

Rooiels BABOON INDABA, 20 Nov 2021

Working Group: Guidance when encountering baboons in nature, on the property or at home

Rapporteur Notes (unedited)

- 1) Establishing a buddy system to assist individuals with getting groceries inside. Residents living alone or residents without garages worry about getting groceries indoors safely from their car.
- 2) Establishing a buddy system to assist individuals at the CBD shops getting into cars or walking home with groceries.
- 3) Team of volunteers on-call for assisting with getting baboons out of houses. Debriefing to contextualize the incident (e.g. Why did the baboon behave the way it did? How can I prevent this from happening again?)
- 4) General awareness on baboons to reduce fears and myths continued. Especially important to reach new residents/visitors.
- 5) Accept that different people have different experiences. Validate trauma and/or fear from an unwanted interaction. Must listen to and address the concerns people have otherwise we risk ostracizing them, which only stirs anger, creates factions in the community and does not foster support for coexisting with baboons in the village.
- 6) Developing a guideline around maintaining a respectful distance to baboons as part of the educational/awareness campaign. At present we have recommendations on baboon-proofing homes, waste, how to get baboons out of your house, etc., but nothing currently exists in RE which explains how to behave around baboons generally when witnessing them on your property, on the road in the village, on the beach etc. Set a recommendation for acceptable distance which gives the baboons space, slows the possibility for over habituation which often results in the crossing of acceptable boundaries between people & baboons and keeps both baboons & people safer. Residents must lead by example here.