



Center for Great Apes
Wauchula, FL
Patti Ragan, Founder

February 11, 2016

Chimpanzee Sanctuary
Northwest
Cle Elum, WA
JB Mulcahy, Co-Director

Ellen Degeneres
The Ellen Degeneres Show
(submitted via website contact form)

Chimp Haven
Keithville, LA
*Cathy Spraez,
President and CEO*

Dear Ms. Degeneres,

Your February 8th show featured a video clip of a pet monkey getting a bath, and you commented, "Who doesn't want a monkey after seeing that? How can you not want a monkey?" As experts in the field of primate care, we implore you to reconsider promoting the cruelties of the exotic pet trade in this way.

Chimps, Inc.
Bend, OR
Lesley Day, Founder

The North American Primate Sanctuary Alliance (NAPSA) is a coalition of eight of the leading primate sanctuaries on the continent. In our sanctuaries, we care for over 640 primates, many of whom were formerly privately owned as pets. Infant primates bred for the pet trade are removed from their mothers at a very early age – years before they would naturally separate. We see daily evidence of how this affects primates throughout their entire life, including social disorders, self-injurious behavior and depression.

Cleveland Amory Black
Beauty Ranch
Murchison, TX
*Noelle Almrud,
Director of Animal Care*

We are contacted daily by people who – perhaps because they saw cute monkeys on television – purchased a baby monkey and then lived to regret it. Monkeys quickly grow to be strong, cunning and difficult to manage. They can transfer disease and destroy homes. It is simply not possible to fulfill the unique needs of a monkey within a private home. Once someone has decided to no longer keep a pet monkey, it can be problematic to find an accredited sanctuary who has space to take him or her. Most primate sanctuaries have lengthy waiting lists, due in part to the products of the exotic pet industry.

Fauna Foundation
Quebec, Canada
Gloria Grow, Founder

Attached is NAPSA's Position Statement on the private ownership of primates so you may learn more about why keeping a monkey as a pet is so harmful.

Jungle Friends
Gainesville, FL
Kari Bagnall, Founder

We hope you will reconsider the message you spread with your celebrity, especially as someone known as an animal lover. Retract your endorsement of pet monkeys. Do it out of concern for your fans, or do it out of concern for the monkeys unwillingly condemned to captivity – but please do the right thing.

Primate Rescue Center
Nicholasville, KY
April Truitt, Founder

*Erika Fleury
Program Manager*

Sincerely,

Erika Fleury
Program Manager



Center for Great Apes
Wauchula, FL
Patti Ragan, Founder

Advocacy Position Statement Private Ownership of Primates

Chimpanzee Sanctuary
Northwest
Cle Elum, WA
JB Mulcahy, Co-Director

The North American Primate Sanctuary Alliance (NAPSA) is opposed to the private ownership of primates.

Chimp Haven
Keithville, LA
*Cathy Spraez,
President and CEO*

Unlike dogs and cats, apes and monkeys are not domesticated 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. In reality, however, there is an active industry that breeds primates to sell as pets in human homes.

Chimps, Inc.
Bend, OR
Lesley Day, Founder

As infants, primates in the pet trade are removed from their mothers years before they would naturally separate, which causes psychological suffering that manifests throughout their entire life. Teeth are often removed for ease of handling, which can limit the foods they can eat. Qualified veterinary care for pet primates can be difficult, if not impossible, to find.

Cleveland Amory Black
Beauty Ranch
Murchison, TX
*Noelle Almrud,
Director of Animal Care*

Primates are inquisitive animals whose proper care requires daily mental stimulation and extensive physical activity, which is often impossible for the average household to provide. Primates kept in human homes are rarely, if ever, monitored by animal welfare officials, which means they are often kept in unsuitable living conditions resulting in neglect, mistreatment, and myriad psychological and physical ailments that can lead to death. There are a range of zoonotic diseases that are transmitted by primates and can be harmful, even fatal, to humans.

Fauna Foundation
Quebec, Canada
Gloria Grow, Founder

Once primates reach adolescence, which can be just a few years into a 40+ year lifespan, they inevitably become too unmanageable to handle. Primates can and will bite. They have strong jaws and sharp teeth, and bites can result in significant and potentially fatal injuries to humans. Realizing that living with an adult primate is not sustainable, owners often seek to surrender their pets or are forced to surrender them due to a threat to public safety.

Jungle Friends
Gainesville, FL
Kari Bagnall, Founder

Many primates that were privately owned end up living in roadside zoos, recycled as breeders to produce the next generation of ill-fated pets, or in other abusive situations. In the best cases, former pets may end up in a NAPSA member sanctuary, where they live their remaining years in an enriched environment more typical to their species. Even in sanctuary, former pets often struggle with learning how to socialize with other primates and many exhibit abnormal behaviors for the rest of their lives.

Primate Rescue Center
Nicholasville, KY
April Truitt, Founder

The private ownership of primates is never in the best interest of the animal or the owner.

*Erika Fleury
Program Manager*

For more information:

["Resolution and Policy Recommendation Addressing the Private Possession of Dangerous Wild Animals," American Bar Association](#)

["White Paper: Personal Possession of Non-Human Primates," Association of Zoos and Aquariums](#)

["The Phenomenon of Monkeys as 'Surrogate Children,'" Linda J. Howard](#)

["Chimpanzees Don't Make Good Pets," The Jane Goodall Institute](#)

["My Child is a Monkey," and "The Perils of Keeping Monkeys as Pets," National Geographic](#)

["The Science Behind Why Chimps Are Not Pets," PBS](#)

["Nonhuman Primates, Zoonotic Diseases," Virginia Department of Health](#)

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

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Visit our website at www.PrimateSanctuaries.org