



## Wild Animals are NOT Pets

### Adopt a Pet, Not a Problem

#### Problem:

Non-human primates are popular pets and are often purchased as infants. Primates do not make suitable pets. The average person simply cannot provide the appropriate housing, veterinary care, or diet that a primate requires to thrive. Primates often become aggressive as they grow older, and they carry numerous highly contagious human diseases.

#### Facts:

- Primates can potentially transmit such dangerous human diseases as yellow fever, monkey pox, Ebola and Marburg virus, tuberculosis, herpes-b, and Simian Immunodeficiency Virus (SIV), the primate form of HIV.
- In the United States, keeping primates as pets has taken on a new dimension with the phenomenon of monkeys being treated as "surrogate children." Many childless people will acquire primates as babies only to discover that they cannot care for—or control—a full-grown animal.
- Pet primates are often mutilated to be rendered less dangerous. Teeth and fingernails are often removed.
- Primates are highly intelligent and social animals. Most captive environments cannot meet their complex social and psychological needs, and pet primates are typically kept chained or confined in small, sterile enclosures.
- Many privately owned non-human primates have attacked humans and other animals, or have escaped from their enclosures to freely roam the community. Bites from non-human primates can cause severe lacerations and infections. For example, in Florida, a herpes-B positive pig-tailed macaque bit a 4 year old girl while being taken for a walk; a girl in Tennessee was bitten by her stepfather's pet Japanese snow macaque; and in Missouri, a 7 year old boy was attacked by a neighbor's pet rhesus macaque and underwent months of medical tests.
- Monkeys are the most common non-human primates to be privately kept. Upon sexual maturity, monkeys tend to exhibit unpredictable behavior. They routinely become aggressive, and both males and females bite to defend themselves and to establish dominance.

## Primate Fact Sheet



- Some pet primates are cast-offs from the entertainment industry, unaccredited zoos, and research institutes, and end up in private hands or in substandard roadside attractions and pseudo-sanctuaries.
- In Africa, the hunting of wild animals for their meat—known as the bushmeat trade—is fueling the extinction of many primate species. Baby primates that are too small to be of any food value often end up as orphans in the pet trade.
- Over 40% of the 234 primate species are now threatened with extinction. There is no conservation benefit to captive breeding for the pet trade.
- There are no federal laws in the U.S. banning primate ownership or exotic animal ownership in general. Fourteen states ban private possession of exotic animals, seven states have a partial ban, and fifteen require a license or permit.

#### Solution

- Never buy a primate for a pet.
- Do not patronize substandard unaccredited facilities that exhibit primates.
- Support H.R. 1329, the Captive Primate Safety Act, and other legislation to regulate the ownership of wild animals as pets.

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