



Position Statement Service Monkeys

The North American Primate Sanctuary Alliance (NAPSA) is opposed to the use of monkeys as service animals.

NAPSA is a coalition of nine of the leading primate sanctuaries on the continent. In our member sanctuaries, we care for over 800 monkeys and apes, many of whom bear the physical and psychological scars of private ownership.

While the relationship between a disabled human and a service monkey may appear mutually beneficial on the surface, the monkeys used in this industry have sacrificed their health and general well-being. Unlike dogs and cats, monkeys are not domesticated animals and cannot be made so in one generation or twenty. Painful training methods, including electric shock packs, are utilized in an attempt to control these naturally independent and inquisitive wild animals. Non-human primates are extremely social animals whose normal development requires the company of others of their own kind. Ideally, primates should live in the wild. Their natural habitats include species-typical social groups that allow them to learn from their families and have a rich emotional life.

These monkeys' lives of servitude begin in a zoo breeding colony where, as infants, helper monkeys are removed from their mothers years before they would naturally separate, causing psychological suffering that manifests throughout their entire lives. They are subjected to total teeth extraction for "ease of handling", which drastically limits the foods they can eat and often leads to malnutrition.

Primates living in human homes have complex and demanding needs. Monkeys are inquisitive animals who require daily mental stimulation and extensive physical activity, which is impossible for even an able-bodied person to provide. Primates kept in human homes are rarely monitored by animal welfare officials. Experienced veterinary care for primates is difficult to find. Once primates reach adolescence, which can be just a few years into a 40+ year lifespan, they become unmanageable. Primates can and will bite. They have strong jaws, and bites – even from toothless monkeys – result in painful injuries to humans.

Many public and private organizations have realized the fallacies inherent in the service monkey industry. In 2011, the U. S. Department of Justice ruled that monkeys are not service animals under the Americans with Disabilities Act. The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs does not fund service monkeys for veterans. The American Veterinary Medical Association, the Humane Society of the United States and the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals also oppose primates as service animals.

There is no justification for forcing monkeys to serve humans.

For more information:

["Monkey See, Monkey Forced to Do."](#) Friends of Animals

["Atypical Experiences of Captive Chimpanzees \(Pan Troglodytes\) Are Associated with Higher Hair Cortisol Concentrations as Adults."](#) S.L. Jacobson et al.

NAPSA is a fiscally sponsored project of Community Initiatives, an Oakland, CA-based 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.
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