

**PROJECT CHIMPCARE: AN ASSESSMENT OF PRIVATELY-OWNED CHIMPANZEES IN THE UNITED STATES**

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In the United States, chimpanzees are one of the only exotic animal species not only found in accredited zoological parks, but also in biomedical laboratories, roadside attractions, sanctuaries, and owned as pets and performers for television, movies and advertisements. A lack of any federal legislation and ineffective state laws governing the private ownership have led to a widely distributed population of chimpanzees that is difficult to quantify and often housed under minimum or completely unregulated circumstances. Project ChimpCARE aims to take a cooperative and multidisciplinary approach to not only quantifying the number of chimpanzees across the U.S. but also assessing their current care and management, and working towards sustainable solutions that meet the complex needs of this species. In this talk, we will describe the factors that have precipitated the current situation for chimpanzees in the U.S. and the collaborative approach Project ChimpCARE has employed to assess this population. Through the first six months of site visits and investigation, over 250 privately-owned chimpanzees (those not living in accredited zoos, research centers or legitimate sanctuaries) have been identified, including 129 pets or individuals in the pet breeding industry, 86 at unaccredited animal attractions, and 44 in the entertainment industry. Factors such as sparse social experience and lack of appropriate maternal rearing distinguish this population from other chimpanzees in the U.S. and present challenges in terms of sustainable housing options. Utilizing these and other data is critical to forming the empirical basis for long-term sustainable solutions for chimpanzees in the United States.

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