

POST-RELEASE SUCCESS OF TWO REHABILITATED VERVET MONKEY (*CHLOROCEBUS AETHIOPS*) TROOPS IN KWAZULU-NATAL, SOUTH AFRICA

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In South Africa, the most common primate in rehabilitation centers is the vervet monkey (*Chlorocebus aethiops*). We evaluated the efficacy of releasing two vervet monkey troops into the wild according to methods employed by an established rehabilitation centre. Two troops were assembled over 2-3 years. Coloured ear-tags identified adults, sub-adults and juveniles. Radio-collars were placed on all the adults and sub-adults of both troops (41% of all individuals). Each troop was released at a suitable site after two nights in a holding cage, and supplementary food was provided for two months after release. For 10 months locations of both troops were recorded, as well as the presence/absence of individuals and their general behaviour. The smaller troop survived better than the larger troop, with only 6 of 35 individuals (17%) confirmed alive in the large troop compared with 12 of 24 (50%) in the small troop. Large numbers of missing monkeys make it difficult to determine whether the release was a success. However, results suggest that rehabilitated vervet monkeys could be successfully released in the future. Recommendations are provided for consideration in future releases.

Keywords: *Chlorocebus aethiops*, monitoring, post-release, rehabilitation, radio-telemetry