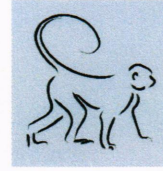




Primatologists Protecting Primates – PPP



October 10, 2022

Dear Hamburg Township Government Officials:

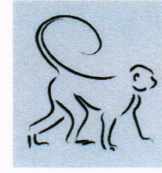
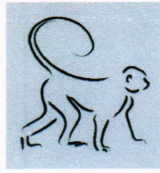
We represent a group of concerned scientists - ***Primatologists Protecting Primates (PPP)*** - from distinguished universities, zoological associations, and conservation organizations across the United States with expertise in the behavior, ecology, welfare, care, and the conservation of non-human primates. As a group, we support the prohibition of the use of nonhuman primates in entertainment other than in zoos accredited by associations such as the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) and the European Association of Zoos and Aquaria (EAZA). We actively support the prohibition of the importation and exportation, transportation, sale, and purchase of all species of non-human primates, with the goal to eliminate the trade of primates as pets and for entertainment. As professional primatologists who have extensive experience studying the ecology and behavior of wild primates, we fully support the extended protection for primates in the U.S. such as would be provided by **H.R. 3135**, the *Captive Primate Safety Act*. The International Primatological Society, the world's largest association of primatologists, has written their support for **H.R. 3135**.

This letter specifically highlights the cruel practice inflicted on monkeys for entertainment, referred to as “Banana Derby Races”, where capuchin monkeys are chained to dogs that are raced around in front of crowds of people from which the monkeys cannot escape. This situation creates terror and permanent emotional harm to a vulnerable animal: the monkey can't flee, and it can't fight, and it can't adapt or cope. The monkey can only suffer.

<https://www.npr.org/sections/13.7/2017/05/04/526779675/animal-activists-say-it-s-time-for-the-cowboy-monkey-rodeo-to-go-extinct>

Non-human primates (lemurs, lorises, monkeys and apes) are our closest living relatives and share many similarities with humans. They are longer lived than other similar-sized mammals, have large and complex brains, and have a long period of dependency on their parents. Primates are among the most endangered animal group in the world with approximately 68% of species on the brink of extinction, including four of the six species of great apes. Although breeders and purveyors of the primate pet and entertainment trade in the U.S. would point to captive breeding programs as irrelevant to species survival, we note the following:

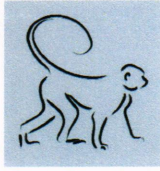
1. **Taking on the responsibility of non-human primates as pets and the use non-human primate in entertainment bears little resemblance to owning a cat or dog.** Primate pet owners and trainers of primates for entertainment are often unprepared for their long lifespans and complexity of their care. Primates are long-lived – often surviving 20 to 40 years, require specialized diets, may be stronger than humans, require prolonged



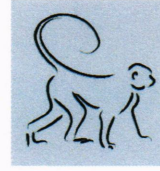
interactions with members of their own species, and need cognitive stimulation as they are highly social and intelligent.

2. **Primates in the pet trade and in entertainment is big business.** Primate infants who have been separated from their parents and hand reared to increase “tameness” are in particular demand, are sold for thousands of dollars and are money-makers for owner/trainers who use these primates in commercial films and advertisements, traveling shows and circuses, and roadside and petting zoos. Removing a young primate from its parent is extremely cruel and results in significant behavioral and psychological problems. This tragedy only provides benefits to animal traders and entertainment trainers; the costs are extremely high to each primate. The degrading manner of exhibiting and handling these primates is presented to the public as “normal” and “acceptable”, instead of educating people about the sensitivity of these sentient animals, their welfare needs, and that primates are not domesticated and never can be.
3. **Non-human primates are wild animals,** as such their behavior is never entirely predictable. Numerous examples of primate-induced injuries to long-term owners illustrate that the cuteness of infancy can give way to serious injury to handlers as they mature beyond infancy. Remedies such as filing down or removing teeth, and/or sedation are cruel and threaten the primate’s health.
4. **Humans and non-human primates can share diseases.** The close relatedness of non-human primates to humans results in [disease transmission in both directions](#) prompting the CDC to recommend wearing protective equipment when in close proximity and handling them. Humans can transmit a variety of potentially deadly diseases to pet primates, e.g., hepatitis A, poliomyelitis, measles, tuberculosis, influenza. The highly contagious herpes B virus is endemic in Asian macaques, causing serious illness in humans, and bacteria and virus infections (e.g., *Giardia* and *Shigella*) can be transmitted from handling marmosets and other Neotropical primates.
5. **Current state regulations are highly variable** ranging from no protection to a total ban of primates in the pet trade and in entertainment. **H.R. 3135** would provide uniformity among states to eliminate inter-state transfer of primates for the pet trade and for entertainment.

In writing this letter, our goal is to call attention to the cruel practice of primates used in entertainment, specifically in events such as the “Banana Derby Race” (e.g., Hamburg Michigan’s *Family Fun Fest* (<https://www.michiganfun.com/event/hamburg-family-fun-fest/>)). We ask for these types of events to be prohibited in the name of humane care and empathy for these primates (and any other non-human animals involved), as is stipulated in **H.R. 3135**.



Primatologists Protecting Primates – PPP



Sincerely yours,

The concerned scientists of **Primatologists Protecting Primates -**

Francine L. Dolins, Ph.D.

Paul A. Garber, Ph.D., Emeritus Professor of Anthropology, University of Illinois-Urbana

Jennifer Cramer, Ph.D.

Herbert H. Covert, Ph.D.

Tim Eppley, Ph.D.

Susan Lappan, Ph.D.

Christy K. Wolovich, Ph.D.

Kathy West, MS

Katherine R. Amato, Ph.D.

Cynthia L. Thompson, Ph.D.

Stacey Tecot, Ph.D.

Pat Shipman, Ph.D.

Sylvia Atsalis, Ph.D.

Robert Mitchell, Ph.D.

Alejandro Estrada, Ph.D.

Barb Smuts, Ph.D., Emeritus Professor of Psychology, University of Michigan

Marilyn Norconk, Ph.D.

Kaelyn Dobson, Ph.D.

Andrew J. Marshall, Ph.D.

Anne Savage, Ph.D.

Michelle Bezanson, Ph.D.

Katherine C. MacKinnon, Ph.D.

Barbara King, Ph.D.

Tremaine Gregory, Ph.D.

Brandi Wren, Ph.D.

Rafaela Takeshita, Ph.D.

Sofia Carrera, Ph.D. candidate

Abigail Ross, Ph.D.

Tabor Whitney, Ph.D. candidate

Susan Perry, Ph.D.

Tina Cloutier Barbour, Ph.D.

Lori K. Sheeran, Ph.D.

Liliana Cortés-Ortiz, Ph.D.

Taylor Weary, DVM/Ph.D. candidate

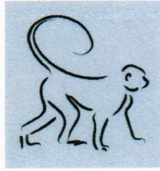
Casey Farmer, B.S., MA candidate

Noel Rowe, MFA

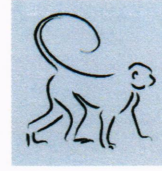
Laurie Kauffman, Ph.D.

Linda Marie Fedigan, Ph.D.

Julie Wieczkowski, Ph.D.



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Erik Patel, Ph.D.

Erin Riley, Ph.D.

Jason D. Wark, Ph.D., Animal Welfare Scientist, Animal Welfare Science Program, Lincoln Park Zoo

Katherine A Cronin, Ph.D., Senior Director of Lincoln Park Zoo Animal Welfare Science Program and

Lester E. Fisher Center for the Study & Conservation of Apes

Raquel Costa, D.Sc.

Mary Lee Jensvold, Ph.D.