



On December 29<sup>th</sup>, Cincinnati.com shared a photo gallery ([Inside Misfitland Monkey Rescue in Clermont County](#)) that spread misleading and concerning messages about appropriate handling of exotic animals. The North American Primate Sanctuary Alliance (NAPSA), of which Misfitland Monkey Rescue (MMR) is not a member, wanted to provide you with some information about primate rescue and how reputable sanctuaries conduct themselves.

- **Posing with primates in photos perpetuates their exploitation.** Your post included many “selfies” taken with monkeys climbing all over humans. True sanctuaries prohibit such opportunities and never share such imagery as they [promote the inappropriate use and handling of primates](#).
- **Permitting monkeys to interact with the public is exploiting them for entertainment purposes.** MMR promotes such “pay to play” events on their website. While it may seem amusing on the surface, the monkeys used in these spectacles suffer and are a threat to public safety. Specifically, the species of monkeys housed at MMR can naturally harbor [Herpes B, which can be deadly](#) when transmitted to humans, and the monkeys [can be infected with and transmit Covid-19](#).
- **Primate bites are not a question of “if”, but of “when.”** Primates can never be domesticated. The juxtaposition of MMR’s signage about dangerous animals and the myriad images of these dangerous animals climbing on the faces of humans is conflicting.
- **True sanctuaries do not diaper primates or keep them in human homes.** Forcing monkeys to wear diapers can cause skin irritations and rashes as well as skeletal deformities over time. A human home is never an appropriate environment for monkeys, who need outdoor access and large spaces in which to engage in natural climbing and play behaviors with others of their own kind.

NAPSA is a coalition of ten of the leading primate sanctuaries on the continent. In our sanctuaries, we care for over 830 primates, many of whom were formerly used in entertainment and the exotic “pet” trade.

NAPSA urges Cincinnati.com to follow the compassionate lead of its peers across the country and prohibit promoting such irresponsible and harmful monkey business for the safety of the public and the animals who are forced to participate.

*Erika W. Fleury wrote this on behalf of the North American Primate Sanctuary Alliance. She is the alliance’s Program Director and the author of the book “Monkey Business: A History of Nonhuman Primate Rights.” She lives in Los Angeles and can be reached at [efleury@primatesanctuaries.org](mailto:efleury@primatesanctuaries.org)*



## **Position Statement**

### **True Sanctuaries vs. Pseudo-Sanctuaries**

The North American Primate Sanctuary Alliance (NAPSA) unites the primate sanctuary community, builds capacity to provide sanctuary for captive nonhuman primates, and advocates to eliminate primate exploitation. NAPSA member sanctuaries care for over 800 nonhuman primates retired from the entertainment, biomedical research, and exotic pet industries, and are experts in providing enriched lifetime care to captive animals. As there are no regulations in the United States that manage who may refer to themselves as a sanctuary, it is important for NAPSA members to distinguish themselves from other facilities who house captive animals but who do not operate with the same high standards, and may even exploit and harm the animals in their care.

It can be difficult to distinguish pseudo-sanctuaries from reputable sanctuaries. There are a number of key characteristics the public may look for when trying to make this determination.

True sanctuaries:

- Operate with the best interests of the animals in their care as their first priority.
- Are non-profit organizations.
- Do not breed, sell or trade the animals in their care.
- Do not allow public contact with captive wildlife.
- Do not remove animals from their enclosures or sanctuary property for exhibition, education, research, or commercial purposes.
- Have limited public visitation.
- Do not exploit the animals in their care. Examples include: photo opportunities with animals, hands-on interactions, or training animals to perform.
- Are fiscally responsible and able to provide lifetime care for all animals at the sanctuary.
- Advocate on behalf of the species in their care.
- Are licensed, accredited and/or overseen by outside organizations. This may include the Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries, the United States Department of Agriculture, and/or NAPSA.

For more information:

["Roadside Zoos,"](#) Chimpanzee Sanctuary Northwest