

Lucky Dutch lab monkeys retired to sunny Balearics

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Eighteen female monkeys used in lab experiments in the Netherlands are to be flown Wednesday to Spain's Balearic islands to enjoy the "exceptional" fate of a leisurely retirement in the sun.

"These monkeys are around 12 years old, and this species can live to 30-35 years old in captivity," Saskia Oskam of the AAP Foundation said of the crab-eating macaques.

"So they have their whole lives in front of them and will be able to enjoy their retirement under the Spanish sun," she told AFP.

The females are part of a group of 73 crab-eating macaques used by drug manufacturer MSD in laboratories for tests including of contraceptives, MSD spokeswoman Hester de Voogd told AFP.

When MSD stopped contraception research in the Netherlands, the monkeys were handed over to AAP (whose acronym means monkey in Dutch), which seeks to look after animals that survive the circus, laboratories or the illegal trade in animals.

"It's quite exceptional that monkeys can be reinserted somewhere else after being used in laboratories," Robert Molenaar of the Coalition Against Animal-Testing (ADC) told AFP.

"In most cases they die during the experiments or are killed afterwards."

The lucky monkeys will now swap their sterile lab conditions for a custom-built dome set in the Lloc de Menorca [wildlife park](#) and equipped with trees, rocks and wooden structures for climbing.

"We try to move the monkeys in groups, but that's often impossible because when we get them they've lived a long time alone and they're no longer used to others," said Oskam.

"This case is exceptional because the 18 monkeys lived together at MSD and are used to each other," she said, describing the monkeys as in good health, unlike [monkeys](#) used for [brain research](#).

The 55 remaining macaques, whose species originates from southeast Asia, are still awaiting a retirement home.

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