the Task Team prepared a draft Discussion Document to support dialogue at the Indaba. The draft document was circulated to the Rooiels community for comment in October 2020. A revised version was made available 1 week in advance of the Indaba. Furthermore, the Task Team guided the development and administration of the 2021 Baboon Coexistence Survey. A report providing initial survey findings was shared with the Rooiels community in early November 2021.

Highlights from the Introductory Session

In her opening remarks, Veronica Jacobs, Chair of REC, placed coexistence with Baboon within the overall context of conserving biodiversity in Rooiels and the Kogelberg Biosphere Reserve. She encouraged participants to be open about sharing views and to propose further action for follow-up consideration of REC and RERA.



Participants were provided with an opportunity to make short introductory statements. The statement covered diverse views. Many participants shared their commitment to coexistence in Rooiels with baboons, while indicating that coexistence requires responsible action by all residents and stakeholders. Other participants raised concerns that the coexistence model is creating significant constraints for them, and at times frustration.

Participants agreed upfront that during the Indaba everyone should be encouraged to participate, that no one or two individuals should dominate discussions, and that participants would seek to understand, rather than to be understood. Participants also agreed by consensus that the environment of Rooiels is a treasure worth protecting and that negative human-baboon incidents in Rooiels should be minimized.

Presentation of the discussion document and survey results

The Task Team presented highlights of the discussion document. The 25 pp. document features the context for Baboon coexistence in Rooiels, summarizes past actions taken and lessons learned, and features initial ideas for further action. The document will be revised and finalized in early 2022 taking into account insights generated during the Indaba.

The 2021 Rooiels Baboon Coexistence Survey was administered in October 2021. The invitation to participate was widely shared via RECA, VP and emails. There were 163 separate households who reside or own in Rooiels that completed the survey. In completing the survey, respondents were assured confidential treatment of all data. The [Survey Results](#) are available on the Rooiels website. More than 50 survey respondents indicated that they would be available to volunteer their time to support action for continued coexistence with baboon in Rooiels.

The survey results revealed that the majority of respondents support coexistence with baboons. For example, most respondents (83%) consider that baboons should be free to “forage on the fynbos in Rooiels” and 77% said that the baboon troop “is part of Rooiels and needs to be accepted and respected”. There are, as in the past, residents that consider the baboons to be a problem (33% in 2021, 27% in 2018 and 46% in 2001).

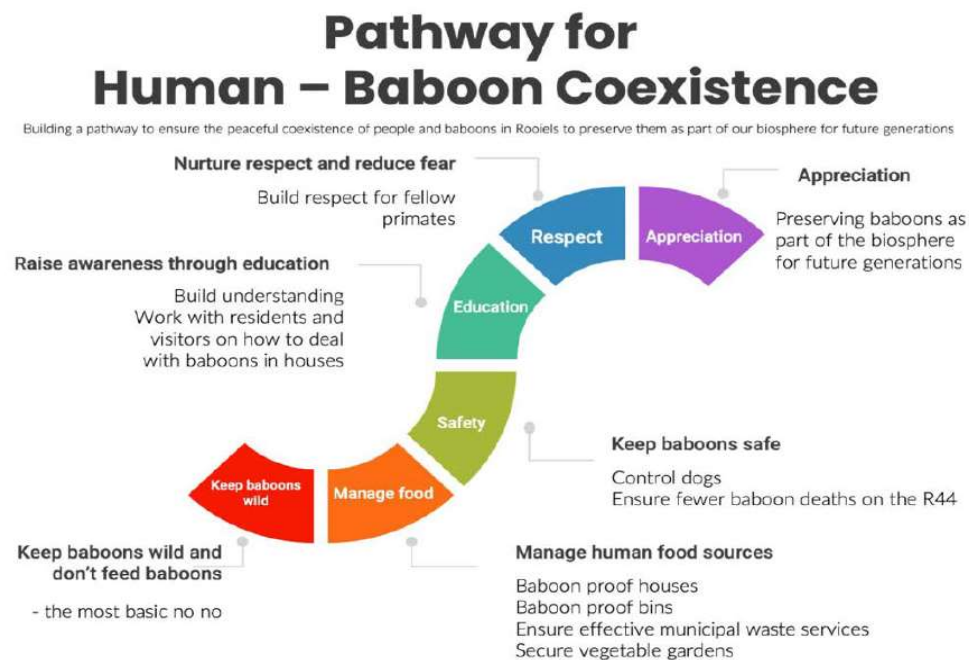
The survey report also featured an initial brief analysis of the extensive written comments through which some residents shared their experiences in detail. Concerns expressed relate to incidents which occurred, and the nature of interaction with baboon, pointing to the need for further action to maintain the coexistence model. The written comments also confirm that many residents enjoy having the baboons in Rooiels.



Given the wealth of written comments made in the survey, it was agreed that a more in-depth analysis of survey results could be valuable. A small team could be set up to analyse (or oversee the analysis of) the survey data. Such follow-up analysis would need to assure confidentiality of the data.

Interactive discussions on pathways to strengthen coexistence

The Indaba held in-depth discussion on key topics considered of importance for existing with baboons in Rooiels. The Pathway for Human-Baboon Coexistence was used as a framework to discuss the 9 areas of action featured in the draft discussion document.



The first four of nine action topics were discussed in working groups, with the remaining topics discussed in plenary. The notes prepared by rapporteurs of the working groups are available on the Rooiels website. The points raised during the discussions will be taken into account when finalizing the Discussion Document and presenting a plan of action to the new RERA and REC committees which will be elected in December 2021.



The action topics discussed included:

1. Minimizing and managing waste
2. Baboon-proofing homes
3. Guidance when encountering baboons in nature, on the property, or at home
4. Supporting businesses that are active in Rooiels
5. Supporting the CBD during holiday periods to minimize incidents
6. Marketing Rooiels as a Conservancy in the Kogelberg Biosphere Reserve
7. Developing a communication package and strategy
8. Fostering our civic responsibilities as residents of Rooiels
9. Fostering knowledge sharing and providing feedback

Summary and proposed follow-up action

The Indaba confirmed the importance of the 9 action topics proposed in the background discussion document prepared by the Rooiels Coexistence Task Team established by RERA/REC in July 2021. Valuable suggestions were provided at the Indaba on each topic. The suggestions will be integrated in the final version of the document to be available in January 2022.

The work and existing activities of the current REC/RERA committees to support coexistence with baboons were appreciated. This includes waste management activities, support of the CBD area during the holiday period, and putting together an information package for newcomers.

Further action campaigns are, however needed to address challenges of coexisting with baboons in Rooiels. The new REC and RERA committees to be elected in December 2021 are encouraged to review the action items featured in the final discussion document and put in place action campaigns on selected priority topics through broad participation of Rooielsers.



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Final Programme

08:30 Registration

09:00 Welcome and introduction of moderator and Task Team members

Veronica Jacobs, Chairperson, Rooiels Conservancy

09:05 Session 1: Introduction, purpose and expectations (Achim Halpaap, Moderator)

- Purpose and objectives of the Indaba
- Participants introduction and expectations for the Indaba (1 sentence per Pax)
- Exercise: Can we identify common values that we all share?
- Modes and methods of interaction

09:45 Session 2: Draft Discussion Document and interim Survey Results

- Interactive presentation by the Babco Task Team
- Questions from the floor

10:15 Session 3: Pathways to strengthen coexistence: 4 small parallel working groups

1. Minimizing and managing waste
 2. Baboon-proofing homes
 3. Guidance when encountering baboons in nature, on the property, or at home
 4. Supporting businesses that are active in Rooiels (including in CBD during holiday periods)
- 40-45 min working groups, 15-20 min reporting back in plenary

11:15 Break



11:30 Session 4: Pathway to strengthen coexistence: 4 parallel working groups (1 hour)

5. Marketing Rooiels as a Conservancy in the Kogelberg Biosphere Reserve
6. Developing a communication package and strategy
7. Fostering our civic responsibilities as residents of Rooiels
8. Fostering knowledge sharing and providing feedback

- 40-45 min working groups, 15-20 min reporting back in plenary

12:30 Session 5: What action are we taking forward? What are next steps?

- How can we put in place sustainable mechanisms and actions to strengthen the Rooiels Coexistence Model.
- What key message do we take forward to REC/RERA members and other stakeholder organizations (e.g. Overstrand Municipality, CapeNature, KBRC, SANBI)

13:00 Vote of thanks

Fiona Christelis, Vice-Chair, Rooiels Conservancy