

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Chimpanzees Receive Increased Federal Protection

New Endangered Species Act listing ends disparity that deprived many chimpanzees of much needed protection

(Chicago, June 12, 2015)– [Lincoln Park Zoo](#) applauds the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) decision and announcement today to list both captive and wild chimpanzees as endangered under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) in response to a legal petition led by The Humane Society of the United States and backed by a coalition of conservation and animal welfare organizations, including the Association of Zoos and Aquariums.

The increased federal protection for chimpanzees is expected to curb the use of these intelligent, social animals in invasive biomedical research, interstate trade as pets and use by the entertainment industry, thereby creating positive implications for chimpanzee conservation and individual welfare.

Habitat loss and poaching has led to a drop of more than 65 percent in populations of wild chimpanzees. The federal agency previously recognized wild chimpanzees as endangered, yet chimpanzees living in the United States were deprived of such protection.

“This so-called ‘split-listing,’ allowed for their use in invasive biomedical testing and created a loophole allowing for the commercial trade and private ownership of this rare species,” explained Steve Ross, PhD, [Director of the Fisher Center for the Study and Conservation of Apes](#) at Lincoln Park Zoo. “This new designation will now provide captive chimpanzees with all of the protections that come with endangered status. This is a very important step to curtailing private ownership and exploitation by the media entertainment industry.”

Scientific studies by Ross, who is also the founder of [Project ChimpCARE](#), revealed that the use of chimpanzees in movies, commercials and greeting cards contributes to widespread misunderstandings about the species which can subsequently impact the public’s conservation attitudes and decisions. Data from these compelling studies, along with an expert declaration by Ross, were used in the petition to the USFWS, and spurred an official USFWS status review of chimpanzees under the ESA in 2011. The review eventually led to the 2013 proposed rule to protect all chimpanzees, which has now been finalized.

The petition was filed by a diverse coalition of organizations including The HSUS, the Association of Zoos and Aquariums, the Jane Goodall Institute, the Pan African Sanctuary Alliance, the New England Anti-Vivisection Society, the Wildlife Conservation Society, The Fund for Animals and Humane Society International.

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ABOUT LINCOLN PARK ZOO

Lincoln Park Zoo, a historic Chicago landmark founded in 1868, is dedicated to connecting people with nature by providing a free, family-oriented wildlife experience. A leader in conservation science both globally and locally, the zoo exemplifies the highest quality animal care and educational outreach. The not-for-profit zoo, managed by The Lincoln Park Zoological Society, is a member-supported organization and one of the nation's only free, privately managed zoos. For more information, call 312 -742-2000 or visit www.lpzoo.org.