

Group calls for more transparency of experiments on primates

July 30 2015

Thousands of nonhuman primates continue to be confined alone in laboratories despite 30-year-old federal regulations and guidelines mandating that social housing of primates should be the default. A new article co-authored by PETA scientists and Marymount University researchers, published in *Perspectives in Laboratory Animal Science*, argues that many laboratories cage primates alone—a harmful practice often done for convenience—and that the U.S. government isn't doing enough to address this growing problem.

Decades of research shows that housing highly intelligent, social [primates](#) alone causes them extensive psychological and physical harm. As many as 89 percent of singly housed monkeys exhibit abnormal, stress-induced behavior, including incessant pacing, rocking, hair-pulling, and even self-biting. They also suffer from higher incidence of physical ailments such as heart disease. Yet studies show that the number of singly housed primates in the U.S. may be increasing.

Researchers from People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals' (PETA) Laboratory Investigations Department and the Departments of Psychology and Sociology at Marymount University reviewed existing data as well as public documents submitted by laboratories to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) from 2010 to 2013, in which the number of primates singly housed for experimental reasons and the scientific justifications for the Animal Welfare Act exemption were reported.

The researchers found the following significant results:

- The total number of facilities that confined primates stayed relatively flat over the four years.
- There was a steady increase in the number of facilities that reported singly housing primates, from 30 (16 percent) in 2010 to 53 (29 percent) in 2013.
- From 2010 to 2013, the percentage of laboratories reporting singly housed primates that failed to adequately report and justify the single housing of primates—which is required by law—increased from 36 percent to 47 percent. In addition, some or all of the required information was improperly redacted from many facilities' reports.

Troublingly, in apparent response to the researchers' attempts to reconcile this missing information and their concerns about the inadequacy of the facilities' reports, the USDA has now directed laboratories to stop reporting this information altogether, completely shutting off any public access to this information.

"The scientific evidence that primates suffer psychologically and physiologically as a result of being caged alone is overwhelming," says study co-author Justin Goodman, a director at PETA and an adjunct instructor of sociology at Marymount University in Arlington, Virginia. "The USDA's recent revisions to reporting requirements will limit the availability of data and, consequently, stifle informed debate on the suffering of primates in laboratories and failures of the existing regulatory system. To address this issue meaningfully, we need more transparency and accountability, not less."

The article, published in *Perspectives in Laboratory Animal Science*, can be found [here](#).

Provided by People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals

Citation: Group calls for more transparency of experiments on primates (2015, July 30) retrieved 25 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2015-07-group-transparency-primates.html>

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