



# PRIMATES AFRICA

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## NEWSLETTER AUGUST 2009

- WINTER IN THE MONKEY WORLD
- HOW CAN YOU LIVE HAPPILY WITH MONKEYS DURING WINTER
- WHAT PRIMATES AFRICA HAS BEEN UP TO
- MONKEY STORIES

### WINTER IN THE MONKEY WORLD

June is effectively the beginning of winter for the monkey world. Many indigenous trees fruit in autumn, providing a good amount of food for monkeys. It is when this fruiting period is over, that urban monkeys start becoming a problem for people living in the urban environment simply because their natural food source is reduced.

In urban areas, monkeys are less likely to starve than monkeys living in natural areas because they find food from unnatural sources eg. Dustbins, dog's food, food inside houses and restaurants. In natural areas monkeys do not have these food sources available to them and therefore starve in the winter. Many people who have some knowledge of wildlife use this reason to incorrectly deduce that urban monkeys are breeding out of control because of an easy supply of food. **Nothing could be further from the truth!** Although urban monkeys have a steady supply of food, it is extremely dangerous to obtain this food. Great numbers of urban monkeys are shot by people, beaten to death with brooms, bats etc, poisoned and attacked and killed by dogs when trying to find food in homes and restaurants. Although their tummies are full, many die. In

addition, they eat food from dustbins that is often not fresh and certainly not healthy (stale cakes, buns, sweets etc).

Also, many monkeys are killed on the roads while trying to travel from house to house. The result, in fact, is that



*Male monkey injured during monkey attack*

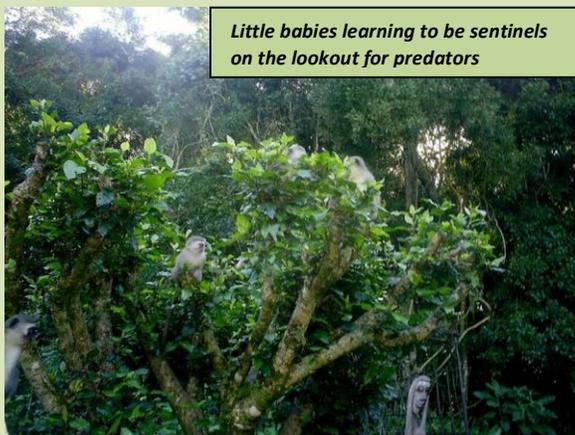
monkey numbers are declining in urban area. The most important thing to remember is that monkeys are visiting your property for 2 possible reasons: to protect their territory from other monkeys or to find food. It is mating season now, so if you find the whole troop spending an unusual amount of time at your property and they seem to be stressed and making a noise, you can be sure they are protecting their territory from a neighbouring troop. There will be monkey 'poo' at the bottom of downpipes and window sills (to mark their territory). People commonly think that the monkey numbers have exploded because

there seems to be a large amount of monkeys suddenly. It's not so – simply 2 troops, normally in different areas, are fighting over the same space. The reason why they fight at this time of year, is because they know that there will be less food in winter and want to make their territory as large as possible so that they have as much food as possible. This fighting normally doesn't change their territory size very much unless humans have interfered and killed many monkeys in 1 troop, thereby causing an imbalance in their numbers and therefore their ability to defend their territory.

## HOW CAN YOU LIVE HAPPILY WITH MONKEYS DURING WINTER

- Please ensure your children are not in the garden with the monkeys if 2 troops are fighting. They are very stressed at this time and may react abnormally. Troop fighting is not common unless you live on the boundary of 2 monkey territories.
- Check for any badly injured monkeys. If you do see one, please phone the hotline for advice or assistance.
- Ensure that no food (especially fruit, bread, sugar and eggs) inside your house is visible from any window.
- Please phone our hotline and ask for our brochure that explains what to do when monkeys enter your home
- Attend one of our monkey body language and communication courses – phone hotline for details
- Do not feed monkeys by hand but set up a feeding station. Phone hotline and ask for our 'Responsible Feeding' brochure to explain in detail
- Many Palm trees fruit in winter - one of the few food sources in winter for monkeys. Please do not cut the fruits off (orange berries on female palms).
- Research which indigenous plants are suitable for your garden or neighbourhood, so that you are ready to buy and plant them in spring. Phone our hotline and request our indigenous plant list for monkeys and birds. Lindsay Boxhall, a Primates Africa member can be contacted on 07822201358 for personal advice on what indigenous trees to plant. Alternatively, for a free indigenous plant newsletter or advice at a fee, email [info@tree-frog.co.za](mailto:info@tree-frog.co.za).
- Plant exotic fruits that monkeys love: mango and guava trees, passion fruit creepers, pawpaws, bananas and many exotic shrubs with red and purple berries.

## WHAT PRIMATES AFRICA HAS BEEN UP TO



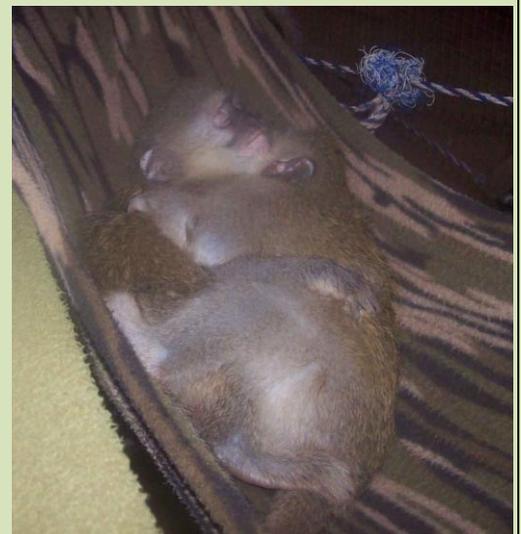
monkeys to teach her babies about the wild while she keeps a beady eye on them. She allows them out of their cages when she is present so that they can start familiarizing themselves with the wild while still having the sanctuary of their cages if things get a little scary. Here is a comment from Karin during one of those episodes: 'They really are wonderful - this troop. I think I have been

the trees to look and warn as well. And the rest ran for cover – together mostly. They forage and they react whenever a predator is around.....'

**REHABILITATION :** Two of the rehabilitation centres, Darwin Primate Group and The Burchal Centre, who work with Primates Africa, are working hard on the rehabilitation process, using novel methods of rehabilitation that are proving very successful.

Karin Saks from Darwin Primate Group near Knysna, is using her sanctuary

lucky with the individuals that have come here. Yesterday Bandit and Mr No Hands (sanctuary adult males) were barking loudly for ages due to a visiting raptor who was harassing the chickens again. Jack and some of the other male juveniles went to the top of



Two little babes asleep on a hammock at Burchal Centre

**Joan Chalmers** of Burchal Centre in Durban North, on the other hand, is not able to let her monkeys out of the cages because her rehabilitation monkeys are always watched by wild monkeys in the area who could attack her rehabilitation monkeys due to territorial issues. In spite of this, they have been taught by the wild monkeys and the adult monkeys (both male and female) in captivity about dangers in the wild, like raptors. Because Joan makes a concerted effort

to know every monkey's character and study their reactions, she is able to group monkeys that really like each other and who are bonding with each other.

The Burchal Centre has been very busy building more new cages to accommodate their growing population. They now have over 60 monkeys and were quickly running out of space. They held their grand opening on the 16<sup>th</sup> June at 10.30am, and released the

monkeys into their new cage at 12 noon. The monkeys took a while to develop enough courage to move into their new home (just shows how happy they were in their old home!) but are now enjoying all the extra space! Well done to Joan, Tom and your dedicated assistants who made such a wonderful job of the enclosures.

**EDUCATION:** Jean Senogles, a Primates Africa volunteer presented a talk on monkeys to the Mtunzini Woman's Institute. It was very well received and Primates Africa now has Mtunzini residents observing monkey troops that live there.



From left to right: Joan Stander (secretary), Jean Senogles (Primates Africa education director) and Allette de Bruin (chairlady) of Mtunzini Woman's Institute

Primates Africa went to Mtwalume Secondary School and gave two monkey presentations. It was Wiseman's first talk and he spoke very well. It is a magnificent school with a wonderful headmistress, teachers and pupils. They are keen to start a veggie garden and we are hoping to help because the school is close to an equestrian farm where they could get manure and hay for a perm culture garden.



Wiseman & Mandy enlightening students of Mtwalume Secondary School on the monkey world

We also went to Greenburg Secondary school in Phoenix and gave a presentation to the science class.

A number of presentations are done on a monthly basis by the education team to all types of forums and at different times of the day. Mandy Mc Keon, Jean Senogles, Wiseman Nhlngulela, Stephen Ngcobo and Sue Shafto are volunteer presenters, but if there are any teachers at a loose end with a passion for monkeys, we'd love you to join our education team.

If your school would like a visit from Primates Africa, please phone our Hotline on 084 432 9974.

**RESCUES:**

**Sandy Burrell**, a member of Primates Africa who lives in Uvongo on the south coast of Kwazulu Natal, works incredibly hard for Primates Africa but most importantly for the monkeys. She has, single-handedly and amazingly, rescued 59 monkeys in her area during this last year. Of these monkeys, 4 were released back to the wild (almost a troop!) after

ICU care and rehabilitation by Sandy, 13 were transferred to rehabilitation centres, and 2 went to a sanctuary but sadly 40 were euthanased. In addition, she has been a surrogate mother to 9 babies.

Sandy sent us the details of one of her rescues: 'We received a call from Mr. Smith who said that he had seen a monkey crawling down a downpipe into

his back garden with a baby hanging on. The mother must have been in a great deal of pain as her progress was slow. When I arrived I could not see her - it was an ideal garden for a monkey to - it was over grown and wild. During our long search, Mr. Smith kept repeating that there was no way that she could have disappeared. I explained to him that no matter how extensive her injuries were, if a monkey felt cornered or threatened the adrenalin kicks in and

they seem to be able to do things which one may have felt impossible. We enquired from the neighbour if he had seen a monkey with baby and his reply was yes -it was around the corner of the house. We then dashed around into the neighbour's garden to find baby climbing a small shrub with mum at the bottom who was trying to climb to safety in case she was attacked by the owner's dogs. I rescued mum and baby without much of a fight except that mum gave a call which

was answered by her troop some distance away. I took mum and baby to the vet. Baby was fine and had such smooth fur, as if it had been brushed very neatly into place. Mum had many teeth missing, a dislocated shoulder and an injury between the spine and hip which seemed to be a few weeks old. Sadly mum was euthanased and went to heaven and Shep became one of my 9 baby orphans of this year.'

Thank you so much Sandy for all your help and a very big thank you from the monkeys on the South Coast for caring for them and helping them during their time of suffering. The South Coast residents should be very proud of you! In our next issue we will feature more wonderful people who have dedicated much of their time and resources to helping the plight of the monkeys.

**MONITORS:** Our Monitors' Club is doing well with many monitors diligently observing their troops and sending in their reports. Here is a note from one of the monitors: *'My little troop visits me fairly regularly and come and eat bread, drink water from the birdbath or dog's water dishes. Little one-eyed Joy is still with the troop but I cannot spot 'Skewe Bek', the male who had a tear to his lip or 'Hoppy' the male monkey with the injured (lame) back foot. Maybe they have healed and thus I do not recognize them. There are a number of 'teenagers' and 'toddlers' in the troop but impossible to count how many because they move and swing from branch to branch so quickly! They seem to keep away or hidden when lawn mowers, leaf blowers or any unusual noises are about. Today, Friday, is a very peaceful and quiet day here and they enjoyed food at their leisure but are still very alert to any sound or movement*

*around them. What a delight to watch these lovely little creatures!'*

So, if you enjoy watching monkeys or have monkeys that visit your property, would you like to volunteer as a monitor. It'll take very little time out of your week but like this monitor, you'll gain so much pleasure. Please phone the Hotline if you are interested in volunteering.

**It seems that some babies are arriving early this season. If anyone is monitoring their troop (formally or informally) please let us know when your first baby monkey arrives, how many babies are born to your troop this year and how many are still alive by next June. Please SMS any updates to our hotline on 084 432 9974.**

**HOTLINE:** The hotline volunteers work very hard, not only answering

the phone but organising rescues, volunteers, educational programs, fundraising and ensure that all queries are dealt with – no small task. In addition, they advise callers on monkey problems and a variety of other primate issues while recording every call and maintaining statistical information – useful for understanding what is happening in the monkey world. Thank you ladies, for your tireless dedication!

where they consulted with the body corporate and provided them with useful information for living with monkeys. Unfortunately, the body corporate misquoted Primates Africa by stating in writing to their residents that Primates Africa would assist them with culling monkeys if necessary. After serious protestations from Primates Africa, they wrote a letter to be sent to the resident, retracting their statement and added that they, too, would not consider culling monkeys. We thank them for this and would like to emphasize that **Primates Africa does not support culling under any circumstances.**



An unusual looking monkey (partially albino). Photo sent in by monitor Fran

As a result of a call to the Hotline, Primates Africa recently visited a block of flats

**HABITAT PROTECTION:** In an attempt to improve the environment for all wildlife, birds and specifically the monkeys, we encourage people to plant as many indigenous trees and plants as they can. Here is Lindsay Boxhall's tree of the issue, featuring the *Deinbollia oblingifolio* (common name: Dune Soap-berry):

*Ecstatic am I, to excite and tempt you all to plant this fabulous, quite magical little tree - a slender tree generally growing to about 6m, non-invasive roots and sun-loving. It grows happily near the ocean, will endure poor soil and salty breezes.*

*During March, new flowers can be observed that are clusters of creamy-white bud-like flowers, closely packed together in large terminal heads. Buds and stalks are covered in silver-gold velvety hairs (March – June). Clusters of berries follow, ripening to golden yellow, sweet and juicy and 10mm diameter. These are gobbled up by birds and loved by monkeys.*

*As the buds begin to open, a myriad of wildlife flutter and sip the abundance of nectar. Insect eating wildlife also visit, a total hive of activity! This tree flowers and fruits within 3 to 4 years and often earlier. Should you desire butterflies in your garden, this tree will not disappoint.*

In KZN, this tree is host to up to 8 species of butterflies e.g. Purple-brown Hairstreak – ‘*Hypolycaena philippus philippus*’. That is quite some profile for one small tree!

**FUNDRAISING:** The hotline ladies recently organised a fundraiser at the Barnyard Theatre where they raised R4900! Well done! We desperately need to raise funds for

paying vet bills for injured monkeys, telephone costs, assisting other organisations, financially who care for primates. So, please consider volunteering as a fundraiser or if you

haven't the time, donate a small amount on a monthly basis to Primates Africa. **Every cent is spent on the animals as Primates Africa is run entirely by unpaid volunteers.**

### MONKEY STORIES:

**A MAN AND A MONKEY** – ‘I bonded with this monkey in Umdloti after I helped him with a dreadful injury he sustained from a monkey fight. His lip was torn and side badly bitten. I took pity on him and fed him. He has visited me almost every day since 2005. We developed such a strong bond that he had no fear of me – in fact, we often touched. We seemed to be able communicate without saying anything. I named him Big Boy.’

But.... over the last few months Big Boy was really beginning to age and he had difficulty in pulling himself up the buttress walls at my flat. He arrived early on Sunday morning and died while I was in the shower. I found



Big Boy

him in the braai alcove that he always used to sit in to shelter from the rain and cold. He died very peacefully and there was no evidence of foul play. It was very comforting for me to have been there. Had he gone into the bush to die I would never have known what had happened and I would have been haunted by thoughts of him being killed by a car, being poisoned etc etc.’

This touching was sent to us by Graham from Umhloti, KZN and explains why so many people love monkeys. Graham is writing a short story of his experiences with Big Boy. He hopes to sell the story at a nominal price to raise funds for monkey charities. We'll let you know when it's ready for publication!

### KILLERS –CARS & SHOOTERS - Sue Shafto sent in this sad story to show how many monkeys are killed on our roads:

‘About 3 weeks ago, a one year old was killed on Golf Course Drive. A few days ago, I found a female whose head was black and blue and couldn't see out of her eyes. I took her to Kerry, the vet. Her diagnosis was: **Monkey confused, paddling and unable to walk. Severe peri-ocular swelling, unable to see if eyes ok. Bleeding wound on left shoulder. Pellet in neck region. VD splinters of pellet from left side and bulk lodged on right side. Skull fracture present.** Was this monkey shot, then ran across the road to escape and was hit by a car? Or did someone shoot her and then club her?’

We found out who shot the monkey. It was someone who holidays annually at Mt Edgecombe from overseas. I have seen the Estate manager in this regard.”

Earlier on in the week, Claudene, a hotline volunteer, phoned to say that her hubby, Martin, was on his way home from work when he stopped and picked up a baby that had been run over on Golf Course

Drive. He put it on the pavement, but when he went back to take a photo, he saw the mother dragging her dead baby through the golf course fence.



Little baby that Martin found



Battered & shot mother

Life is valuable  
Love is precious  
Value it

