



HM GOVERNMENT OF GIBRALTAR
Ministry for Health & Environment
Joshua Hassan House
Secretary's Lane
Gibraltar

PRESS RELEASE

No. 143/2013

Date: 5th March 2013

Opposition did not deal effectively with ape problem when they had the chance

The GSD Opposition have clearly lost their way in trying to discredit the Government at every opportunity. In criticising the latest action to scare the macaques away from built-up areas they are showing their total lack of knowledge on the subject.

While macaques and baboons (on which noise has been tried as a deterrent) seem to acclimatize rapidly to automated sonic disturbance, they do not to harassment by people using sonic means. The latter is the method being used, with some success already.

The idea is to make the monkeys uncomfortable in all the built-up areas, and not to allow them to settle in alternative ones, as the GSD Opposition environment spokesman, Jaime Netto, curiously seems to be suggesting.

This is just one of several strategies being implemented in coming weeks, which will also see increased monitoring of the macaques to clearly establish their movements, which will help to better deal with management issues.

Steps to export groups of macaques continue, and will be announced once arrangements are in place.

The Opposition is clearly calling for fullscale killing of Gibraltar macaques. It seems to forget the wide ranging negative publicity that Gibraltar faced last time such culling tookplace, which included campaigns by major international bodies aimed at hitting the Gibraltar tourist industry. Indeed, despite the culling, and as predicted by the experts, the macaques were back in built up areas within months as other groups moved in to fill the gaps. This is because the GSD failed to tackle other management issues designed at discouraging movement into Town. Therefore, they killed dozens of monkeys for nothing. They failed to follow through these crisis management tactics with anything significant.

The GSLP/Liberal Government is doing a great deal of work behind the scenes in developing a Plan and strategies to deal with these problems on a permanent basis, using intimate knowledge of nature to resolve them.

It is shameful that the GSD is failing to support Government in its efforts, by joining in its "Get our monkeys back to nature" campaign, and backing Government calls to stop illegal feeding. They know that this is one of the key factors. They failed to do anything when they had sixteen years in Government to do it, and now they do not even have the dignity to join in a unified Gibraltar-wide attempt to solve this problem once and for all.