

## Primates as pets

We have significant concerns as to whether the welfare needs of non-human primates can be met when they are kept privately as pets.

Primates are long-lived, intelligent, socially-complex animals and we can think of no circumstances where a primate would benefit from being kept privately as a pet. They are unsuitable to be kept as companion animals. Primates are extraordinarily difficult to care for properly as pets, due to their complex social and dietary needs – very few can provide the necessary resources to meet their welfare needs.

### Husbandry

Primates cannot be kept on their own but require to be housed with at least one conspecific to be able to express natural behaviour; reflecting one of the needs set out in the five welfare needs. They require both an indoor and outdoor enclosure to ensure adequate exercise and exposure to UV light and each species of primate has specific dietary requirements. It should also be noted that primates carry zoonotic diseases, so should be housed in such a way that limits disease transmission to humans.

The husbandry requirements for primate groups are complex, requiring enclosures large enough to prevent hierarchical stress and constructed robustly. In addition, most primate species have such specialised UV-B, temperature, humidity, lighting, behaviour and dietary requirements to be taken into account that we consider it extremely difficult to fulfil their basic welfare needs if kept as pets.

The welfare needs of primates based on the five welfare needs enshrined in the Animal Welfare Acts cannot be met when these animals are kept as pets.

### Conservation

We support a ban on the keeping of primates as pets and the only exception to that position would be to allow individuals who are working in partnership with accredited zoos, to breed primates for conservation purposes.

There should also be controls to prevent trading in primates or breeding for non-conservation purposes.

### Regulatory framework

For as long as primates are still allowed to be kept as pets, greater oversight is required to help protect the animals' health and welfare.

A general licensing scheme is unlikely to be the best option for regulating the keeping of primates in terms of the message of apparent approval it would give and how effectively it would target the non-compliant keepers who would be unlikely to participate. It may be better to stop a very small number of responsible people from keeping primates in order to protect primates from the majority of less knowledgeable keepers.

### Implementation of a ban

We acknowledge that should a ban be put in place then effective plans would be needed to identify and secure suitable accommodation for those primates currently being kept privately as pets. An appropriate agreed transition period would need to be allowed for.

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