



Statement on the killing of chimpanzees in Swedish EAZA Zoo Furuviksparken

It is with great sadness we learn that at least three chimpanzees were shot after an escape from their enclosure and that three chimpanzees are still trapped within the building. This occurred on 14th of December in Furuviksparken Zoo, Sweden.

The Zoo management claims that “shooting is (...) the only solution to a chimp loose in the park.”¹ Tranquiliser is seen as no option due to stress in the chimpanzees. It has been remarked that there was insufficient anaesthetic available to dart the chimpanzees.²

The Jane Goodall Institute firmly condemns the shooting of chimpanzees under human care as there should be always alternatives available. We emphasize the important role that caregivers can play in guiding the chimpanzees back towards their enclosure. Zoos should always have enough tranquiliser available to avoid such tragedies. This EAZA (European Association of Zoos and Aquaria) member zoo was closed for the winter and one of the chimpanzees shot dead was a three-year-old. Shooting chimpanzees should only be a very last resort in case of imminent danger to others. From what we can assess, it is highly questionable that this was the case.

Moreover, zoos should stop using the word ‘euthanasia’ for the killing of chimpanzees and other animals. This misleading language suggests that this action was undertaken in the interest of the individual chimpanzees themselves. Moreover, the Jane Goodall Institute strongly calls for EAZA to step away from their policy of killing healthy animals for zoo management purposes.

If a zoo maintains that killing escaped animals is the only solution, then they should not have the animals in the first place.

Captive chimpanzees should always have the best care and a safe home. It is never possible to guarantee that chimpanzees, who are highly intelligent, will be unable to find a way to escape from their enclosures, whether in a zoo or a sanctuary. Therefore there should always be a plan, well understood by keepers and caregivers, that enables escaped chimpanzees to be persuaded to return to their enclosures without danger of harming other animals or humans. There are very many examples of escaped chimpanzees who have been returned safely by their keepers. Without the use of tranquilizers but if this is not possible then, as stated above, there should always be enough tranquilizer for emergency use and keepers who are trained to dart escapees.

From the communications released by the Furuviksparken Zoo there is no clear explanation of the reasons that resulted in this horrible tragedy, so we urgently call for an in-depth investigation and evaluation by an independent organization.

Related to the three remaining chimpanzees we urgently call the management of Furuviksparken to handle the situation with care in order to avoid the repetition of this tragedy and to make use of available expertise within the international network to solve the situation in a controlled way such that the safety of chimpanzees and humans as well will be assured.

¹ <https://www.furuvik.se/important-message>.

² <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/dec/14/three-chimpanzees-shot-dead-after-escape-from-swedish-zoo>.