

BEHAVING, BUT AT WHAT COST? THE EFFECTS OF A MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUE ON A CHACMA BABOON TROOP IN SOUTH AFRICA.

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In the South African Cape Peninsula, 'baboon monitors' are employed to herd baboons out of and away from urban areas as a means of reducing baboon-human conflict. The goal of this study was to understand the effects of these monitors on baboon behavior and habitat use across the seasonal extremes of summer and winter. We compared a monitored troop to a non-monitored troop within the same geographic area, with scan samples conducted at 20-minute intervals from dawn to dusk from April 2005 through September 2006. The non-monitored troop spent more time feeding and less time resting in summer while maintaining similar social and travel time across seasons. Dietary composition significantly differed across seasons, with a strong preference for endemic vegetation in summer and raided food in winter. By contrast, there was no effect of season on feeding time, but an increase in travel and resting time in summer compared to winter, in the monitored troop. The diet of the monitored troop did not vary seasonally with the exception of raided food items, which were consumed more in winter than summer. With regard to habitat utilization, the non-monitored troop used habitat types evenly in relation to their overall activity budget, while the monitored troop's activities were highly variable according to habitat. These results suggest that baboon monitors do affect the activity budget and diet of baboons and that the year-round herding by monitors may not give the baboons the freedom to vary their foraging areas (and diets) seasonally.

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