

Gibraltar's latest export - pesky monkeys

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Two macaque monkeys in Gibraltar on February 10, 2000

Britain's tiny outpost of Gibraltar has announced it will crack down on pesky Barbary macaque monkeys by exporting them off the Rock.

Beloved by tourists, the [monkeys](#) have started roaming into town, looting bins, foraging for food and frightening locals.

The Gibraltar government said it planned to capture some of the troublesome primates and prepare them for export in the spring.

"This marks the beginning of real progress in dealing with macaque numbers that have been allowed to get out of control," the Rock's environment minister, John Cortes, said in a statement Wednesday.

"By exporting and neutering we are controlling numbers without having to cull."

The government said it was in the final stage of discussions with a "respected third party" that wanted to take a group of macaques in the spring.

It declined to say how many of the territory's roughly 200 macaques would be exported, nor their destination, until the agreement was completed.

The capture programme is set to start in the coming days.

The animals are to be held in a purpose-built facility under veterinary supervision before being shipped.

"The packs which will first be targeted for capture will be those which are pestering built-up areas and schools," a government spokesman said.

The government said it was deploying extra staff to take "firm action" with monkeys in urban areas and drive them back into a nature reserve on the upper part of the Rock.

Gibraltar's Barbary macaques are the only free-ranging monkeys in Europe, according to the Gibraltar Ornithological and Natural History Society.

Although tourists often want to interact with them, officials say the Barbary [macaques](#) are wild animals and are best viewed from a distance.

Feeding the monkeys is illegal in Gibraltar and punishable by hefty fines.

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