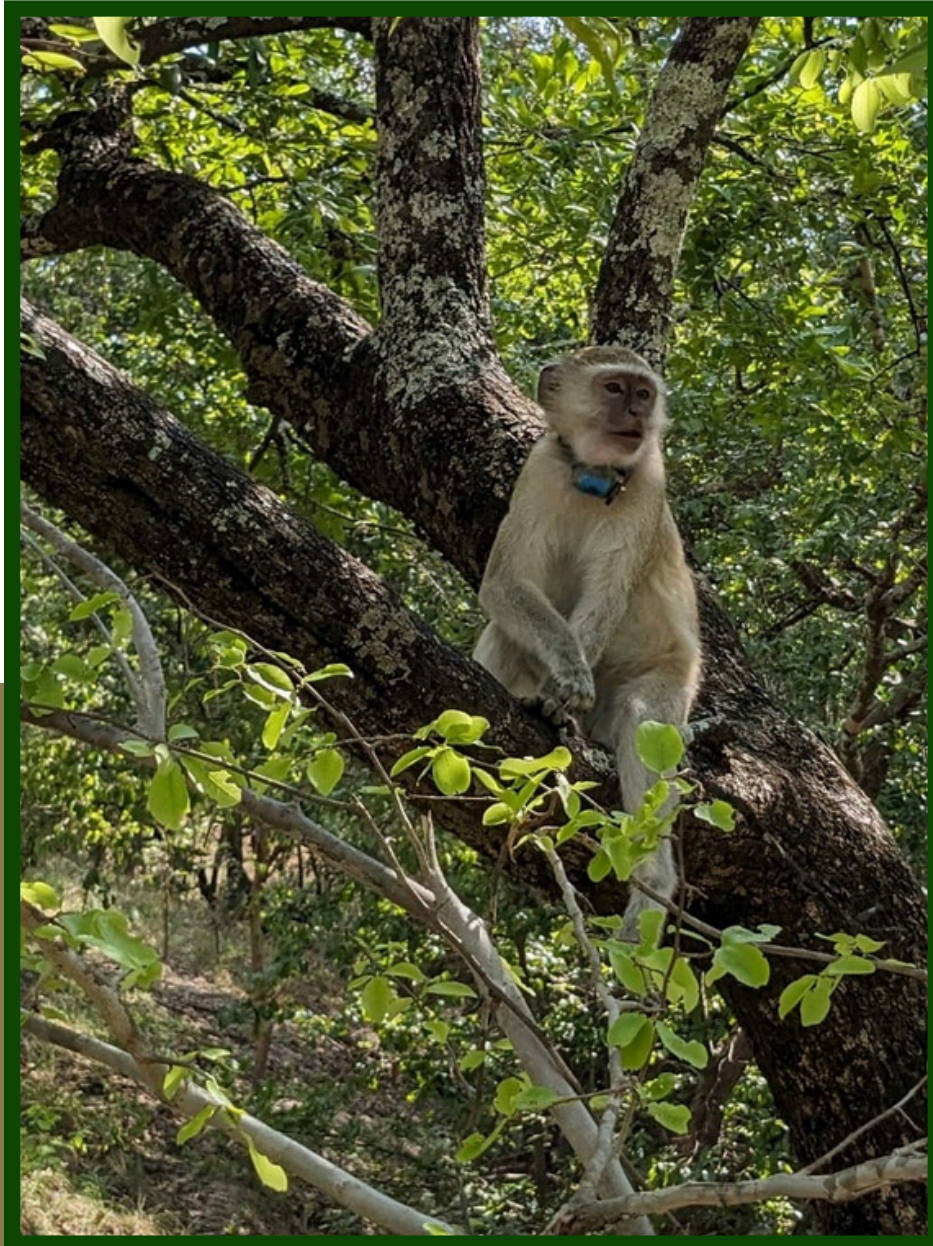

GAME RANGERS

INTERNATIONAL



BUSH TELEGRAPH

VOL.10
ZAMBIA PRIMATE PROJECT



#WeAreAllRangers

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Above: Member of the release troop "Nkonde" feeding on wild fruit moments after release.

Front Cover: Big Boy keeps his eyes on the troop moments after emerging as overall dominant male and troop leader.

Page 3: Valentine requires around the clock care

Page 4: Chimfunshi, the dominant male of the yellow baboon troop's fatherly tendencies displayed as he welcomed in the young baboons into his family.

Back Page: Albert in the pre-release enclosure

SAVING WILDLIFE AND WILD SPACES BY EMPOWERING RANGERS AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES TO CONSERVE NATURE



*Cosmas Mumba
Zambia Primate Project Manager*

INTRODUCTORY MESSAGE

By Cosmas Mumba

The Zambia Primate Project (ZPP) is a conservation-based project aimed at rescuing primates that have been victims of immense cruelty at the hands of humans. ZPP operates in the Kafue National Park but responds to rescues country-wide. We work in close collaboration with the Department of National Parks and Wildlife (DNPW), conservation NGOs and other stakeholders to protect Zambia's wildlife.

Our mission is to rescue, rehabilitate and release back to the wild monkeys and baboons that are victims of the illegal wildlife trade or compromised by human-wildlife conflict. To ensure lasting change, GRI also works to educate and sensitise local communities thereby reducing the number of primates being taken from the wild.

The Zambia Primate Project was started in 2002 under the Lunga Lushwishi Wildlife Project. With the support of the Born Free Foundation, ZPP became independent and a Zambian-registered organization in 2008. In 2023, Game Rangers International (GRI) incorporated this dedicated conservation project within its Wildlife Rescue Programme.

Since its inception, ZPP has successfully facilitated the release of 837 primates back into the wild. The survival rate of the released primates is between 85 - 100% at 12 months after release, making ZPP one of the most successful Primate Release Projects in the world.

Through this project, we hope to alleviate suffering, promote human-wildlife coexistence and give primates a second chance of life back to the wild.

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WILDLIFE RESCUE PROGRAMME

RESCUE
REHABILITATE
RELEASE



On 11th December we travelled to Mufumbe with DNPW to confiscate this vervet monkey, 9-month old John. He was being kept as a pet and tied to a tree.

BUSTLING WITH RESCUE OPERATIONS

RESCUE

Between October and December 2023, the Zambian Primate Project (ZPP) was bustling with rescue operations, resulting in the successful retrieval and relocation of six primates to the Primate Transit Home (PTH) in Kafue National Park. Confiscations can sometimes prove risky, as possession of primates is illegal, and our team are always accompanied by Officers from the Department of National Parks (DNPW) and Wildlife and Zambia Police. Handling such a significant number of primates required additional road travel and close cooperation with partners at Chimfunshi Wildlife Orphanage located in the Copperbelt where many of these victims have been located. Their assistance with both rescues and primary care of the primates has helped streamline ZPP rescue operations and costs.

JAMES

On November 21st, we received information about a small, young Vervet Monkey being sold as a pet in the Luangwa district. Sadly, his mother had been killed for bushmeat. With support from DNPW, we were able to intervene and rescue him. Although he was young and vulnerable, fortunately, he had no injuries. Typically, at this age, we prefer young primates to be with a human surrogate mother for continuous care and physical contact, but unfortunately, we couldn't find a suitable option. After a health check, James was transferred to the Primate Nursery at the PTH, where we were already looking after older rescue Vervet, Mabula.



James upon rescue on November 2023

UPDATE ON MABULA

Maluba, now 7-months-old, has been exceptionally welcoming to the five other babies in the nursery enclosure. They are all coexisting peacefully, engaging in lots of playful interactions.



Mabula upon rescue in September 2023



Mabula now!



3-week old Bobi was rescued on the 23rd November when found by farmers in Chisamba. Her mother had been killed by dogs. This tiny Vervet Monkey was taken in by a family until she could be collected by the PTH team.

MAX

On December 12th, we visited Chimfunshi Wildlife Orphanage (CWO) to retrieve young Max. He was discovered 60km away from Solwesi by local farmers, all by himself without a mother or group nearby. We collaborated with CWO to offer initial assistance and essential care until we could organize a broader response and coordinate with other rescue efforts.



Max eating a banana just after rescue

CHIMFEMBWE

On 13th December, we were in Mufurila acting on intelligence about a Vervet Monkey being kept as a pet for over a year and a half. When we confiscated the monkey, it was visibly distressed and had an injured eye affecting its vision. The monkey was chained heavily to a tree. In Lusaka, he received a health check at UNZA vet school, and his damaged eye was thoroughly examined. Unfortunately, the vets determined that he is completely blind in the left eye due to the severe damage. He will be closely monitored at the PTH for any difficulties. Despite the loss of sight in one eye, he is otherwise in good health. We believe that being blind in one eye should not hinder his chances of being released. He will join a family troop where members support each other, and monkeys rely more on sound and smell than vision to sense predators.



Chimfembwe at 1 year, 9 months old



Chimfembwe's left eye is totally blind but it will not impact his release



Chikinho (front) is introduced to Mandy and they both initially play it 'cool', demonstrating more interest in food than each other – however it was not long before they bonded.

REHABILITATING PRIMATES

RECOVERY, HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT

Six primates were rescued this quarter and promptly moved to the Primate Transit Home (PTH) for initial care and isolation. Initially, James, Bobi, Max, and Chikinho received support in the Nursery, while older John and Chifwembe were placed together in a quarantine enclosure to foster a new relationship.

Over those months, significant changes occurred in the Nursery dynamics. The newcomers, James, Bobi, Max, and Chikinho, settled in, and as other primates moved on, shifts were observed. The Nursery troop consisted of Vervets Chali, Albert, Kanono, and Yellow Baboon Mandy when the new youngsters were introduced. It was essential to integrate Mandy and Chikinho into the group to ensure a successful release, as we had fewer rescued Baboons than Vervet Monkeys. Mandy had formed a strong bond with Kanono, raising concerns about their separation. Fortunately, Chikinho's arrival led to an immediate connection with Mandy, fostering a positive relationship. Kanono, meanwhile, was preoccupied with bonding with Chali and Albert. The introduction of younger Vervets, James, Bobi, and Max, did not disrupt the harmony among the seven primates in the Nursery, who coexisted peacefully until the older primates moved on after about a week.



James, Bobi and Max explore their new home



Chali, Chila and Tiny were introduced in the quarantine before their relocation together to the night rooms alongside the main Vervet enclosure to begin their transition into a new family troop !

QUARANTINE

At the end of December, the only Vervets left in the quarantine enclosures were newcomers John and Chifwembe. Both of them appear to have settled in well. There were no specific difficulties observed for Chifwembe in relation to his blind eye. He navigated the enclosure comfortably, eating, and drinking without any issues. John's teeth also healed nicely since being cleaned and treated; he has been seen to be eating and chewing well, showing no signs of discomfort. Throughout their time in quarantine together, there was a lot of playing and social grooming. This was their first experience having another monkey companion, as they had both been kept as pets, confined in backyards without social interaction. They spent a significant amount of time together, taking full advantage of this social interaction. We are confident they will easily integrate into the main troop.

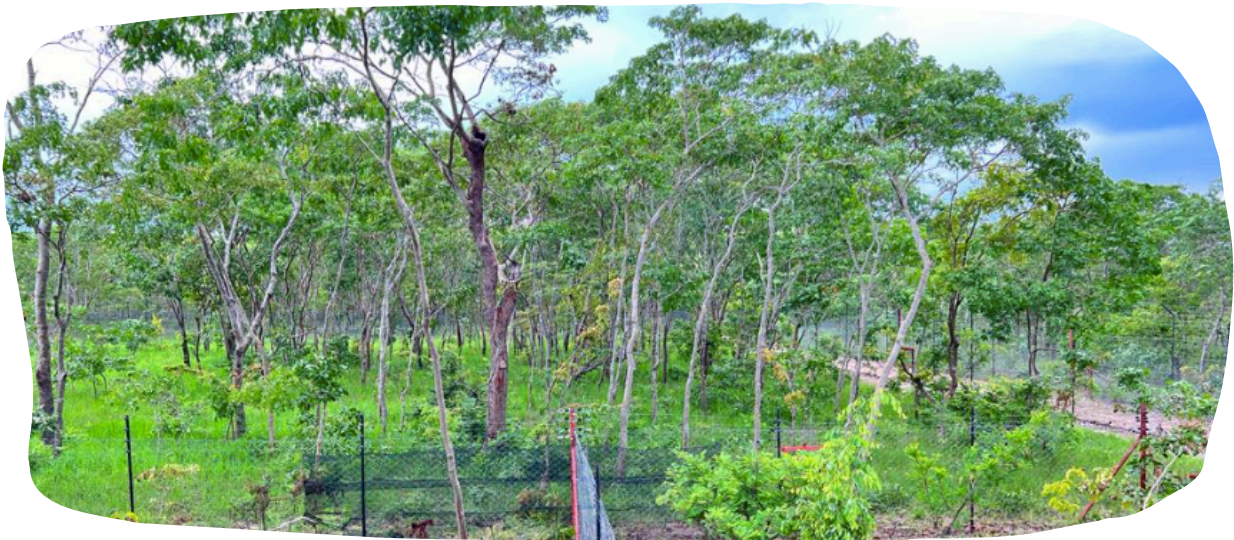


John's damaged teeth from being fed the incorrect diet.

PRIMATE RESHUFFLE

November was a very significant month for the progression of the 2023 Vervet troop...

Throughout October, we conducted detailed studies on each individual to assess their behaviours in the wild, foraging skills, and overall adaptation to the wild. We are pleased to report that all 22 Vervets remained together and are thriving back in their natural habitat, achieving a 100% post-release survival rate at the one-year, one - month milestone.



The primate enclosures are 60x60m (with smaller integration paddocks at the front) and provide the recovering primates with ample space for movement, play and socialisation, as well as natural trees to hone their arboreal skills, until they are ready to be released. The external fence is electrified to prevent escapees and the primate enclosures are further protected with an electrified periphery fence to ensure predators are kept at bay.

RELEASE

2022 TROOP

Throughout early October, we maintained regular monitoring of the 2022 release troop to assess the health and well-being of each individual. This was crucial as we had noticed a decline in body condition among several Vervets in previous weeks, prompting us to implement a supplemental feeding program.



Supplemental feeding



The troop forages for food

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2023 TROOP

In August, 27 Vervets received approval from UNZA vets regarding their health and condition for release.. Five of them were equipped with radio collars for post release-monitoring, and predator avoidance training was conducted. On 3rd November, trapping of the monkeys began by luring them into cages with their favourite treats. Subsequently, they were placed together in transport cages. While 26 Vervets entered the cages easily, 'Mule', coincidentally named, was hesitant. Fortunately, by the morning of 4th November, he was persuaded with food, and all 27 monkeys were transported for an hour to the Release Site near the Lwasanda River on the northern side of South Kafue National Park.



The monkeys were carefully loaded into vehicles for transfer to their new home



John 2nd (left) and Ben (right) hug and comfort one another as they await transport to the release site

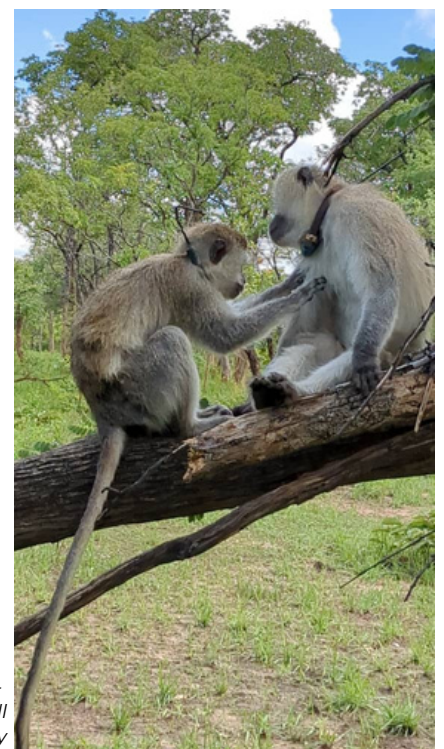


The temporary holding enclosure ensures the primates are calm and cohesive before their a released back into the wild

Upon arrival, the primates were moved to a temporary holding area to acclimate to their new surroundings, including new sounds, scents, and sights. This phase allows them to adjust and settle after the relocation. Ensuring the primates feel safe, relaxed, and confident upon release is crucial to prevent them from fleeing or scattering due to fear. The time spent in the temporary enclosure helps them unwind, strengthen bonds, and normalize their stress levels. However, it's essential to strike a balance as prolonged confinement in a smaller space may lead to increased aggression among troop members accustomed to freedom.

After spending 10 days inside the enclosure, the team felt that the monkeys were prepared. With great excitement and anticipation, they opened the doors to the holding enclosure, granting the 27 Vervet monkeys their rightful freedom to live in the wild. Watching the primates joyfully leaping from tree to tree, embracing their newfound liberty, their initial excitement transitioned into internal struggles for dominance within the troop. Following 2 hours of strength testing and conflicts, the appropriately named adult Vervet Monkey, "Big Boy," emerged as the dominant male, establishing himself as the troop leader. This natural hierarchy plays a vital role in the troop's survival in the wild, providing leadership for decision-making and protection during times of unrest or threats from wild monkeys or predators.

“On behalf of the team, I would like to say thank you to all our beloved supporters for your endless support and the love you show towards the primates, we could not do what we do without each one of you.”
Reported Cosmas Mumba ZPP’s Project Manager



Maria (left) grooms Boyd - The 5 radio collars are functioning well and enable the troop to be monitored daily



Cosmas making observations and collecting data post-release

POST-RELEASE MONITORING

RELEASE

Chart showing the Vervet Monkey and Yellow Baboon release rate vs survival rate between 2002 – 2024:

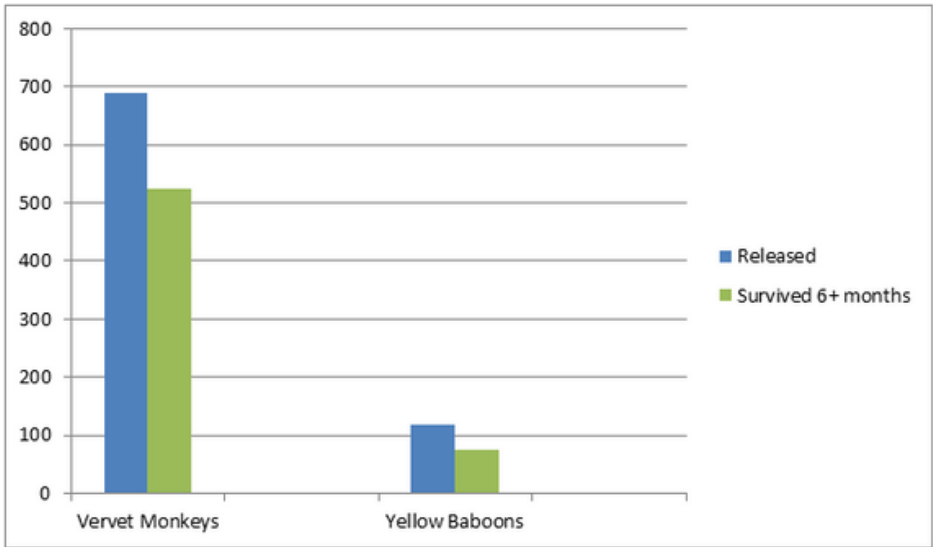
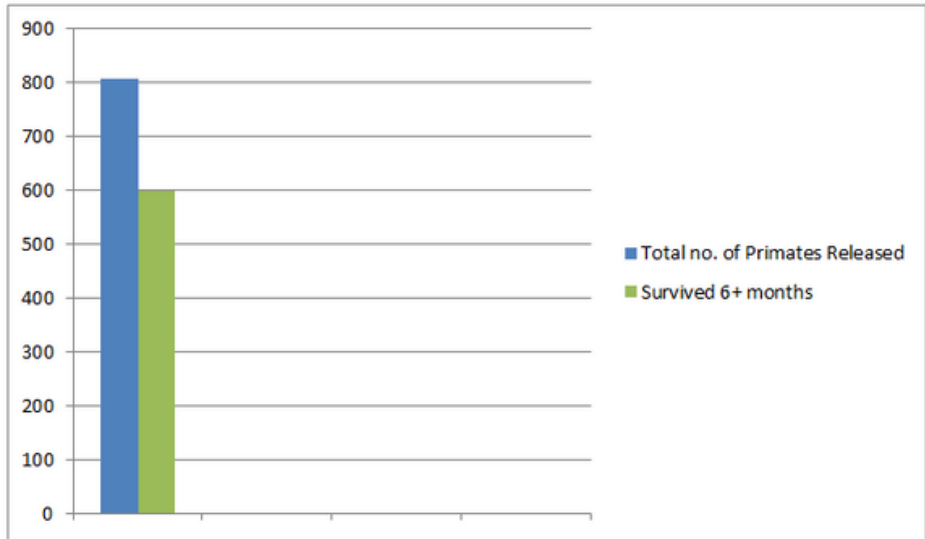


Chart showing the combined number of Primate releases vs survival rate between 2002 – 2024. This is a very high success rate.





The dedicated team of rangers who care for the primates from rescue, through the rehabilitation process.

STATISTICS

OCTOBER - DECEMBER 2023

<i>By end Q4</i>	Vervet monkeys	Yellow baboons
Rescues throughout Q423	5	1
Medical treatment for injuries	2	0
With surrogate mother/s	0	0
Nursery	3	0
Quarantine	2	0
PTH Troop enclosures	7	10
Release Site	27	0
Total primates currently in care	49	
PRM collars (functional)	5 release troop	0



A tiny new rescued Vervet Monkey snuggles in a towel. Primates require much comfort and body contact at this vulnerable age.



The newly comprised 2024 vervet troop forage and enjoy the space of the main PTH enclosure

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COMMUNITY OUTREACH PROGRAMME

ENGAGE
EDUCATE
EMPOWER



Students receive their certificates for participating in the Discovery Day

MONKEYING AROUND!

WILDLIFE DISCOVERY CENTRE

At the GRI Wildlife Discovery Centre, our lesson on primates during Discovery Days is a captivating exploration into the fascinating world of these intelligent creatures. Designed for reception class to grade 2 students, this lesson delves into the vital role primates play in their ecosystems and the essential elements they need to survive.

Our lesson begins by introducing students to the concept of primates as important contributors to forest community structure. We discuss how primates aid in seed dispersal and pollination of angiosperms and other plant species, highlighting their significance in maintaining the balance of their habitats.

Moving on, we explore the essential elements required for primates to survive, air, food, shelter, and water. Through engaging discussions and interactive activities, we encourage students to understand the interconnectedness of these elements and how their absence would make survival challenging for primates. This part of the lesson not only imparts knowledge about the basic needs of animals but also fosters empathy and appreciation for the delicate balance of nature.

Next, we delve into the features that make primates unique and well-adapted to their environments. We focus on their hands, specially designed for grasping and manipulating objects, showcasing how these adaptations aid them in various tasks such as foraging for food and building shelters.

To conclude the lesson on a creative note, we engage students in a fun arts and crafts activity: drawing a monkey. This hands-on activity allows children to express their understanding of primate features while honing their artistic skills. It also serves as a memorable takeaway from the lesson, reinforcing the key concepts discussed throughout the session.

As our young explorers complete their monkey drawings, they not only take home a piece of art but also a deeper appreciation for the importance of primates in our ecosystems. Through hands-on learning and creative expression, we inspire the next generation to become stewards of wildlife and champions of conservation.

At the GRI Wildlife Discovery Centre, every Discovery Day is a step towards fostering curiosity, learning, and a love for the natural world. Join us on this exciting journey of exploration and discovery!



Children doing their drawing lesson



The final artwork produced



Bushmeat recovered by Rangers in ITT

DANGERS OF EATING BUSHMEAT

ZOONOSES FROM PRIMATES

Zoonotic diseases (also known as zoonoses) are caused by germs that spread between animals and people. Examples of zoonotic diseases include animal flu; anthrax; bird flu bovine tuberculosis; brucellosis; ebola etc...

Unfortunately Primates are often caught, killed and sold to the illegal bushmeat trade.

Key facts according to World Health Organisation:

- A zoonosis is any disease or infection that is naturally transmissible from vertebrate animals to humans
- There are over 200 known types of zoonoses
- Zoonoses comprise a large percentage of new and existing diseases in humans
- Some zoonoses, such as rabies, are 100% preventable through vaccination and other methods



Chikinho at 1 year old.

On 24th November we received this yellow baboon from Mumbwa. His mother was killed for bush meat; someone was trying to sell him as a pet.

MPOX (MONKEYPOX) IS A ZOO NOTIC DISEASE!

The mpox virus causes mpox.

- The virus spreads through close contact with an infected animal or person.

Mpox spreads from an animal to a person through:

- Animal bites or scratches.
- Wild game that is cooked for food.
- Products, such as skins or furs, made of infected animals.
- Direct contact with body fluids or rashes of animals with mpox.

PREVENT ZOONOSES



HUNTING



BUTCHERING



COOKING



EATING

BUSHMEAT PUTS YOU AT RISK OF DISEASE



PARTNERS

WILDLIFE RESCUE PROGRAMME PARTNERS



RESOURCE PROTECTION PROGRAMME PARTNERS



COMMUNITY OUTREACH PROGRAMME PARTNERS



WILDLIFE DISCOVERY CENTRE PARTNERS





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