

PRESS RELEASE

4 May 2004

FIRST EVER REPATRIATION OF A CONFISCATED PET PRIMATE

SINGAPORE 4 MAY – In May 2003, acting on information provided by the International Primate Protection League (IPPL) and the Animal Concerns Research and Education Society (Acres), the Agri-Food & Veterinary Authority, assisted by Acres, confiscated a vervet monkey illegally kept as a pet in Singapore. This monkey had been illegally imported from South Africa.

It is illegal to keep primates as pets in Singapore. Furthermore, under the Endangered Species (Import and Export) Act, it is illegal to import this species without a permit. The possession of any illegally imported primate species is also an offence.

Each year, thousands of animals are captured from the wild for the illegal pet trade. Removing these animals from their natural habitat damages the fragile ecosystem as well as threatens the species' existence. More than half of these animals die during transportation and the surviving animals mostly end up living in bad conditions or are mistreated.

At a young age, this monkey named “Blue” (now approximately 6 years old) had been forcefully separated from his family, and sent to live in a cage far from his home.

Acres has been working to find a new home for this monkey where he can once again associate with other vervet monkeys. Blue today, makes his journey back home to the African continent, to the Munda Wanga Sanctuary in Zambia. This is the first repatriation of a confiscated pet primate in Singapore.

Blue will be living in a newly built, large, open topped, electrified enclosure, with other vervet monkeys.

Acres extends our appreciation to the Singapore Zoo, for taking care of ‘Blue’ the vervet monkey and helping with the logistics necessary for his return flight to Zambia.

Stichting AAP is the principal sponsor for this repatriation. Additional sponsors include IPPL, Gorilla Haven and Acres.

Acres will continue our efforts in addressing the illegal wildlife trade in Singapore.

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Notes to editors

1. Blue will fly on board flight SQ406 to Johannesburg and flight SA62 to Lusaka, together with an Acres personnel.
2. Acres is a non-profit organisation aimed at fostering respect and compassion for all animals. Acres's approach to raising animal welfare issue is to focus on education and back up our advocacy with scientific clarity accrued through research. Using our findings, we will inform the public and work towards synergistic partnerships with the authorities and related parties to improve animal welfare.
3. Munda Wanga Sanctuary provides home for orphaned and injured animals from around the World that are indigenous to the continent and preferably Zambia.
4. The vervet monkey (*Chlorocebus aethiops*) is listed under Appendix II of CITES. Appendix II includes all species which although not necessarily now threatened with extinction may become so unless trade in specimens of such species is subject to strict regulation in order to avoid utilization incompatible with their survival.