



October 23, 2019

John Asebes, KSN News
Sent via email: john.asebes@ksn.com

Dear Mr. Asebes,

An October 17, 2019 story titled, "[Biggest Broncos Fan at Starlite Drive-In is a Monkey](#)" featured Cheyenne, a marmoset monkey owned by Tammy Israel, who was brought to the Starlite Drive-In football celebrations. Cheyenne's cage was placed in the back of a car parked amongst 200 others. Footage shows her visibly agitated as she climbs on the shoulder of Tammy (you narrate that "the camera may have made her a little bit nervous today") as she is admonished not to bite. Tammy holds her down to squeeze her into a harness, explaining that "she don't [*sic*] like her leash." Everything shown in this video is harmful, both for monkeys in general and for Cheyenne in particular, as well as the humans around them. Our attached position statements go into further detail.

Bringing monkeys out into public spaces is frightening to them, and it puts them and the general public in danger due to the ease of disease transfer between humans and other primate species. Like other primates bred for private ownership, Cheyenne was removed from her mother as a very young infant and will live for decades. In just a few short years, she will inevitably become too difficult to handle, which is why most monkey owners eventually relinquish their animals. Attacks and injuries are common - just look up "pet monkey bites" to see the harm monkeys are capable of inflicting. Though Tammy claims Cheyenne serves as her "emotional support animal", the emotional support animal industry is unregulated and the claims that monkeys serve as such are worthless. Service monkeys are not recognized by the U.S. Department of Justice under the Americans with Disabilities Act or the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

Viewers of your content will receive the message that it's easy, fun, and normal to have a monkey as a pet. This impression could not be further from reality. 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 close to 800 primates, many of whom were formerly privately owned as ill-considered "pets."

You have the power to reach many people with your content; We hope you will reconsider the message you spread with your articles. Please commit to no longer promote exotic animal ownership, and consider a report on the lifesaving work of accredited primate sanctuaries. We will show you where "pets" like Cheyenne ultimately end up.

Sincerely,

Erika Fleury
Program Director

NAPSA is a fiscally sponsored project of Community Initiatives, an Oakland-based 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.
1000 Broadway ♦ Suite 480 ♦ Oakland, CA 94607

Visit our website at www.PrimateSanctuaries.org



Advocacy Position Statement Private Ownership of Primates

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

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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

For more information:

["Legislative Recommendations to Prohibit the Possession, Sale, Breeding, Import, or Transfer 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

["Private Ownership of Nonhuman Primates,"](#) International Primatological Society

["Atypical Experiences of Captive Chimpanzees \(Pan Troglodytes\) Are Associated with Higher Hair Cortisol Concentrations as Adults,"](#) S.L. Jacobson, H.D. Freeman, R.M. Santymire, S.R. Ross

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

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

["Significant Zoonotic Disease of Non-Human Primates,"](#) Walter Reed Army Institute



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.

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