

AN INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATION DEDICATED TO PROTECTING THE RIGHTS OF ALL ANIMALS

PETA



PEOPLE FOR
THE ETHICAL
TREATMENT
OF ANIMALS

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**Submission on the Environment Protection and Biodiversity
Conservation Amendment (Prohibition of Live Imports
of Primates for Research) Bill 2015**

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A. About PETA Australia

People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) Australia is the local affiliate of the world's largest animal rights organisation, PETA US, which has over 3 million members and supporters worldwide. PETA is dedicated to establishing and protecting the rights of all animals and operates under the simple principle that animals are not ours to eat, wear, experiment on, use for entertainment or abuse in any other way.

PETA works through public education, cruelty investigations, research, lobbying, celebrity involvement and protest campaigns to focus international attention on the exploitation and abuse of animals for their flesh, for their skins, as living test tubes in laboratories and for entertainment.

B. PETA's Support of the Bill

The Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications is seeking submissions from the public as part of its enquiry process regarding the proposed Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Amendment (Prohibition of Live Imports of Primates for Research) Bill 2015. PETA strongly supports passage of the Bill and urges the Committee to adopt a stance recommending unqualified passage, for the reasons below.

Non-human primates, including crab-eating macaques (*Macaca fascicularis*), rhesus macaques (*Macaca mulatta*), stump-tailed macaques (*Macaca arctoides*), Japanese macaques (*Macaca fuscata*) and others, are commonly exported from various Asian, South Asian and Southeast Asian countries, including Cambodia, China, Indonesia and Vietnam for use in experiments abroad.

The United Nations Environment Program's World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC), the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) Animals Committee and various environmental and animal welfare charities have all expressed concern about the exportation of non-human primates from many of these countries because of documented widespread corruption (including forged permits, insufficient population surveys and an overall lack of regulatory enforcement), cruel capture methods and threats to the wild non-human primate populations in some areas.¹ Exposés regarding apparent illegalities in this trade have also been widely reported in the media in these areas.²

¹See UNEP-WCMC, *Review of Significant Trade: Species Selected by the CITES Animals Committee Following CoP15 and Retained in the Review Following AC26* (2013); CITES, *Twenty-Sixth Meeting of the Animals Committee: An Update on the Conservation Status of and Trade in Long-Tailed Macaque (Macaca fascicularis) in Eleven Countries in SE Asia* (2012); The British Union for the Abolition of Vivisection, *Cambodia: The Trade in Primates for Research. A BUAV Investigation* (2008); The British Union for the Abolition of Vivisection, *Indonesia: The Trade in Primates for Research. A BUAV Investigation* (2009); A Eudely, 'The Crab-Eating Macaque (*Macaca fascicularis*): Widespread and Rapidly Declining', *Primate Conservation*, (2008) 23(1), 129–132; Species Survival Network, *Selection of the Long-Tailed Macaque (Macaca fascicularis) for Inclusion in the Review of Significant Trade (Resolution Conf. 12.8 (Rev. COP13)* (2011).

²See HQ Dung, 'A Trans-Border Wildlife Trade Network Unmasked', in 4 parts, *Tien Phong Newspaper* (Hanoi, Vietnam) 2008; B Di Certo, 'Illicit Monkey Trade Growing: Probe', *The Phnom Penh Post* (Phnom Penh, Cambodia) 15 May 2012; N Soma, 'The Sickening Trade in Wildlife', *The Phnom Penh Post* (Phnom Penh, Cambodia) 28 September 2012; H Robertson and K Sovuthy, 'Cambodia Feeds Booming Global Monkey Trade',

Such exposés and investigations show that many of the non-human primates exported from these countries are cruelly trapped and taken from their families in the wild, while others are reared on squalid monkey farms. As Senator Lee Rhiannon noted in her second reading speech, a report on the non-human primate trade in Indonesia documented trappers' shooting of mother monkeys, who, when made to flee, would occasionally drop their infants, who were then captured for sale.³ Elsewhere, the investigating group documented trappers' use of dogs to chase monkeys into nets.

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The terrified primates captured by trappers for sale in the bushmeat trade, for sale as pets and for use in experiments are then crammed into small wooden crates and transported to large breeding centres and holding facilities. Those destined for use in experimentation are then transported inside the dark cargo holds of long-haul flights – which in some cases can last up to three days and can involve turbulence, extreme fluctuations in temperature, multiple loadings and unloadings and a lack of food, water and veterinary care.⁵ Researchers at the University of Oxford found that stress from air transport “resulted in compromising the welfare of the study animals” and created an indefinite marked change in the animals' behaviour.⁶ Chronic stress in captive non-human primates, including those in laboratories, dramatically increases the primates' likelihood of developing stereotypic and self-injurious behaviour such as pacing, rocking, circling, hair-pulling and slapping and biting themselves.⁷ Moreover, chronic stress in non-human primates alters their behaviour and brain chemistry and can invalidate research findings.⁸

Some international examples also illustrate the additional safety concerns for both animals and humans posed by air shipments of non-human primates. For instance, in 2014, an American charter airline was cited by the US government for failing to provide more than 1,000 monkeys destined for the US – the largest importer of non-human primates – with food and water for over 24 hours and for transporting them in insecure crates.⁹ In 2012, China Southern Airlines paid over \$14,000 in fines to the US government after 17 non-human primates died of starvation and/or dehydration on a flight from China to the US.¹⁰ That same year, a monkey destined for a

The Cambodia Daily (Phnom Penh, Cambodia) 4 November 2014; H Chiew, ‘Monkey Business’, *The Star Online* 11 September 2007 (Malaysia).

³The British Union for the Abolition of Vivisection, *Indonesia: The Trade in Primates for Research. A BUAV Investigation* (2009) 15–16.

⁴*Ibid.*

⁵C Miller-Spiegel, *Primates by the Numbers: The Use and Importation of Nonhuman Primates for Research and Testing in the United States*. The American Anti-Vivisection Society (2009).

⁶PE Honess, PJ Johnson and SE Wolfensohn, ‘A Study of Behavioural Responses of Non-Human Primates to Air Transport and Re-Housing’ (2004) 38 *Laboratory Animals* 119–132.

⁷MA Novak, ‘Self-Injurious Behavior in Rhesus Monkeys: New Insights Into its Etiology, Physiology, and Treatment’ (2003) 59(1) *American Journal of Primatology* 3–19.

⁸*Ibid.*

⁹N Huang, ‘U.S. Charter Airline Cited for Neglecting Cargo of Macaques From China’, *The New York Times* (New York City, United States), 8 January 2015.

¹⁰N Huang, ‘China Southern Pays U.S. Fine Over Monkey Cargo’, *The New York Times* (New York City, United States), 21 April 2014.

laboratory escaped from a passenger airplane in a New York airport, delaying the flight and putting airport workers in danger.¹¹

Finally, non-human primates pose a risk of injury and illness to humans with their ability to infect humans with various zoonotic illnesses, including Ebola. In fact, Ebola-infected monkeys were imported into the US at least three times between 1989 and 1996.¹² During that time, the disease jumped from monkeys in a Virginia laboratory to several laboratory workers.¹³

In conclusion, the trade in non-human primates is dangerous, corrupt and cruel, and it threatens wild populations of non-human primates in Cambodia, Indonesia, Vietnam and elsewhere. Documentation shows that many of the non-human primates exported for use in experiments are cruelly trapped and taken from their families in the wild, while others are reared on squalid monkey farms. The cruelty endemic in the capture and transport of non-human primates creates heightened levels of stress for them, which negatively affects their welfare and can invalidate research findings. For these reasons, PETA strongly supports the enactment of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Amendment (Prohibition of Live Imports of Primates for Research) Bill 2015.

¹¹N Golgowski, 'Escaped Monkey Delays Air China Flight From New York for Nearly Four Hours', *The Daily Mail* (London, United Kingdom), 26 May 2012.

¹²A Ahktar, 'Ebola Has Happened in the U.S. and It Could Happen Again if We Don't Address the Root Causes', *The Huffington Post* (online), 5 August 2014 < http://www.huffingtonpost.com/aysha-akhtar/ebola-has-happened-in-the_b_5652646.html>.

¹³*Ibid.*