THE CAPE PENINSULA BABOON MANAGEMENT

JOINT TASK TEAM

BABOON-PROOF FENCING FOR THE CAPE PENINSULA

BACKGROUND INFORMATION DOCUMENT

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Introduction to baboon-proof fences

Preventing wildlife from moving into human dominated areas (e.g. agricultural land, residential areas) is one of the most common goals of wildlife management. Fencing has long been utilized as a tool to restrict animal movement in captive (e.g. zoos), natural (e.g. reserves) and agricultural (e.g. fruit farms) settings. With appropriate animal-specific specifications, fencing is arguably the single most effective and economical non-lethal preventative barrier to direct animal movement.

Due to their high level of intelligence, dexterity, agility and adaptability, baboons are rank amongst the most challenging species to manage globally. Though much more complex than typical game or wildlife fences, baboon-proof fence designs have been successfully developed and implemented in a variety of settings in South Africa

including captive baboon centres, farms, and urban areas. An example of this can be found at Zwaanswyk on the Cape Peninsula.

Figure 1 below shows the recorded location of baboons before and after the baboon-proof fence was erected at Zwaanswyk.

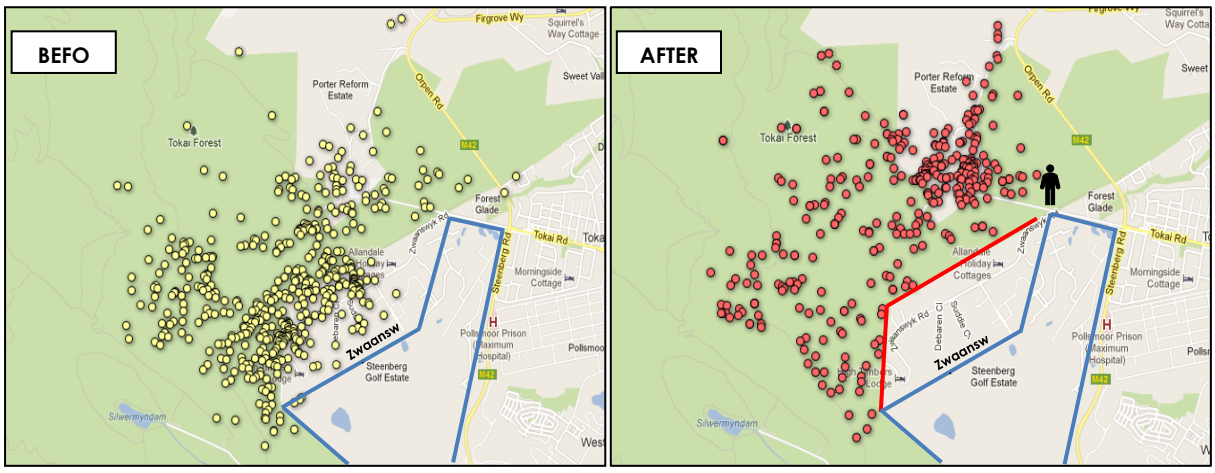

Figure 1. GPS movements (yellow points) of a baboon troop into the suburb of Zwaanswyk before (left) and after (right) the installation of baboon-proof fence (shown in red). The approximate outline of Steenberg Golf Estate's fence, which was erected prior to Zwaanswyk's fence, is shown in blue. The human figure represents the location of field ranger(s) and/or security guard(s) where the fence remains open and baboons must be prevented from entering.

Figure 2 on the next page is a schematic diagram based on the successful fence erected in Zwaanswyk. This is an example of a baboon proof fence and will not necessarily be fence design that is eventually constructed.

The Zwaanswyk fence was erected in 2013 and showed immediate success in excluding the movement of baboons into the suburb, setting the standard for baboon-proof fencing in the Cape Peninsula. A decade later the fence continues to largely exclude the neighbouring baboon troops with the assistance of field rangers employed by the Zwaanswyk residents.

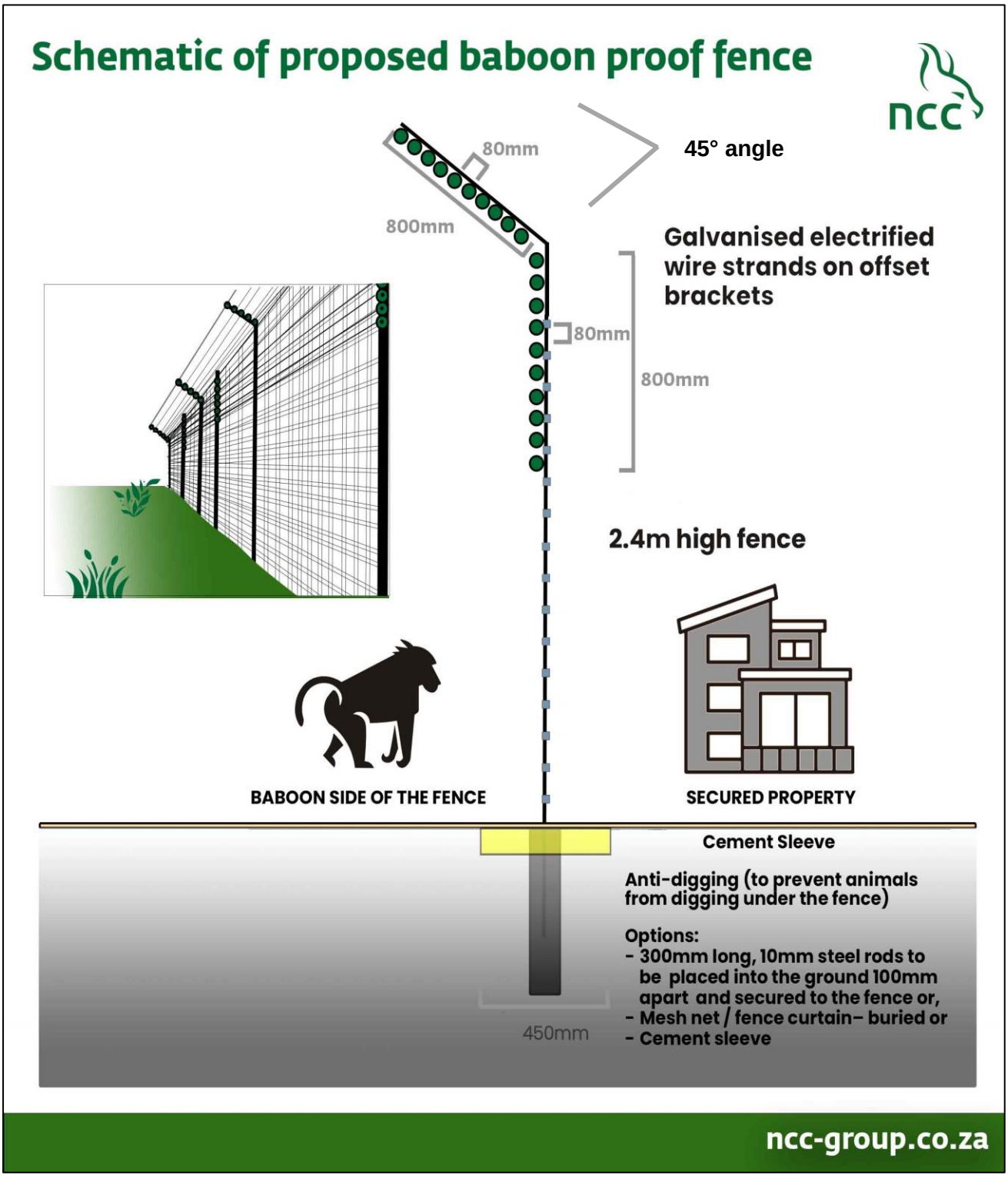

Figure 2. Schematic of a baboon-proof fence based on the successful fence used in the Zwaanswyk community.

Key issues to be considered before deciding to erect a baboon-proof fence

The CPBMJTT intends to engage local communities and other stakeholders on the implementation of the Baboon Strategic Management Plan (BSMP), including the consideration of baboon-proof fences.

Before a fence can be erected, however, a number of issues must be carefully considered. These include:

- the terrain and topography of the landscape
- the natural vegetation occurring in the area
- the location and movement patterns of baboon troops
- the views of local residents, property owners and other stakeholders
- the upfront capital costs of a fence must be considered, together with the long term maintenance costs of a fence, if it is to be successful
- the permission of property owners is required, and some fence locations may require Environmental Authorisation in terms of the National Environmental Management Act (NEMA) regulations for Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)
- the potential impacts that a proposed fence may have on the movement of other wildlife must be considered, particularly given the possible placement of fences along the boundaries of Table Mountain National Park.

Human-dominated landscapes are largely unsafe for wildlife and thus individuals and populations of other wildlife species, in addition to baboons, are likely to experience welfare and conservation benefits as a result of fences which maintain them in the natural landscape. However, the movement of wildlife is also pertinent to natural behaviour and ecology, as well as overall ecosystem health. Inadequately designed and poorly monitored electric fences are known to cause wildlife electrocution and mortality, specifically for smaller species such as tortoises and snakes as they attempt to move through their ranging areas.

The fence shown below has been designed to prevent the electrocution of non-climbing animals that may walk alongside the fence as there are no electrical strands below 1.5 meters.

Figure 3. A fence designed to facilitate the movement of small animals between properties. This option could be considered where necessary. The gaps at the base of the fence must not be larger than 80mm to prevent use by baboons.

Locations that may be considered for baboon-proof fencing on the Cape Peninsula

The figures below show the possible locations of baboon-proof fences that may be considered by the CPBMJTT in engagements with local communities, property owners and stakeholders.

- The location of the fences illustrated below serve as overview approximations only.
- The exact location and shape of a fence would be subject to change based on topography, landowner permission, residents' inputs, environmental impact assessment outcomes, socioeconomic factors, and other considerations.
- These issues may indicate that some locations are not suitable for a fence at all, whereas others may be found to be suitable with mitigation and detailed design to address the concerns of residents and other stakeholders.
- The locations of access gates for residents and visitors is not shown on these figures, but would be considered on a case by case basis.
- To ensure that the proposed fences are baboon-proof, field rangers/fence monitors would be required to prevent baboon movement around fence ends.

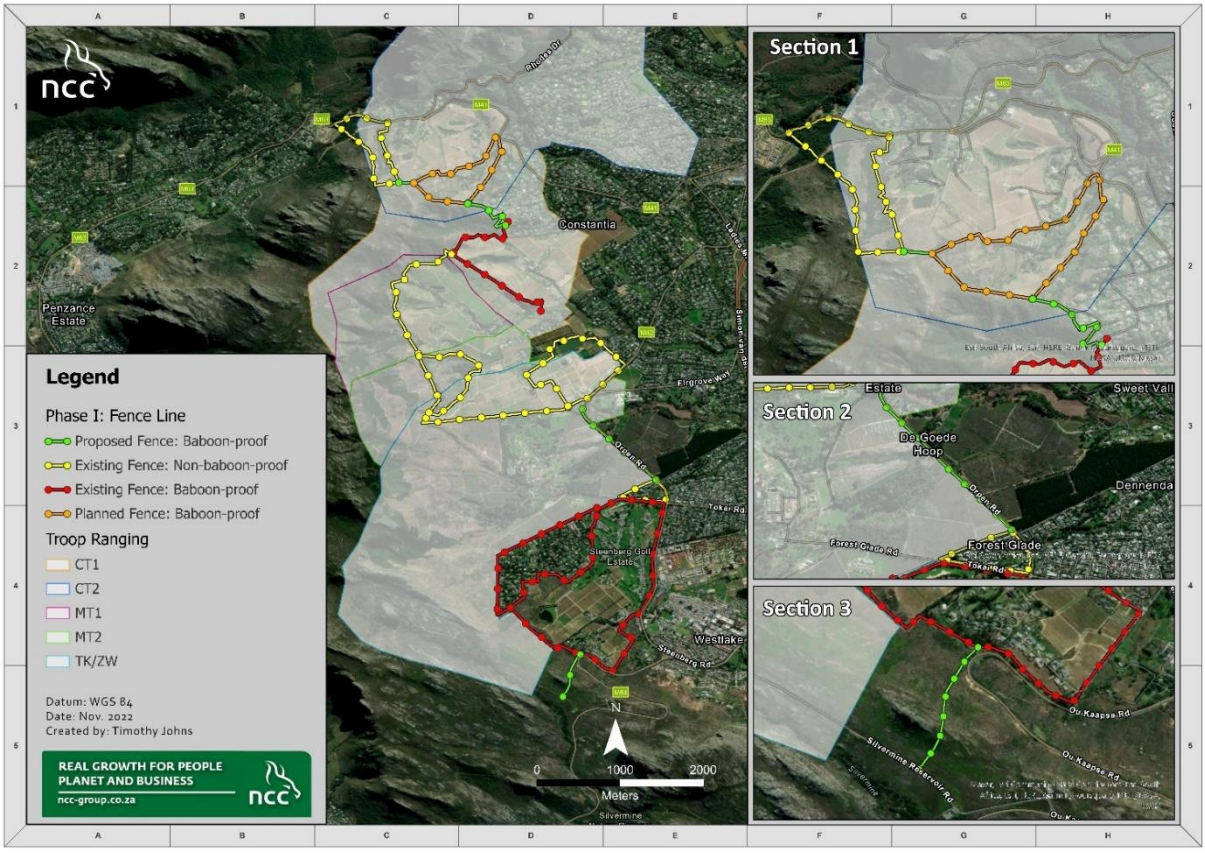

Figure 4. Existing and possible future fences in the ranging areas of the north subpopulation of baboons on the Cape Peninsula.

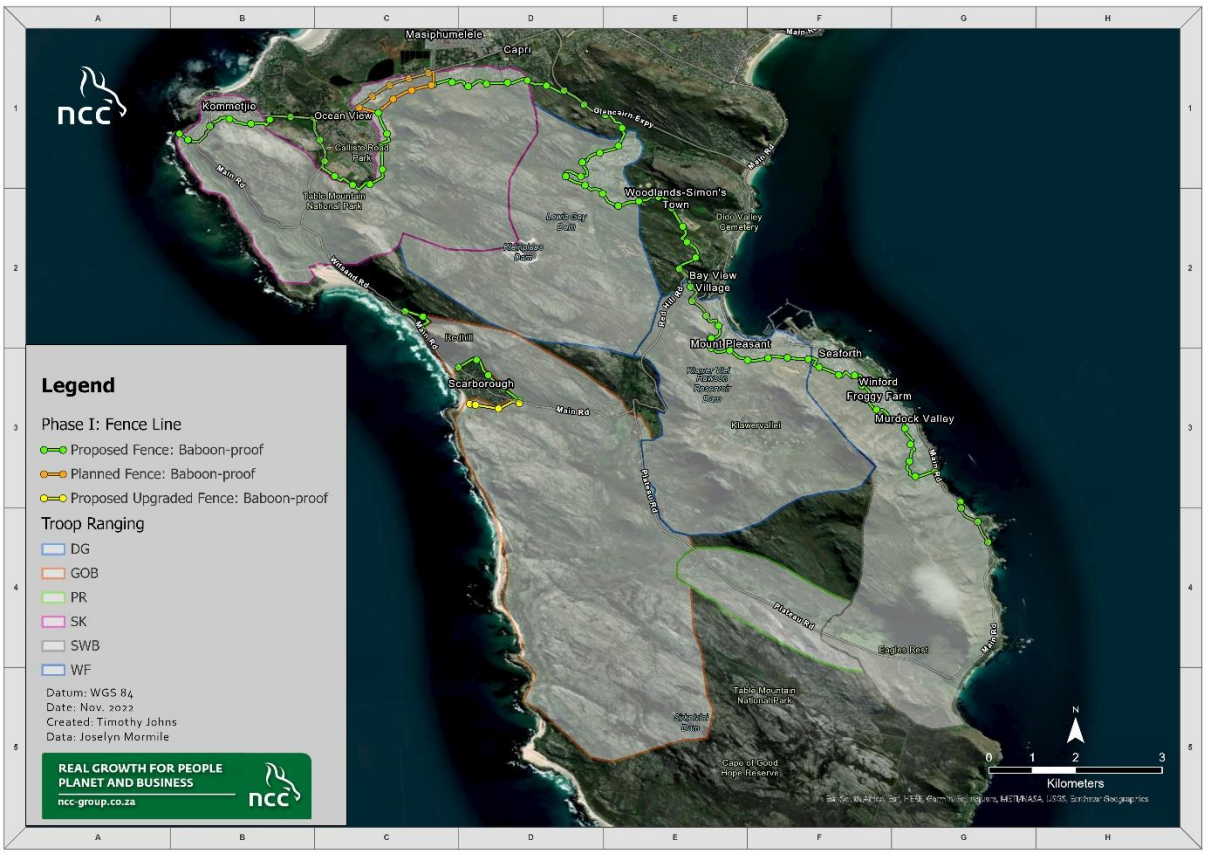

Figure 5. Existing and proposed fences overlaid on the troop ranging areas of the south subpopulation troops on the Cape Peninsula.