



MONKEY WORLD –APE RESCUE CENTRE

PRESS RELEASE



Protect Pet Primates: MPs to debate laws on monkeys

This afternoon, MPs will meet to debate the plight of pet monkeys in the UK during an adjournment debate called by Richard Drax, MP for South Dorset. The debate follows last year's petition demanding "Welfare for Wildlife", handed into Downing St. by Monkey World director Dr Alison Cronin, MP Richard Drax and musician Peter Gabriel. With over 110,000 signatures, the petition campaigns for a change in the law to the legal UK pet trade, which currently allows over 66 species of monkey to be kept as pets without a register or needing a license. These primates, (which include all species of tamarin, squirrel monkey and marmosets) can be bought as easily as goldfish, often by well-meaning animal lovers from unscrupulous breeders.

Due to the unregulated trade, social media sales are rife and primates are not the only victims, as scams are on the rise. Some "breeders" have sold the same monkey several times for huge sums, up to £1700 in some cases. Many others claim to need deposits for vet checks and transport, with no monkey forthcoming after the unsuspecting buyer parts with his money.

Not knowing the specialist diets, social needs and appropriate environments these primates require, owners are unwittingly neglecting the monkeys, and Monkey World have rescued 106 primates from private homes. Worryingly, the trade is on the rise, with over half of these rescues taking place in the last 5 years. Many suffer from rickets, aggression and mobility issues, often from being kept alone in bird cages, with no outside access and a diet of table scraps. As an international rescue centre, working with governments around the world to stop the smuggling of primates from the wild, it is tragic that the home-grown legal UK pet trade is the largest problem Monkey World faces.

Antiquated animal laws are failing to protect the primates from cruelty or neglect, and instead only occasionally lead to prosecution once it has occurred. Dr Alison Cronin, who is regularly called to assist upset private owners, the RSPCA in cruelty cases and police who encounter vulnerable monkeys said "Every week, Monkey World is contacted to rescue more victims of the legal trade in monkeys as "pets" in the UK. For a nation of animal lovers, this uncontrolled trade is causing suffering for both animals and people. The current laws need to change"

Monkey World hopes that Richard Drax will convince parliament to change legislation to protect monkeys currently kept as "pets" in the UK today. Modifying existing laws will also protect well-meaning animal owners. With the Dorset rescue centre already at bursting point with victims of the pet trade, the change cannot come soon enough.

For more information on Monkey World – Ape Rescue Centre, or the Jim Cronin Memorial Fund, Registered Charity No 1126939 please visit www.monkeyworld.org and www.jimcroninmemorialfund.org