

# The use of wild animals in performance **2016**

Written for the European coalition ENDCAP by the Born Free Foundation



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# Introduction

The use of wild animals for performance in circuses in the European Union has been a major focus of concern for animal welfare advocates, vets and members of the public for decades. Work on this animal welfare issue has resulted in a number of EU Member States prohibiting or restricting the use of some or all species of wild animal in travelling circuses within their national boundaries. Whilst these moves have been welcomed, wild animal circuses remain legal in the majority of EU Member States.

Furthermore, the use of the same species of animal in performances in television and film, theatre, in zoos and dolphinariums has not received the same attention. This is despite the fact that the differences in treatment of animals used in performance situations, other than circuses, are a matter of degree, not kind. Indeed, the same individual animals used in circuses may also be used in television, theatre or other public events.

Using information from different Member States, this document offers an insight into the use of wild animals in a variety of different performance situations across the European Union, with the aim of identifying key animal welfare concerns in the context of performance with a view to inform national policymaking processes.



## Part One: Animal Welfare

The use of wild animals in performances, whether those performances take place in circuses, television studios, zoos or as part of other live events, raises serious concerns for the welfare of the animals involved.

Animal domestication has taken place over the course of thousands of years and has changed the genetic make-up of animals as a result of selective breeding for desired characteristics. A wild animal has not been domesticated, and therefore retains the biological characteristics that were acquired, through evolution, as adaptations to its natural habitat. Living conditions imposed upon wild animals used in performances may differ drastically from those for which their species has evolved<sup>i</sup>. This presents the potential for serious welfare problems when wild animals are kept in unnatural, captive environments. However using wild animals in performances may present additional stressors and welfare compromises over and above those faced by life in captivity.

Factors which may be present in performance environments and which may have a negative impact on welfare of the animals involved (in either the short and long term) include: inadequate and unnatural social and physical environments for the animals (whether temporary or permanent); lack of privacy (whether temporary or permanent); high noise and light levels and unfamiliar odours during performance or productions; inappropriate and unnatural proximity to people (trainers, performers and members of the general public) and climate conditions which may differ significantly from the animals' natural environment.

In addition, demanding and sometimes even abusive training methods which may involve coercion may be used to oblige animals to perform, thus further compromising their welfare. For those performing animal businesses which travel, or which transport animals from their home base to the performance venue on a regular basis, there is the added welfare concern of frequent movement and the potential for animals to be confined for long periods, as well as the impact of loading and unloading. According to one expert report, 'For some species, frequent transport causes a degree of anxiety that is so pronounced as to warrant classification as cruelty to animals'<sup>ii</sup>.

It is known that wild animals in captivity may develop abnormal behaviour, with a particular problem being repetitive, seemingly functionless, actions referred to as 'stereotypic behaviour'. Stereotypic behaviour may be the result of frustrated needs or be a coping mechanism developed to address a current or previous inadequate or stressful environment. The presence of stereotypic behaviour is generally acknowledged to be an indicator of current or previous poor welfare<sup>iii</sup>. Stereotypic behaviour may include repetitive swaying in animals such as elephants, incessant pacing in big cats, bar biting or licking in ungulates such as giraffes or camels, and self-harming or 'head twisting' in animals such as primates and bears.

Lifelong welfare problems may be created for animals used in performances. In order to 'tame' a wild animal – a process which involves changing the animal's behaviour, but not their genetic make-up and natural instincts – the animal may be removed from its family group from a young age. These animals may be deliberately hand-reared in order to habituate them to human contact and ensure a 'bond' with humans. In primates, for example, this might mean removing a baby from his or her mother at just a few days old. This not only presents welfare problems for the baby, who might naturally stay with his or her mother for a number of years, but also for the mother, who is likely to suffer psychologically as a result of the loss of her offspring.

Medical conditions caused by poor diet and husbandry may affect animals used in performance. Wild animals used in the entertainment industry are almost never released to the wild and therefore spend their entire lives in captivity; even if the period during which they perform is only the first few years of their lives. Chimpanzees, for example, might only be used in performances until they reach adolescence at around seven or eight years' old, yet they can live well into their fifties.

Some animals used in performances, such as chimpanzees, are 'retired' from use when they reach adolescence as they become too dangerous and unpredictable to be handled by their trainers. Those who are offered a more normal life, for example by being 'retired' to a sanctuary, can struggle to adapt to normal species-appropriate social behaviours as a result of their abnormal upbringing. As a general rule, the cost of care for the animals used in entertainment and then retired to sanctuaries will be borne by the sanctuary itself which, in turn, will often be funded via donations from members of the public. This means that, despite consistent polls showing public opinion is opposed to the use of wild animals in circuses, for example, it is often the same public who subsidise the long-term care of the animals who have been used in this exploitative industry.

Some animals remain with the businesses that they performed with long after they have become physically unable to perform the tricks required of them. Anne, the last elephant in a circus in England, for example, was transported around the UK for many years after she became too infirm to perform in the circus shows. Evidence suggests that, in her last years with the circus, she spent a large part of her time alone, shackled to the floor in a canvas tent. She was transported in the back of a lorry, where she would spend hours at a time. She was rescued following an exposé which showed her being beaten by a member of staff at the circus and now lives in a safari park in the UK.

### **Case Study: Alfa the Dolphin - Italy**

*Alfa is a female dolphin who was captured from her wild home in the Gulf of Mexico in 1986. She was then used for breeding and performance at the Rimini dolphinarium in Italy for 27 years. Alfa gave birth to five offspring, two of whom did not live to be more than six years old. Her surviving young were also used for performances.*

*In July 2013 Italian authorities inspected Rimini dolphinarium following its application for a Zoo Licence. Rimini dolphinarium was found to be in breach of both Decree 73/2005 and Ministerial Decree 469/2001 that regulate facilities keeping bottlenose dolphins in captivity in Italy. Some of the specific breaches included: lack of shade for the animals and lack of hiding places from public view; lack of an appropriate cooling and cleaning system for the water; old and inadequate tanks without sufficient space, failure to guarantee the dolphins' physical and psychological health due to these factors and lack of social stimulus. The dolphins were not provided with adequate or appropriate veterinary treatment, demonstrated by the fact that medical pools, or pools meant to quarantine the animals and for the keeping of pregnant and nursing females, were absent.*

*Following a further inspection, the authorities seized the four dolphins which were kept in Rimini. For the first time in Europe, the owners of a dolphinarium were charged with 'animal abuse' and for holding animals in an environment incompatible with their needs, resulting in severe suffering. Alfa, Sole, Luna and Lapo were then transferred to Genoa Aquarium.*

*The Court Case was initiated by the Italian animal protection organisation, LAV. Despite the Rimini Dolphinarium owner's appeal, the Court confirmed that the animals will not be sent back to Rimini Dolphinarium. As a result, the shows with dolphins in Rimini ended in September 2014.*



Photo © Eric Borda

## Part Two: Human health and safety

Wild animals such as lions, tigers, cetaceans and elephants are unpredictable and very dangerous to humans. Some not only pose the threat of physical injury, but the significant potential for disease transmission between animals and people (zoonotic diseases).

The combination of the temporary nature of accommodation during travel (or at temporary sites in the case of travelling circuses), the close proximity of animals to people during performances and the practice of 'parading' animals such as elephants through towns where circuses are performing, represents a serious risk of accident or escape. This, in turn, leads to serious risk to public health and safety. There are numerous documented instances of escape or injury caused by wild animals around Europe. Since 2005, there have been at least eight documented big cat accidents or escapes, twelve elephant accidents or escapes, as well as bear and crocodile escapes in the circus industry alone. Some of the incidents resulted in serious injury to people or the animals themselves.

### Case Study: Deaths and injuries caused by elephants – Germany, France, Ireland

*In June 2015, an elephant escaped from Circus Luna in Germany and trampled and killed a man who was out walking nearby.*

*On September 9th 2013, an elderly man in France was killed after an elephant escaped from the Cirque d'Europe and trampled him to death. The man, who was not an audience member at the circus, was allegedly attacked after the elephant, Tanya, broke through two barriers to escape the circus, which was performing in a Paris suburb.*

*In 2012, a visitor to the Courtney Brothers' Circus in Ireland was hospitalised after an elephant fell on him and crushed him. The visitor spent time in intensive care and made a full recovery. The accident followed the escape of another elephant from the same circus less than a week previously.*



Photo © BFF



Photo © BFF

There is also a threat of zoonotic disease transmission between animals and humans. Public records show that many circuses have a history of tuberculosis in their elephants, which can infect humans. Many primates can also carry diseases that are easily transmittable to humans; for example, Herpes B virus is carried in a high percentage of macaque monkeys and is almost always fatal to humans. Reptiles can carry and transmit a number of predominantly bacterial diseases, including Salmonella, Mycobacterium, Campylobacter, Aeromonas, and Escherichia coli. Often these infections do not make animals appear unwell but can cause serious illness in humans<sup>iv</sup>.

### **Case Study: Deaths in orca (killer whale) performances - USA and Spain**

*In 2009, Alexis Martinez Hernandez, 29, a wildlife trainer, fell from an orca's back during a rehearsal for a public performance and crushed his rib cage at Loro Parque zoo in Tenerife. Park officials said the orca, a 14-year-old named Keto, made an unusual move as the pair rehearsed a stunt in which the orca lifts the trainer and leaps into the air.*

*One year later, animal trainer, Dawn Brancheau, was killed during an orca performance at a SeaWorld Centre in the United States.*

*The tragic deaths of the two trainers triggered the publication of the book, 'Death at Seaworld', and the subsequent documentary film, 'Blackfish', which received popular and critical acclaim.*

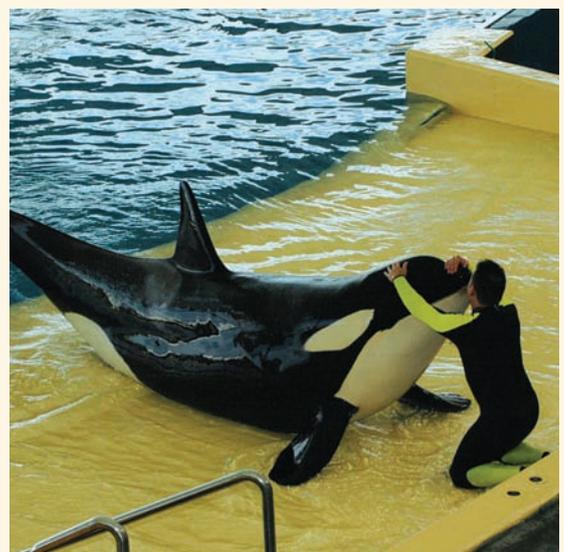


Photo © BFF

### **Case Study: Young boy mauled by sea lion in zoo - Spain**

*In early May, 2015, a young boy from the UK was badly bitten during a 'swim with' experience with a sea lion at a zoo in Tenerife as he celebrated his tenth birthday. The young boy was taken to hospital and given stitches after the sea lion, which the zoo claimed was 'tame', bit the boy on the leg as he played with the animal in a swimming pool. News reports suggested that no medical treatment was offered to the young boy on site and staff simply put the family in a taxi to the hospital.*



Photo © BFF

## Part Three: Expert and public opposition

To date, most genuine public opinion polls relating to performing animals have focused upon the use of wild animals in circuses. Opinion polls carried out in several countries in the EU have pointed toward a clear public desire to end the use of wild animals in circuses. For example, in June 2015, the Scottish Government released the results of its public consultation on the matter and 98% of respondents called for a ban on the use of wild animals in travelling circuses<sup>v</sup>. A poll carried out in Ireland in 2014 showed that only 28% of people thought it acceptable to use wild animals in circus shows<sup>vi</sup>. A public consultation carried out in 2010 by the UK Government Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) showed that 94.5% of the respondents favoured a ban on wild animals in circuses, 95.5% considered there were no wild animal species whose use were acceptable in travelling circuses and 96% thought that travelling circuses should be prevented from obtaining any further wild animals<sup>vii</sup>. Similarly, 64.4% of German citizens would like to see a ban on the use of wild animals in circuses<sup>viii</sup> and 57% of French citizens are against the presence of animals in circuses<sup>ix</sup>.

In June 2015, the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE) released a position statement in opposition of the use of wild mammals in travelling circuses. The statement concludes that, when wild mammals are used in travelling circuses, there is 'by no means the possibility that their physiological, mental and social requirements can adequately be met'<sup>x</sup>.

Whilst formal polling has not been carried out with regard to the use of wild animals in other performance situations, there is increasing evidence to suggest that opposition is growing as the general public becomes better-informed about this issue. For example, a petition established to oppose the use of capuchin monkeys in the newest film in the 'Pirates of the Caribbean' franchise saw almost 85,000 people demand an end to the use of wild animals in future productions<sup>xi</sup>. Spanish initiative, Adnimalsfree.org, and UK project, AnimalPledge.org, both work to encourage an end to the use of wild animals in the TV and film industry. Between them, the two schemes have encouraged over 180 companies and individuals working in the media industry to commit to never use a live wild animal in any future production. Other high-profile companies, such as Converse and Brother have agreed to reconsider the use of wild animals in adverts after concerns were raised with them in recent years.



## Case Study: Anne the elephant - UK

*In 1957, a five year old Asian elephant, later to be named Anne, was sent from her native Sri Lanka to the UK to join the Robert Brothers' Circus, a business which would later become Bobby Roberts' Circus. Anne was to remain in this circus, performing tricks for paying audiences for the next 54 years.*

*For the final nine years of her time with the circus, and to the present day, Anne was kept alone, despite being a member of a deeply social species whose natural behavioural needs demand company of her own kind.*

*For a period of her life, Anne was provided with company; in the years prior to Bobby Robert's Circus splitting from Robert Brothers', there were eight elephants. When Bobby Roberts set up alone in 1982, he took Anne and four other elephants with him. Anne's most recent companions, Beverley and Janie, both died during the winter of 2001/2002. The circus never confirmed the cause of death of the pair. From that time until now, Anne has lived in complete isolation from her own kind.*

*In her later years with the circus, Anne had developed arthritis and, perhaps as a result of this, was considered too infirm to perform the tricks in the circus ring that had previously been demanded of her. In spite of this, she was still brought out by the circus to provide photo opportunities for audience members during the show's interval at each site.*

*Her time during the touring season was split between a lorry trailer, a canvas tent, where she was often shackled to the ground by heavy chains and, if the site where the circus was pitched allowed, a fenced area to move around. This area might be in a field, a car park or a piece of wasteland. During the winter, Anne would mainly be kept in a barn at the circus' winter quarters. Whilst little is known what happens behind the closed doors of the circus' winter site, in 2011, a UK-based animal protection group secretly filmed inside the barn in which Anne was kept. Footage showed her shackled to the ground with chains attached to two of her legs with for the majority of a three-week period. And in footage which shocked the UK public when released, Anne endured a groom repeatedly beating her with a pitchfork on numerous occasions. Whether Anne suffered similar beatings in previous years when kept in this barn will never be known.*

*In 2012, the circus' owner, Bobby Roberts, was held responsible for the cruel treatment of Anne and convicted of three counts of causing 'unnecessary suffering' under the Animal Welfare Act 2006. But the sentence handed to the circus owner was branded 'derisive' by animal protection groups when it was confirmed that a conditional discharge would be granted. In the time that elapsed between the release of the footage and the court case, the circus owner agreed to rehome Anne voluntarily and she was relocated to Longleat Safari Park in the UK, where she is likely to spend the remainder of her days.*

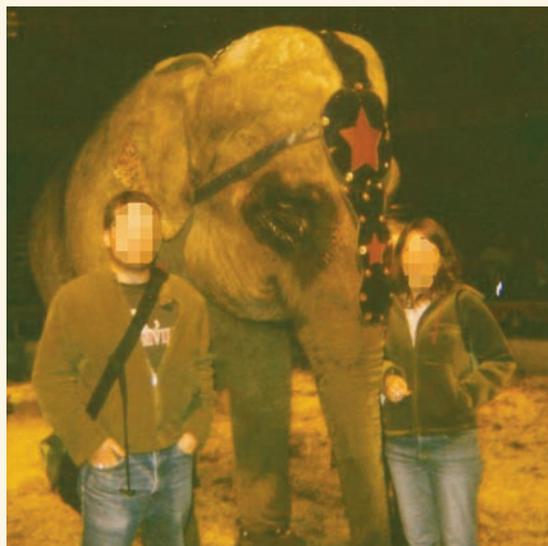


Photo © BFF

## Part Four: Performance environments

### Animal performance in zoos

With a few exceptions, all permanent establishments that display animals of wild species to the public for seven days a year or more are required to be regulated by the EC Zoos Directive (No.1999/22/EC). This is a framework law, requiring all EU Member States to adopt the principle that zoos must participate in the conservation of biodiversity, enforced through their licensing and regular inspection, to ensure compliance with the Directive's requirements. In addition to a commitment to species conservation, zoos are also required to 'promote public education and seek to raise awareness in relation to the conservation of biodiversity, particularly by providing information about the species exhibited and their natural habitats'<sup>xii</sup> and further, to ensure the animals are kept in a manner that meets their biological needs<sup>xiii</sup>. These requirements appear to be incompatible with the use of animals in performance, particularly where training is harsh, living conditions are cramped and the performance repertoire involves the demonstration of unnatural behaviour, which have no educational value. The World Zoo and Aquarium Conservation Strategy (WZACS) furthermore stipulates that public education should be an integral component of all activities undertaken by a zoo.

The EU Zoo Inquiry 2011<sup>xiv</sup>, which included evaluation of the performance of 200 randomly-selected zoos in 20 EU Member States, identified that 19 of those countries require zoos to ensure all activities have an educational focus and purpose. Assessment of the zoos identified that animal presentations (i.e. animal encounter sessions, sea lion shows, bird flying, aquarium or dolphinarium presentations, parrot or chimpanzee shows, etc.) are widely-represented in zoos across the EU. On average, 56% of the performances observed in European zoos exhibited animals displaying unnatural behaviour and tricks, often to musical accompaniment. This included macaw parrots and chimpanzees riding bicycles, sea lions walking upright and catching hoops, and elephants performing headstands and circus-style tricks. Whilst some EU Member States have advised against the use of animals in performance (eg Spain, Portugal, UK, etc.), particularly when public education, animal welfare and public safety are compromised, animal performances in EU zoos are still common. Investigations confirm that the majority of animal performance in zoos lack educational content and are largely focused on entertainment content as opposed to species-specific information and conservation. These findings appear to breach the requirements of both the EC Zoos Directive 1999/22 and the industry's own World Zoo and Aquarium Conservation Strategy.

### Animal performance in dolphinaria

Cetaceans, the collective name for whales, dolphins and porpoises, are kept in 33 dolphinaria in 15 EU Member States. The majority of the reported 310 captive cetaceans in the EU are bottlenose dolphins (*Tursiops truncatus*) but also include orcas (*Orcinus orca*), belugas (*Delphinapterus leucas*), harbour porpoises (*Phocoena phocoena*), and an Amazon River dolphin (*Inia geoffrensis*). The majority of these animals are kept for display and performance, in purpose-built tanks, while some facilities offer 'swim-with' opportunities, Dolphin Assisted Therapy and souvenir photographs with the animals. All EU Member States but one (Bulgaria) regulate dolphinaria under the EC Directive 1999/22, relating to the keeping of wild animals in zoos. The way in which animal performances may contravene the requirements of the EC Directive are outlined in the above subsection. In addition, guidance from the European Association of Aquatic Mammals (EAAM) regarding animal shows, includes in its recommendations for achieving educational goals that *'the commentary on these should focus on biological facts. Any confusing or foolish comments should be omitted. Anthropomorphic and comic performances should be omitted'*<sup>xv</sup>.

Analysis of the commentary provided during the majority of the shows, indicated that, on average, only 12% of facilities referred to the animal's biology and natural behaviour. Two shows had no such information. Of the 18 shows, 17 failed to inform the public about where the species are found in the wild, eight failed to identify the dolphins as mammals and none of the 18 shows mentioned the conservation status of the species<sup>xiv</sup>. Analysis of the dolphin shows, exhibit signage and leaflets made

available to the visiting public suggests that there is little attempt by dolphinariums to educate visitors about the biology, ecology and conservation of the cetaceans they display.

Investigations have not only confirmed that EU dolphinariums are failing to meet their legal educational obligations, but, further, that no captive cetacean in the EU is being provided with their biological requirements or have the freedom to express normal behaviour, both of which are guiding principles for animal welfare. Stress and stereotypic behaviour are common in captive cetaceans. Results indicate that cetacean performances in the European Union do not comply with the requirements of the EC Zoos Directive, nor do they meet the industry recommendations set out by the EAAM.

## Animal performances in circuses

Unlike zoos, which house many of the same species, there is no EU legislation which seeks to protect animal welfare in circuses. Wild animal species currently used in European circuses include (but are not limited to): elephants, tigers, lions, sea lions, zebras, crocodiles, bears, primates, giraffes, hippopotamus, rhinoceros, penguins, snakes, kangaroos and emus.

Circuses cannot provide captive animals with a suitable environment. For instance, circuses confine animals whose natural ranges may be dozens or even hundreds of square kilometres, in small cages where they are unable to walk more than a couple of metres at a time. In England, for example, big cats in circuses are provided with indoor space of just 4x4 metres under existing welfare regulations. Within the same rules can be found examples including animals being provided with nothing more than space to stand, turn around and lie down in their night quarters. In circuses, animals have little to no opportunity to hide or seek shelter, semi-aquatic animals have been documented as being kept without access to bathing water, and nocturnal animals are made to perform during the day.

Social animals in circuses are denied the opportunity to fulfil their needs. For example, herd animals such as elephants and zebra are kept alone or in unnatural pairs. Normally solitary animals such as tigers live in permanent groups. Species such as lions and tigers are kept in mixed-species groups and predator and prey animals, such as big cats and zebra, are kept close to one another.

The types of performance that wild animals are required to carry out in circus shows, such as elephants performing "head stands" or lions and tigers jumping through flaming hoops, are unnatural. Some have the potential to cause long-term health problems for the animals due to their repetitive nature which, for example, may cause stress on joints and ligaments.

Evidence exists for stereotypic behaviour being significant in animals in circuses<sup>xvi</sup>, and this is supported by anecdotal evidence and video footage. Presence of stereotypic behaviour in some species may serve as partial evidence to confirm that circuses are unable to meet the needs of wild animals<sup>xvii</sup>.

In March 2016, six EU Member States had banned the use of wild animals in circuses, whilst an additional 12 EU Member States had implemented partial bans.



## Case Study: Mojito and Tintin - Spain

*Mojito and Tintin are two young lion cubs who were used until 2015 by a Spanish circus as 'photo props' for audience members to hold and take photographs with. It is thought that a number of cubs may have preceded them which, as they grew too large to be handled safely, were replaced by younger animals. Where the previous cubs were sent following their short period of use in photographs is unknown. A number of Spanish NGOs were aware that the circus in question was using the young lions in this way throughout 2014 and a visit to the circus in February 2015 resulted in the identification of Tintin who, at that time, was just around two months old; far too young to be separated from his mother. The handling of such a young wild animal by strangers in a chaotic and noisy public space is likely to have caused distress to this young lion.*



*Mojito, who had been used prior to Tintin by the same circus, came to the attention of the NGOs when he was handed over by the circus to a veterinary surgeon in Valencia after he developed problems with his oesophagus which prevented him from eating properly. The veterinary surgery was asked by the circus to euthanise Mojito but the staff chose, instead, to nurse him back to health. A number of NGOs in the area worked to find a safe home for both Mojito and Tintin, who are thought to be related but from different litters. In March 2015, the two cubs were moved to a sanctuary in the north of Spain, before then being transferred to their permanent home at the Primadomus sanctuary near Alicante. The two cubs experienced a very difficult start to life but are now inseparable and are guaranteed the best possible care going forward.*

## Animal performances in television and advertising

To date, unlike circuses which have been banned from using wild animals in some countries, there are thought to be no outright bans on the use of wild animals in television and film anywhere in the European Union. This is in spite of the fact that the use of animals in this way differs very little when compared to their use in other performance situations: in fact, the same animals may be hired out by a circus or zoo for media work. In addition, there are a number of companies which specialise in the provision of wild animals for the TV industry, such as *Fauna y Acción* in Spain or *Amazing Animals* in the UK.

In an attempt to create a 'bond' with the animals, many trainers separate young animals from their mothers at an early age in order to hand rear them to try to imprint the animals. However, when these animals reach sexual maturity they often become aggressive, even with the people who have cared for them since they were small.

Training of the animals generally goes on behind closed doors but testimony from former animal trainers has confirmed that, in at least some cases, the methods used are extremely cruel. A primatologist who worked in an animal training company with chimpanzees in the United States said: *"The trainers abuse these animals for various reasons, and often for no reason at all. If the chimps tried to escape, they would receive a beating. If they bit someone, they would receive a beating. If they did not pay attention, they would receive a beating. Sometimes, the trainers would hit them without motive, or for things that were completely outside of the chimps' control"*.

In order to prevent injury when animals become aggressive, some trainers 'declaw' big cats or bears or remove or file down the canine teeth of animals such as cats and primates. Declawing is a cruel and painful practice whereby bones in the feet may be cut or removed, also severing nerves, ligaments and tendons.

The pain can be excruciating and chronic as it may damage nerves or the pads, and modification of the foot's structure can lead to abnormalities in their gait and to back and joint problems. This process may even affect the animal's personality, either making them more apathetic or more nervous, skittish and therefore aggressive.

As wild animals such as big cats, bears or primates reach adolescence, they become potentially dangerous to be used safely in productions. As the cost of keeping these animals is high, and they no longer bring in income, many simply disappear, are kept caged and in terrible conditions, passed on to zoos where they might continue to be exploited or to other centres which use them for breeding stock to continue to fuel the industry. Animals who have been used to make significant amounts of money for large companies are ending their days alone, in cages, for years. Only very lucky individuals are rescued by bona fide sanctuaries, whose ability to rescue and provide for animals for life is limited and who may have insufficient funds to care for all of the animals deemed no longer useful to the industry.

### **Case Study: Marco the chimpanzee - Spain**

*Marco was born in captivity in around 1984 and arrived at the Mona Foundation primate sanctuary in Spain in 2001. For over 17 years, before being rescued, Marco was forced to perform in many TV commercials that promoted many products, including telephone (Telefónica) and beer (Estrella Damm) companies. He was owned by a very well-known animal trainer in Spain who bred and trained many chimps to be used in the entertainment industry. Typically during the training process, the infant chimp is taken from the mother as soon as it is born and then the humanisation process begins resulting in the chimpanzee being deprived of the maternal care, which is essential for the baby to thrive physically and psychologically. This training and exploitation continues until adolescence at around seven years of age when the chimpanzee becomes more unpredictable and difficult to handle. This is the stage when most chimpanzees end up locked away for the rest of their lives, often in cramped and inappropriate living conditions. Since chimpanzees can live for more than fifty years in captivity, this may mean a lifetime in solitary confinement.*



*Marco lived with his father and six other chimpanzees in an old dilapidated truck in Valencia. Within the truck, each chimpanzee was housed individually in very small 2.5m<sup>2</sup> cages in total darkness. The chimpanzees had no choice but to sit in their own faeces and leftover food. Marco spent the majority of his time inside the truck. In fact the only time he saw any daylight was when he had to 'star' in the commercials.*

*Today Marco is safe from exploitation and lives at the Mona Foundation primate sanctuary in Spain. His early experience from living in sub-standard living conditions have left him with psychological and physical problems. He suffers from heart problems most likely resulting from poor nutrition. This was detected when he came to the sanctuary but this is kept under control with daily medication. Today Marco is the alpha male of the bachelor group and although he was humanised and trained to perform, nine years on he is a fully rehabilitated and social individual who has gained the respect of his group.*

*The Mona Foundation has invested time, energy and resources to ensure that Marco and his other rescued companions are given the best possible life and the sanctuary will continue to provide for them for the remainder of their lives. The frivolous use of animals such as Marco for entertainment purposes not only comes at a great cost to the individuals but also creates long-term pressure on already overburdened sanctuaries and other NGOs working to remedy the situation by providing the lifelong care so often denied to the animals by those businesses which have previously exploited them.*

## Part Five: Conclusion

The use of wild animals in performance situations; whether in zoos, circuses, television and film or live events, poses a significant risk to the individual animals and people. The long-term and lifelong impact of subjecting wild animals to the necessary training required to coerce them into carrying out desired behaviours should not be underestimated. Many animals used in performance will spend their lives in unnatural social and physical environments, be subjected to regular handling and travelling and be exposed to situations far-removed from those from which they have evolved. Some may have teeth or claws removed in order to limit risk of injury. This in turn can cause debilitating chronic conditions. Case studies have demonstrated that the impact on the health and wellbeing of the animals may last for a lifetime and, even for those who are lucky enough to be moved to a more appropriate environment, such as a sanctuary, it may be impossible to make a full recovery. When animals are moved to sanctuaries to live out their lives, it is usually the already overburdened rescuers who must provide financially for their care, sometimes for decades.

The use of wild animals in performance serves little educational purpose and has no positive impact on conservation. In fact, research<sup>xviii</sup> suggests that the use of animals in the media may damage conservation efforts. In the case of zoos and dolphinariums, this lack of educational and conservation value may be considered a breach of national zoo regulations and the EC Zoos Directive.

Whilst the use of wild animals in circuses is still legal in many EU countries, the issue is one which has been subject to a great deal of attention in recent years and has been banned in some places. The same cannot be said for the use of the same species of animal in other performance situations. The arguments and case studies laid out in this document demonstrate that the experiences of wild animals used across a number of performance situations are similar and that the use of wild species in this way will always compromise animal welfare and endanger public safety.

It is therefore recommended that EU Member States take a holistic approach to dealing with the issue of wild animals in performance when devising and implementing national policies. This will help to ensure that, should businesses owners be banned from using wild animals in certain types of performance, this does not serve to simply shift the same animals into another situation where they are used in a similar way, albeit in a different setting.

The authors of this document advocate an end to the use of wild animals in performance across the European Union and encourages Member States to take action to ensure that the damaging practices outlined in this document are brought to a swift and humane end within their jurisdiction.



# References

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## **Born Free Foundation**

Born Free Foundation is an international wildlife charity, founded by Virginia McKenna and Bill Travers, following their starring roles in the classic film *Born Free*, and their son Will Travers, in 1984. The Born Free Foundation works worldwide for wild animal welfare and compassionate conservation.

Born Free supports and manages a diverse range of projects and campaigns; embracing both compassion and science in setting an agenda that seeks to influence, inspire and encourage a change in public opinion away from keeping wild animals in captivity. In the short term, the charity works with governments, the travel industry and like minded organisations to seek compliance with existing legislation and improve the welfare conditions for wild animals currently held in zoos. Via our Compassionate Conservation agenda, we provide protection for threatened species and their habitats across the globe. Working with local communities, Born Free develops humane solutions to ensure that people and wildlife can live together without conflict.



[www.bornfree.org.uk](http://www.bornfree.org.uk)

## **ENDCAP**

ENDCAP is a European coalition of NGOs and wildlife professionals from the majority of European countries that specialise in the welfare and protection of wild animals in captivity. Working with the European Institutions, national governments and experts, ENDCAP aims to improve knowledge and understanding of the needs of wild animals in captivity, uphold current legislation and seek higher standards, whilst challenging the concept of keeping wild animals in captivity.



[www.endcap.eu](http://www.endcap.eu)

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