



WWW.VERVET.ZA.ORG

**VERVET MONKEY FOUNDATION**

REHABILITATION • EDUCATION • SANCTUARY



# Vervet Monkey Foundation

Annual report 2023



# Table of Content

## Vervet Monkey Foundation

### Annual Report 2023

VMF map .....	3
Introduction .....	4
Where Care Creates Miracles .....	6
Zach .....	8
Rexie .....	10
Arrivals .....	12
Releases .....	14
Foster Mums .....	16
Integrations .....	18
Veterinarians .....	20
The Outbreak .....	22
Staff and Interns .....	24
Ethical Volunteering .....	26
Visitors & Security .....	28
Media .....	30
Social Media .....	32
Education .....	34
Events .....	36
PASA / GFAS .....	38
Grants/FLOAT campaign .....	40
Facility Upgrades .....	42
The Year Ahead .....	44
The Vervet Forest .....	46





Vervet Monkey Foundation 2023

# Introduction

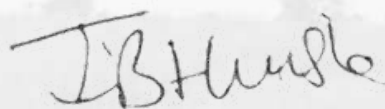
As the Vervet Monkey Foundation (VMF) enters its 30th year since establishment we reflect back on the many lives saved, the evolution of rehabilitation and sanctuary protocols as well as education programmes. Creating significant change in communities preventing monkeys from becoming orphaned as a result of human-wildlife conflict remains pivotal.

For the 30 year anniversary, we embraced the theme 'Where Care creates Miracles' representing our commitment to individual care where stories of hope and inspiration have resonated with people across the globe. Monkeys like Zach & Rexie have shown us their will to survive with resilience through adversity and challenges.

The inception of the Vervet Forest written plan marked the beginning of the year, complemented by the highly anticipated premiere of the Vervet Forest movie on YouTube which not only rejuvenated our hopes but also reignited our collective vision for the long-term future of the vervet monkeys.

Undoubtedly, a bit of a rollercoaster year with highs and lows, consistent highs being the dedication and care for the recovery of the 'miracle monkeys' and winning the GFAS Outstanding Wildlife Sanctuary Award. Towards the end of the year however, we faced a great challenge of a respiratory outbreak impacting the sanctuary. With the help of our team, organisations and supporters rallying together in the face of adversity, we feel there is no obstacle we can't overcome by standing strong and working together in solidarity for the primates.

We feel immense gratitude to everyone as we look forward to what can be created in the coming year.



Dave Du Toit (Founder, Director) & Josie Humble (Director, Rehabilitator)







# Where Care creates Miracles

## 30th Anniversary of the VMF

On a seemingly usual day, just like any other, Dave went to work as normal. A worker came up to him and handed him a tiny vervet baby whose mother had just died. This baby, named Regus, would change Dave's life forever.

As it was illegal to keep monkeys as pets and Regus needed a home, Dave partnered up with Arthur Hunt to create a safe haven for confiscated vervet monkeys. Getting through the legal process to establish the sanctuary took several years more. On the 17th November 1993, it was finally achieved. The Vervet Monkey Foundation was created.

Since then, the VMF has saved hundreds of monkeys in need. One example is Cuddy (shown below in the centre) in Groomingdale's who has brain damage and nobody thought would survive. Now, she enjoys her life, plays, grooms and has fun with Floki. That's the VMF - the sanctuary 'Where Care creates Miracles'.







Tour stand



Anniversary dinner





# Zach

Zach's story began in the shadows of a residential area, where a compassionate soul stumbled upon him, sprawled and unconscious. What unfolded next was not just a rescue mission but a battle against the callousness of those who sought to harm him. Thankfully, a good samaritan intervened, after seeing the helpless monkey also being kicked by people.

As Zach found refuge in our care, the severity of his condition unfolded. Shock and suspected head trauma led to a v poor diagnosis—extensive skull fractures and a fractured shoulder, unable to swallow or move, we had to be patient. The initial prognosis echoed the challenges that lay ahead. Yet, drawing on three decades of expertise, VMF chose to extend a lifeline to Zach, a decision that would reveal the true power in 'where care creates miracles'.

From IV drips, veterinary medications, herbs, nutrition, brain & vestibular music therapy, targeted leg placements and homeopathy, every available modality (along with VMF Director Josie's experience) available to us was used to help pull Zach through. After the initial healing, collaborative efforts with a local bodystress release therapist also helped ease any tension in his body helping him move better. In addition, a stability ball in a purpose made outdoor area in Josie's garden greatly helped Zach with his balance.

To see this little one pull through where he couldn't even sit by himself reminds us to Never Give Up on those who have the will to survive. Zach now loves to play, climb, groom and be a monkey again at the sanctuary.

May his story resonate with yours, echoing the belief that, united, we can create a world where care truly creates miracles.





Zach in June



using balance ball



receiving meds



# Rexie

Early September Dave was called about an injured monkey needing help. Unconscious, the tiny one-year-old was rushed to the vets where x-rays showed extensive fractures in his mouth, skull and neck. While we feared the worst, our dedicated vet believed in him, in us, and said we should give him a chance. Animal Manager Becky took on the herculean task of overseeing his care and treatment plan, determined to prove that that Rexie had the potential of being another miracle monkey.

Rexie was facing an impossible challenge and the first 24-48hrs were crucial. Amazingly, Rexie sailed through that immediate critical period and every day thereafter only improved. Initially unable to open his mouth due to the extensive fractures, all medications and nutrition had to be delivered via syringe, drop by drop. Two weeks post injury Rexie started eating soft fruits, handfed by carers. Not long after, Rexie, ravenous and enthusiastic progressed to feeding himself and enjoying a range of foods.

As with human broken necks, a supportive neck collar was a necessity. "The collar" had many iterations; each one engineered from household materials (from hair rollers to foam mats) and built to stabilise Rexie's neck. Five weeks post injury we were able to remove the collar completely. After the collar was removed, Rexie's progress picked up significantly. Immediately happier, he was more motivated to move independently. To help him we utilised a range of therapies including physio, massage, rife machine, and balance balls. We challenged Rexie mentally and physically, often training in a new skill first by physically moving his limbs for him.

Charlotte, a Belgian volunteer, and osteopath was instrumental in Rexie's Recovery. She was able to relieve tension, and pressure in Rexie's neck, back and head, unlocking new milestones. With Charlotte's expertise (and orphan Darby's help), Rexie was walking, running and even climbing again!





In December



In September



In November



In December



# Arrivals

Besides Rexie and Zach, the VMF welcomed 35 new arrivals (25% less than the year before), many of whom required specialised care:

- 28 vervet orphans (24% less than the year before)
- 5 wild rescues (Zach, Idris, Rexie, Baba, Derek Merensky)
- 1 adult former pet monkey (Boetie Boy)

Baby season 2022/23 came to an abrupt end in late January with no more baby orphan arrivals after the 31st of January. We don't know what led to this unusual development, but we always hope it is because less wild monkeys are being killed. Baby Season 2023/24 started similarly to the previous year, the first orphan arriving in early October. Luckily, most of the babies have been in good condition upon arrival and were able to progress through the rehabilitation process quickly and find a monkey foster mum not long after their arrival.

Idris and Baba were also lucky enough to recover from their wounds respectively (read more about them in "releases").

The last wild rescue in 2023 arrived in late October and was called Derek 'Merensky' as he was found at the Merensky school just outside town. This background is unknown, but the large bruising on his abdomen indicated that he was possibly hit by a car.

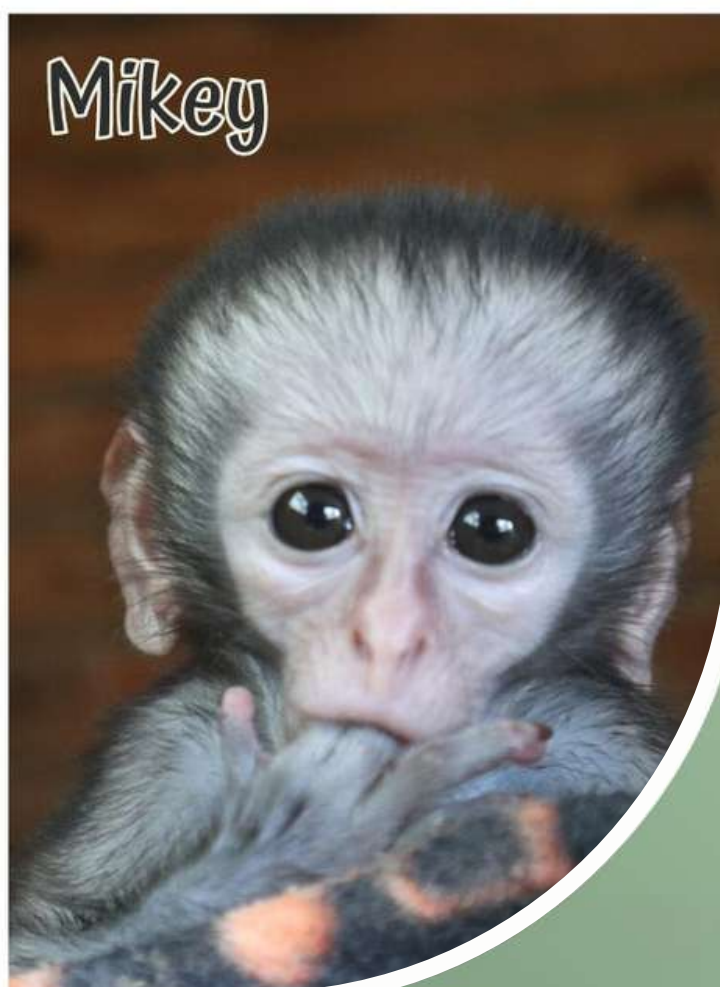




Elora



Kathleen



Mikey



## Foster Mums

The VMF foster mum programme was first established in 2011. Since then, we enabled 280 vervet orphans to live with groups of up to 50 monkeys and from as young as 3 months old in enclosures rich in indigenous bush, simulating their natural habitat surrounded by electrified fencing. As early as 6 weeks old, the orphans have no human interaction after they have learnt how to use the milk feeding cage, all the care is given from monkey foster mums. The success speaks for itself; more than 99% of all orphans in the foster mum programme are now living a happy life with a new family. Rehabilitating orphans this young into social troops enables them to maintain their inherent fear of people and ensures the best possible outcome for them to live in a wilder state.

In 2023, 25 orphans were integrated through the foster mum programme to live a more natural life into 10 troops (Skunkey, H&B, Koko, Global, SAAV, Goliath, Skrow, Engeltjie, Gismo, and D&D). In January, orphan babies were released to H&B troop for the very first time. Anxiously, we awaited the big day - and were rewarded with a perfect integration. The entire H&B troop was excited to welcome their babies Fudge and Mara, into family; alpha female Hocus a proud 'grandmother'. Other females such as Harmony and Skylar followed the babies and tried to get as much time with them as possible. Thus, we decided to give them a chance to adopt some babies as well. Shortly after, Herbert and Thigpen met Harmony and Skylar in the foster mum introduction cage. It was love at first sight. All of the H&B females established themselves as caring and loving mothers who are very protective of their adopted orphans. We are excited to introduce more babies in the next season.

By December, 19 of 22 orphan babies from season 2023/24 have already met their foster mums. The babies still in human care are Remy and Darby who had broken arms and needed more time to heal, and Fritz. Fritz arrived on New Year's Eve and loves her 'brothers' in the Disneyland area.





Atlas and Panacur in Koko troop



Acorn, Phoebe & Ulku



Timmy and Uh-Oh



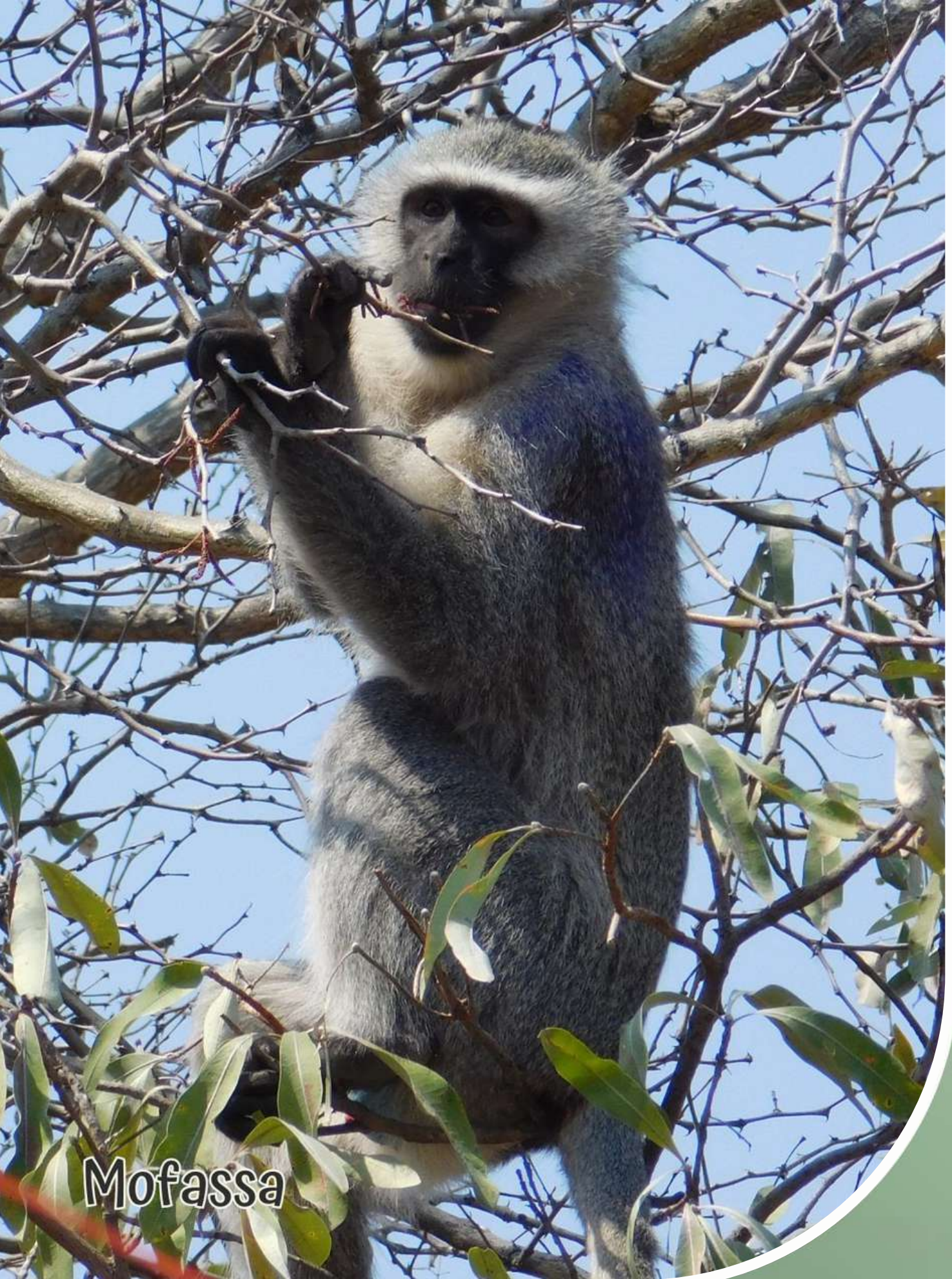
# Integration

The foundation integrates individual monkeys into social groups for their own benefit, as social enrichment is necessary for primates. With troop integrations, the individual monkey gets acquainted with the troop through a large introduction cage on the side of the enclosure, monitored closely by the integration team. Once the monkey is confident with individuals in the group, they are then released into the troop enclosure. The team continues to monitor the monkey until they demonstrate that they are comfortable within the troop. In 2023, 43 monkeys were successfully integrated into social groups. That is an increase of 26% compared to previous year, due to the many arrivals in 2021.

25 vervet orphans were successfully integrated in troops through the foster mum programme and another 19 babies were adopted by their foster mums.

H&B welcomed elderly male Mofassa to their troop. Mofassa had been living in an introduction cage next to H&B troop for a while. There, he already bonded strongly with the troop monkeys. He also accepted the orphan babies as 'his' to protect while they were still in their rehabilitation process. Often, he would tell the voluntary staff off for looking at the babies or for getting too close to them during integration. In September, it was finally his turn. Mofassa was very confident in the troop and built strong relationships with alpha male Joshi. Within a couple of days, Mofassa stayed in the troop full days and nights and demonstrated his dominance to anyone who questioned him. Now, the hierarchy is established, and he is settled in the troop. He enjoys spending time with the alpha group and defending his new family.





Mofassa



# Releases

Whenever possible and appropriate, the VMF releases injured wild monkeys back to their own troops in the wild after recovery. When wild monkeys are brought to the VMF, we record the day, time and exact location they were found so that the team can eventually return to find the family troop. We are unable however to release orphans back to their wild troops as they require their mother's milk to survive.

In 2023, we are delighted to have re-released five monkeys to the wild; three of which had arrived in 2022. Marsian and Frieda were reunited to their troops in January. Hecate, an injured baby whose mum was luckily still alive, took a bit longer to recover from her injury to the back. Once she was fit enough, she was returned to her mum. Not only Hecate's mother, but also all the other troop members were very excited to get their baby back, while at the same time being very protective of her. It was a truly remarkable release for all the volunteers who cared for her!

Idris had arrived at the VMF in late August. He was shot several times with a pellet gun, with at least 8 pellets remaining in his body. The two year old juvenile was in severe pain and struggled with nerve damage. In the caring hands of VMF volunteers he made a full recovery and was able to return to his family in the wild.

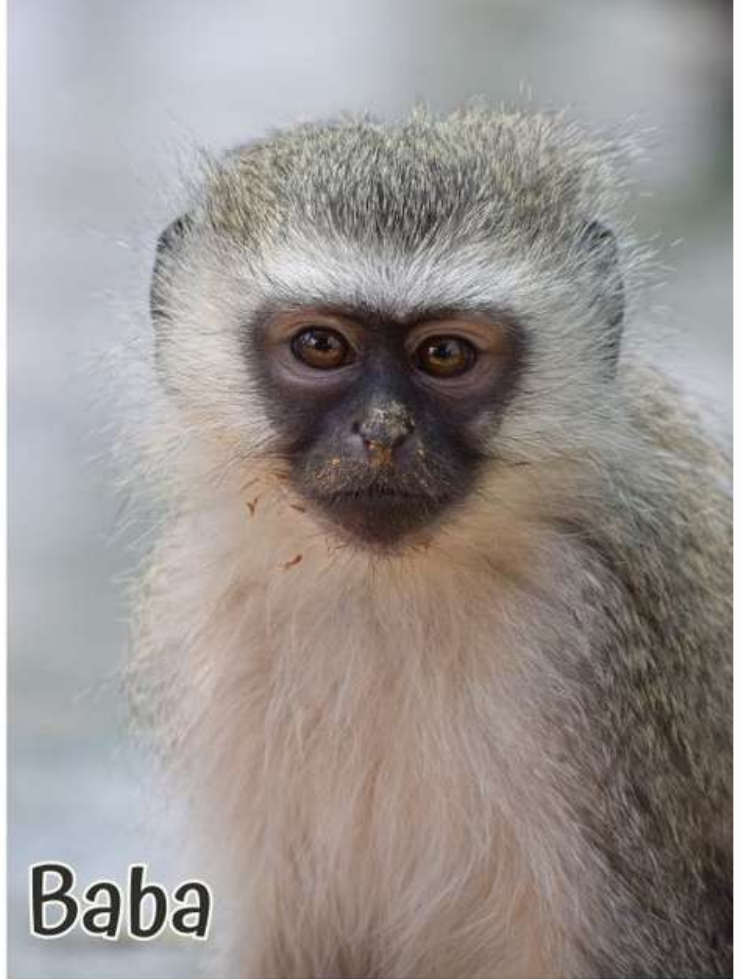
In early October, Serala Animal Clinic contacted the VMF about a young female who had a concussion and had been treated by the vets for 10 days. They asked for help to rehabilitate and release her. Luckily, Baba was back on track in no time and proved herself to be stable and ready for release. Her family accepted her back with great relief.

Subadult monkey Derek Merensky suffered from severe abdominal bruising and partial mobility loss. He is still in recovery but the VMF team hopes for a full recovery and a reunion with his family soon.





Idris



Baba



Marsian Release



## Veterinarians

Local vet Dr. Larissa Odendaal at the Serala Animal Clinic once again gave us a reduced fee to perform vasectomies. In total, 19 vasectomies were carried out. This procedure allows males the full range of natural behaviour while preventing reproduction.

Floki has been in for a treat this year; receiving multiple acupuncture treatments from Dr. Sarah at the Serala Animal Clinic. Floki struggles to walk after his treatment as a juvenile. Found being sold at the side of the road, his captors bound him at the legs, causing prolonged dislocation at the hips and lifelong mobility impairment. The acupuncture helps to loosen the tense muscles in his legs, relieving discomfort and increasing mobility.

Other monkeys we were able to help:

- Robin had an abscess in his mouth and several teeth had to be removed. After an initial strict diet of only soft foods, Robin healed nicely and was able to return to Robert troop. There, he is often seen munching away on paw paw.
- Judi-Bee arrived in January 2022 as an orphan with a broken leg. She was integrated to Skrow troop and doing very well. In May, she showed difficulties moving on her weak leg. She was taken to the vets and x-rays revealed that the leg was fused together with the hip, and a femoral head removal surgery was performed to restore mobility for the leg. Judi-Bee returned to her troop after she completed physiotherapy.

Big thank you to Serala Animal Clinic and Tzaneen Animal Clinic for their fantastic work throughout the year. We appreciate the close team work and the easy communication with them. With their help, we can offer treatment for the monkeys beyond our scope.



# Michaela with Floki at vets for acupuncture



Zach



Judi-Bee





# The Outbreak

In December, the sanctuary was struck by tragedy. A respiratory disease spread rapidly across the troops and the monkeys. At the beginning, it was just some sneezing and coughing. One morning, we found adult male Winnie with abdominal breathing and lethargic behaviour. We caught him, brought him to sickbay and immediately tried to treat him. Sadly, he passed away just a few minutes after arriving at sickbay. Since then, we have mourned the losses of five more monkeys.

We immediately understood this was a serious infection and contacted the local vet to determine Winnie's cause of death. To our despair, we found out he had suffered from pneumonia caused by the bacterium *Klebsiella pneumonia*. This bacterium is said to live in the environment and has a high mortality rate, while also resistant to many antibiotics. Determined to give the best care to our monkeys, we asked PASA for any shared experience with other sanctuaries dealing with similar disease and worked closely with our local vet as well as our own knowledge of treating respiratory illness.

Director Josie Humble created a holistic treatment plan consisting of lung support supplements, homeopathics, effective herbs, and the advised antibiotics from the lab. Voluntary staff members monitored troop monkeys for the slightest signs of symptoms and the medical team administered veterinary medication and treated critical patients with the additions of a nebuliser and rife machine. Thank you to the team for their caring work and their dedication to help the monkeys.

We are very grateful for PASA's generous emergency grant of \$3000 and Carver Foundation's donation of \$2500 to support the monkeys and finance medication for the animals in need. Long-term supporters Greg Skruck and Dougie & Adam Lancet respectively donated \$1000 towards the care of the sick monkeys.

Big thank you to our dedicated team and all volunteers assisting in these difficult times!





Emma checking the lungs of the babies



Regina nebulising  
Shanti-Ray



Jules - 29 years old  
survivor



## Staff and Interns

In 2023, the VMF was able to recruit more voluntary staff and finally the sanctuary started to run smoother again with many helping hands post 2020. We aimed to overlap the time new staff members could spend with leaving members to ensure detailed training. Unfortunately, this is not always possible due to delays or declines in the visa process which has been an ongoing challenge.

We welcomed 6 new voluntary staff members and 3 interns. To our honour, Simone Marcolin, a head chef from Italy, cooked some incredible meals for our international volunteers and taught new chef Adam from Hungary some tips and tricks during April and May.

Sickbay Staff Becky Easter has been promoted to Animal Manager overseeing health, critical care, meds and orphans. Mark Ashcroft's long dedication and commitment to the VMF has been acknowledged in his new role as Primate Rehabilitation Leader overseeing sections, integrations, monitoring, husbandry and the long-term rehabilitation of the monkeys.

We thrive to continuously improve the quality of our work and the care for the monkeys through training for the team. This year the topics ranged from nutrition to baby care. Wendy Easter, Becky's mum, provided the voluntary team with a first aid training. Former volunteer Lana Bru conducted further training on LEAN method to standardise and improve efficiency and workflow with the local team managers Innocent and Lucas.

Our Local Staff team continued to be led by the ever-smiling Local Staff Manager Innocent Mahuwa. Big thank you to Sammy, Innocent, Solly, Godfrey, Kletter, Mossassa, John, Lucas, Phaniel, Thabo, Grandwell, Nhla Nhla, Michael, Gloria and Suzan. They are the backbone of the sanctuary and keep the place running from behind the scenes.





chefs Bronson, Simone, Adam



Integration  
staff Reni



Simone's creation



# Volunteering

The VMF believes in ethical volunteering and aims to continue developing the volunteer experience at the foundation. Thank you to all the ethical volunteering organisations ensuring there are always people to help the VMF continue its work.

The VMF welcomed 65 volunteers this year. Five volunteers were returning volunteers and two were South African volunteers. They volunteered for free board and accommodation as we needed the extra hands while also creating opportunities locally. Michaela, local volunteer from the neighboring Letsitele, comes for 2 days a week, sometimes also bringing her family with her.

It is still not at the same level as pre-Covid (on average 150 volunteers per year). Having limited people helping out, has increased the work pressure on the remaining team. We were able to partner with 4 more ethical volunteering organisations to recruit more dedicated volunteers across the globe.

We continue to improve the volunteer experience at the VMF. The volunteer village has now access to wifi around the clock. We installed electricity and lights running mostly off solar in every cabin in the volunteer village and provide a fan to everyone to cope with the hot weather.

Great news for our US American volunteers. Any volunteer who would like to visit us and work with us can now claim up to 40% of the volunteering fee for tax reduction through the US based charity **Friends of the Vervet Monkey Foundation**. Please email [info@vervet.za.org](mailto:info@vervet.za.org) for more information.





Darby



## Visitors

The tourism in the region is still not back to pre-pandemic levels. We see the impact in our guided tours. 48 mostly local and some international visitors visited us for guided tours to learn about the monkeys (33% decrease from previous year). A family of 5 visited the VMF in July for a day. During this time, they helped with preparing milk for the orphan babies in troops and handing out forage to the monkeys. They really enjoyed their time and take many memories back home.

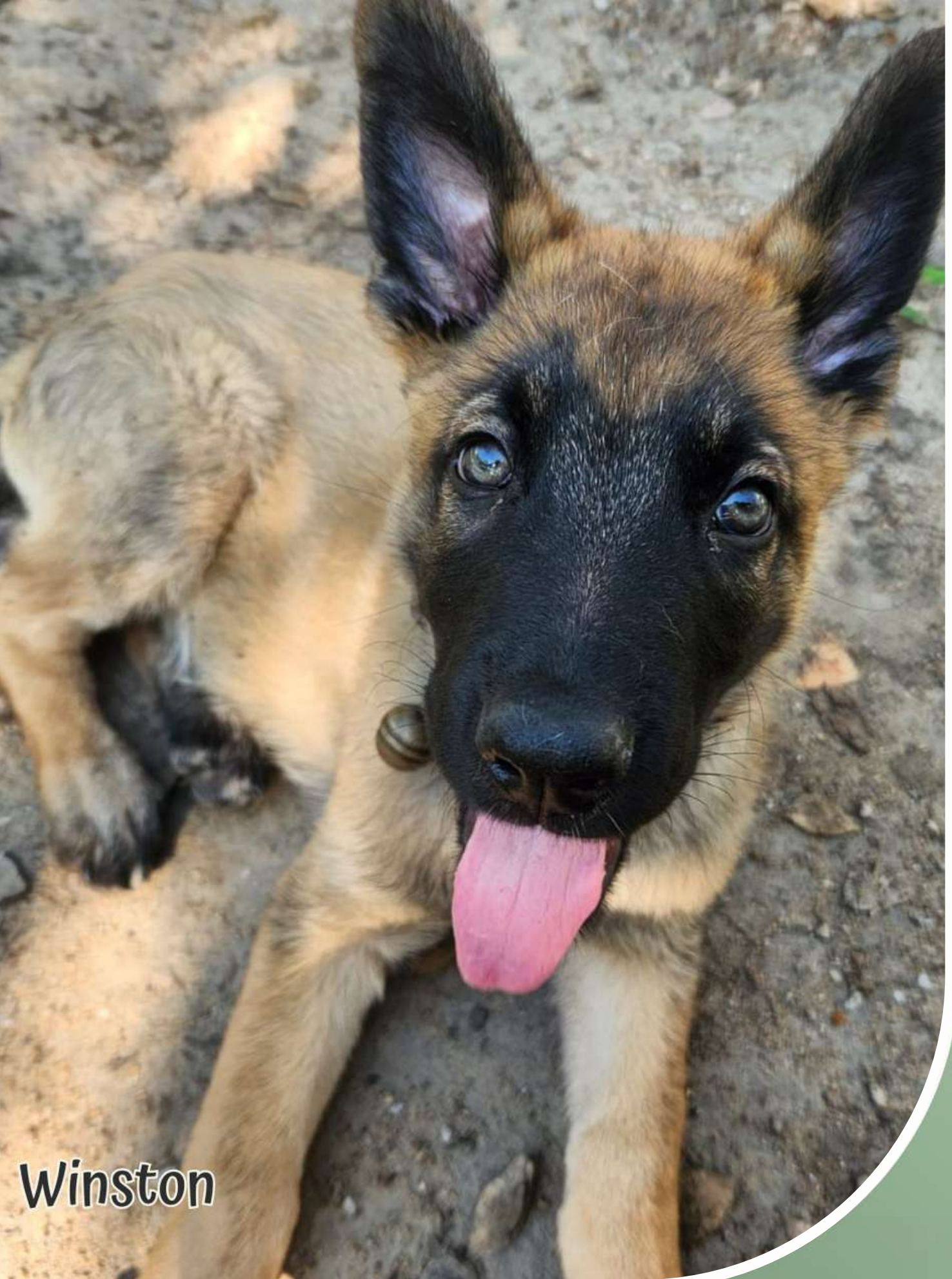
## Security

Fires – in 2023 we back burned the perimeter in order to prevent bush fires reaching the foundation. The early and continuous rains also lowered the risk of fires drastically. Thankfully, no wildfires occurred on the VMF premises, and we were blessed with green vegetation throughout most of the year.

Security – there was no instance of theft in 2023. It seems like the sanctuary wide alarm system is working well. Besides the panic buttons all staff members carry at nighttime, light beam detectors are installed that send alarms to Dave and local staff SD Victor.

George (Dave's dog) and Rocky (Josie's dog) received reinforcement in the form of a new puppy - Winston. Winston is a Belgian Malinois mix and was fostered by the vets at Serala Animal Clinic. He joined Dave and George at the tender age of 3 months. He is learning fast from his big brother George who he adores and loves to play with Rocky for hours.





Winston



## Media

The VMF emphasise the importance of public awareness of the monkeys' situation and threats. We continue to do so through social media, YouTube, interviews and articles.

In February, the Spanish newspaper **El Espanol** published an article on Jess Vasquez and her life with the monkeys. Shortly afterwards, Jess gave an interview to the Spanish radio broadcaster **La Cope**. In May, The VMF was featured in the magazine **Happy Tails**. In October, the South African magazine **HeadsUp** published an article on the VMF and promoted the opportunities to visit the sanctuary for guided tours.

A big success with the Youtube series. It is now in its 7th season, raising awareness with an ever-growing audience. Since the beginning of the year, the subscriber numbers have risen from 57.4K to 69.6K subscribers. The channel has a total of 4.2M views. If that is not an impressive success!

Dave's informative yet compassionate way of narrating the footage taken by voluntary staff and volunteers makes the series special as it comes straight from the Founder. Many viewers wish to see more of the monkeys, and we see an increase in the youtube memberships.

A new feature VMF fans around the world can enjoy are the weekly livestreams on Youtube. Every weekend (Saturdays), we stream live from Disneyland nursery area and several different introduction cages and enclosures. This has become a weekly ritual with many regulars enjoying a relaxed, monkey-filled start to their day where they can also ask questions on the live chat.



A FILM BY KYLE SALAZAR

# THE VERVET FOREST

WWW.THEVERVETFOREST.COM

© @VERVET\_FOREST | PHOTOGRAPHY & DESIGN BY JACKIE RUSSO

# The Vervet Monkey Foundation



## Welcome to Vervet Monkey Foundation

The Vervet Monkey Foundation (VMF) is a non-profit organization (#020 694 NPO) established in 1993. Our center is based in South Africa and provides sanctuary to over 600 primates.

## Rehabilitation programme

The VMF has over many years developed and pioneered a new approach to the rehabilitation of orphaned vervet monkeys. In 1998 we announced our intention to develop a new approach to the rehabilitation of orphaned monkeys. We have since electrified our enclosures that are natural, and by using

## Article in Heads Up

Shorts

## Youtube - now also with shorts



When your orphan buddy thinks you having more fun...

2.6K views



Challenged Monkey Rexie helps Orphan Darby settle in

5.4K views



"Utku's Rainy Day Treat: Corn Time with New Mom"

2.6K views



"Fiona' enjoys"

2.9K views



## Social Media

We are continuously very active on our social media platforms to further increase the engagement and outreach. Our aim is to educate people around the world and spread awareness for the monkeys' situation in South Africa and our work as a primate rehabilitation sanctuary.

Our facebook pages and groups as well as our Instagram has seen a larger number of followers. This led to an increase in engagement such as likes, shares, comments and ultimately donations and awareness. We are very thankful for the 15 facebook birthday fundraisers, which raised a total of R39,892 by the community.

We are delighted with the enormous Instagram engagement on our page. The number of followers is now stable at 92.2k followers! Thank you Animal Manager Becky, for the fantastic cute, yet educational and always interesting posts. The Instagram audience enjoyed a total of 5 Instagram lives and fundraisers. Popular were the cooking classes with head chef Simone, as well as Josie and Becky with orphan Boogie.

In 2021, the VMF created a tiktok account to promote our work to a new audience. Josie and Luna continued to spoil the audience with little funny videos of monkeys and educational messages about the rehabilitation of vervets at the VMF. We now have over 5000 followers, nearly doubling in just a year. Thank you, Josie and Luna, for another year of winning attention of the younger generations.





Becky and Josie on livestream



Vic on release





# Education

The VMF was privileged to explain the importance of rehabilitation work to 79 students from the Belgian university VIVES and Tshwane university, department of Nature conservation in Pretoria. The students visited divided in two groups, one in March, the other in May. They spent the morning at the VMF, learning about the threats monkeys are facing in South Africa and reasons why orphan babies are handed in to the VMF. They also learnt about the foster mum programme and its benefits over traditional rehabilitation programmes. After enjoying a vegan lunch, the students left with many new inputs to think about.

In June, Animal Manager Becky Easter gave a presentation to biology students of the 8th semester of University of Mexico State, discussing rehabilitation and the work of wildlife sanctuaries.





Becky giving baby care presentation



Mark giving tour



## European Events

In 2023, the VMF participated in 3 events in Belgium and Luxemburg. IARC2024 (International Animal Rights Conference) in Esch-sur-Alzette (Luxemburg) gave the public the opportunity to learn about the VMF and its volunteering programme for four days in September. In October, the VMF had stalls at the Vegan A'Fairs in Brugge (Belgium) and the Vegan Christmas Market in Heppen, Leopoldsborg (Belgium). We are excited to see, that more audience is attracted by these events. Sadly, the numbers have still not recovered to the pre-pendamic ones. We hope, that 2024 will bring a larger public interest in the events and the amazing volunteering opportunities at the VMF.

Big thank you to Hilde Olbrecht for being the face of the VMF in Europe and spreading the word to a larger audience.

## UK Events

The VMF was represented at 2 events in 2023 - at Bath Vegan Fair on 4th November and Manchester Vegan Christmas Fair on 19th November. Both events were a great opportunity to spread awareness of the sanctuary and speak to people who are looking for volunteering experiences and internships with likeminded people. 2023 also saw the opening of the U.K. based online VMF shop where a small selection of products that complement the main VMF online shop are available for people to purchase. These include our vegan recipe book 'Prime-eats' which contains many recipes and beautiful photos of the VMF monkeys.

In 2024 we will be considering the best events for the VMF to be represented at that consider the changing nature of U.K. vegan events. We also hope to launch the U.K. arm of the VMF charity which will enable us to raise more much needed funds that support our work.

Big thank you to Shellie Robinson to represent the VMF in the UK.







## PASA/GFAS

The Vervet Monkey Foundation has been an active member of Pan African Sanctuary Alliance (PASA) since February 2006. Proudly, the Vervet Monkey Foundation was yet again re-accredited in 2022 for the excellent care provided to all monkeys.

The PASA code of conduct requires all members and staff to exhibit:

a) a concern for the primates, b) integrity, c) transparency, d) fairness, e) conscientiousness, f) professionalism, g) personal and institutional commitment to conservation.

The Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries (GFAS) is dedicated to the sole purpose of strengthening and supporting the work of animal sanctuaries, rescues, and rehabilitation centers worldwide. The VMF is accredited member since 2015 and was re-accredited in 2021.

In March, Dave joined the PASA Strategic Development Conference at Lilongwe in Malawi.

In October, the VMF was acknowledged with the **GFAS Outstanding Wildlife Sanctuary 2023 Award**. The VMF is very proud of the recognition of our work and our devotion to strive for excellent care for all animals in our care.

VMF would like to thank PASA and GFAS for their support for sanctuaries through training, and peer discussions to improve the animal's lives in Africa and worldwide.





PASA conference at Lilongwe





## Grants

In 2023, the VMF reached financial stability thanks to the emergency grants received to combat the respiratory disease and the grant from IPPL.



Gratefully we received a grant towards general funds from International Primate Protection League (IPPL). \$7,5000 was granted to be used where needed.

The grant has been used for general running costs as well as to cover the costs for food, medical costs and to secure the basic needs of the monkeys on site. Without this generous grant, we wouldn't be able to provide this level of excellent care for the monkeys. Thank you, IPPL!

## FLOAT campaign

FLOAT (for love of all things), is an organisation, that creates unique T-Shirts and sells them on their website. Their goal is creating awareness and funding for the world's best non-profits by conducting limited edition apparel campaigns for a week each and contributing \$8 from every sale to the current week's cause.



They approached the VMF to collaborate and highlight the sanctuary for a week on their online platforms with a special design of Zach.

The T-Shirts were very popular and were able to raise total funds of 608\$ for the monkeys. Thank you FLOAT for this great campaign and we hope to collaborate in the future again!





FLOAT's Zach T-Shirts



Zach



# Facility Upgrades

The VMF seeks to always improve current facilities and practices, considering the monkeys' and volunteers' needs. Most projects are constructed by the impressive skills of the local team under Local Team Managers Innocent and Lucas's guidance, paired up with Director Dave's vision.

The new Main Feed area that was fully built in 2022, was furnished in January 2023 and ready to use. It is a spacious place to prepare the monkey food without the wild troop taking pieces of banana for themselves. The local and voluntary team enjoy the new Main Feed which is also more efficient, hygienic and organised.

Load shedding is governmental imposed power cuts 6-12 hours a day, necessary as not enough power is generated to brighten up the entire country of South Africa. These long hours without electricity can pose risks to the monkeys when the electric fences don't work, or sickbay is not functional. Additional risks come with long hours in which the fridges and freezers aren't working. To tackle this problem, we have purchased larger batteries to store solar power even at night or rainy days. Now, the VMF is mostly independent from municipality power.

Further projects were able to be completed:

- All wooden cabins in volunteer village are equipped with electricity and a fan
- Re-piping most of the sanctuary to avoid leaks and water loss
- Building of a new toilet block at the cottage
- Painting Disneyland and Sickbay for more hygienic cleaning





The volunteer village  
now has power!



New Toilet block at  
the cottage



# The Year Ahead

We are proud of our accomplishments of last year. It took many helping hands in a dedicated team to achieve them. We are grateful for everyone supporting and assisting us on the way. For the coming year, we have some more ambitious plans, always in mind to make the life for the monkeys and volunteers the best possible.

- Attract more volunteers with updated cabin designs
- Increase social media presence
- Tap into new fundraising opportunities
- Modernise fencing for the older enclosures as part of the 30yr re-build
- Dedicate more time towards socialisation and integration of single housed monkeys

A huge thank you to everyone who supported the VMF throughout 2023. It has been a special year of celebrations for the VMF, honouring the 30 years of our existence. Receiving the Outstanding Sanctuary Award 2023 by GFAS as encouraged us to continue with our way. Lastly, the outpouring support during the Outbreak during the last weeks of the year has warmed our hearts.

We look with hope and dedication at the year 2024, ready to create more miracles.





Atlas and Yllena



# When Monkeys Dream...

## The Vervet Forest

The VMF is grateful for having witnessed miracle after miracle happening in the hands of our dedicated team. Yet, today's world still gives monkeys reasons for nightmares. But we can change it. We can create a little heaven for monkeys in which dreams come true.

The Vervet Monkey Foundation envisions the creating of a safe space for the rehabilitated monkeys to be released in. We call this forest the Vervet Forest and it should encompass about 300-500ha of indigenous bush. This land will be a protected forest for rehabilitated orphaned and abused vervet monkeys who will be free from hunting, culling and human conflict. In addition to providing a sustainable home for the released monkeys, this land will also maintain a whole thriving ecosystem that benefits indigenous plant and animal life, as well as creating dozens of local jobs.

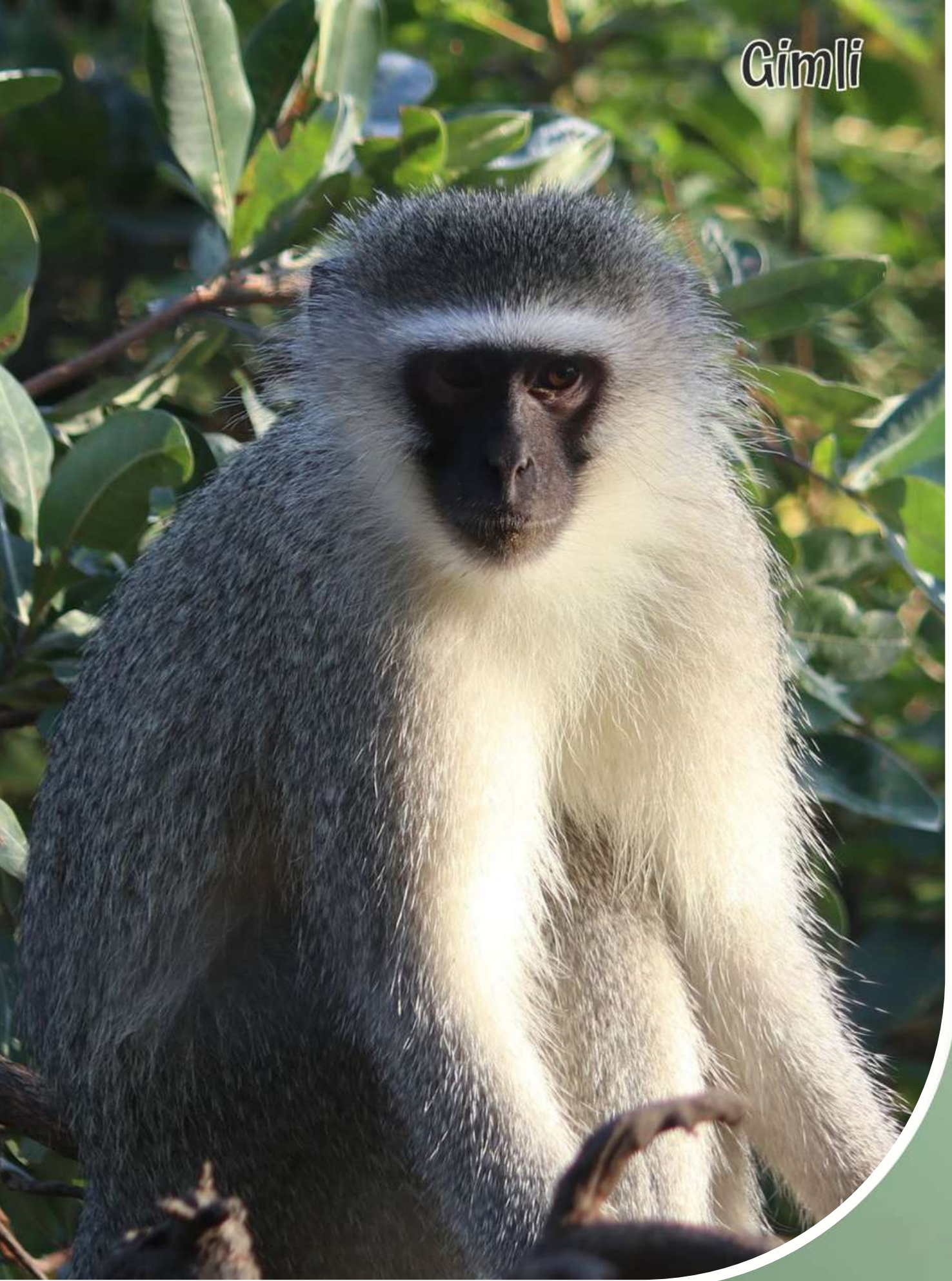
New attention was brought upon the Vervet Forest in January 2023. For the first time, the Vervet Forest Documentary by Kyle Salazar premiered on youtube and is now available for free. Since then, it has been seen over a quarter million times.

In April, our new website [www.vervetforest.org](http://www.vervetforest.org) launched along with the Vervet Forest Project Plan (created by Operations Manager Hana Bruger). It explains in great detail and with stunning pictures the steps we need to take in order to make the Vervet Forest vision a reality.

Strap on your shoes and follow us on this whimsical journey.

**Make Monkey Dreams Come True**





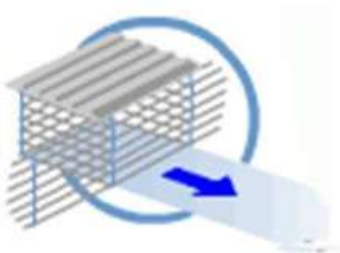




# Vervet Monkey Foundation

## Annual Report 2023

Friends  
of the  
vervets



For more information please contact:

Vervet Monkey Foundation : PO BOX 415 : TZANEEN 0850 :  
PLOT 35 : CALIFORNIA : TARENTAALRAND : LETSITELE :  
e-mail [info@vervet.za.org](mailto:info@vervet.za.org)

