

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Photos of an appropriate multi-male, multi-female group of chimpanzees at Lincoln Park Zoo can be found [HERE](#). Pet trade images are not shared as Lincoln Park Zoo research shows when these images of chimpanzees in human settings are circulated, chimpanzees are not believed to be endangered.

## Primates Don't Make Good Pets! Says Lincoln Park Zoo

*Series of manuscripts from the Lester E. Fisher Center for the Study and Conservation of Apes bring light to the detrimental effects of atypically-housed chimpanzees*

**Chicago (December 13, 2017)** – The Wolf of Wall Street movie. Weezer's "Island in the Sun" music video. Michael Jackson's "pet" Bubbles. While these may seem like unrelated pop culture references, they all have a similarly daunting theme: the use of chimpanzees in the pet or entertainment trade. These chimpanzees typically are raised by humans and rarely see others of their own species until they are fortunate enough to be moved to an accredited zoo or sanctuary. For years, Lincoln Park Zoo researchers have documented the long-term effects of this unusual human exposure on chimpanzees. Now, a third and final study in a series has been published in *Royal Society Open Science* Dec. 13 showcasing the high stress levels experienced by these chimpanzees who have been raised in human homes and trained to perform for amusement.

Over the course of the three years, Fisher Center researchers evaluated more than 60 chimpanzees – all now living in accredited zoos and sanctuaries - and examined the degree to which they were exposed to humans and to their own species over their lifetime to determine the long-term effects of such exposure. A variety of data was collected including behavioral, personality scores and endocrine data to assess the differences between chimpanzees who spent most of the time around humans (pet or performers) versus those living in more species-typical environments among other chimpanzees. The three studies have been pivotal in protecting great apes within the United States as part of Lincoln Park Zoo's Project [ChimpCARE](#), an initiative committed to improving the wellbeing of chimpanzees.

### Pet and Performer Chimps Experience Higher Stress Levels

The most recent study, published Dec. 13, evaluated the stress hormone, cortisol, which can be found in hair samples and determines long-term stress (versus short-term stress which can be found in other biological matter such as feces or saliva). Researchers found that chimpanzees with a lot of direct human exposure and little time around other chimpanzees tended to have higher cortisol levels, even later in life when the chimpanzees were properly socialized.



## **Atypically-reared Chimpanzees are Less Social Among Chimps**

The second study, published to *Developmental Psychobiology* in January 2016, found that chimpanzees reared by humans or without chimpanzees (often pets or performers) tended to score lower on extraversion within their personality scoring. Less extraverted chimpanzees were then less likely to be social within their groups.

## **Human-reared Chimpanzees Don't Know How to be Chimps**



The first study, published in *PeerJ* in September 2014, found that chimpanzees with higher exposure to humans tended to demonstrate lower rates of prosocial or friendly behavior with other chimpanzees in their social group. These types of activities include grooming, mating and other species-typical behaviors.

These studies showcase the long-lasting effects on chimpanzees that are not exposed to appropriately complex, multi-male, multi-female social groups. Pet and performer chimpanzees are becoming exceedingly more rare thanks to initiatives such as Lincoln Park Zoo's Project [ChimpCARE](#), which contributed to [ending the chimpanzee split-listing](#) for federal protection in the United States. Organizations accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) and the Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries (GFAS) have provided lifelong care for these former pet and performer chimpanzees and integrated – and continue to integrate – them into appropriate social groups with other chimpanzees.

To learn more about the Lester E. Fisher Center for the Study and Conservation of Apes visit [www.lpzoo.org/fishercenter](http://www.lpzoo.org/fishercenter).

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## **ABOUT LINCOLN PARK ZOO**

Lincoln Park Zoo inspires communities to create environments where wildlife will thrive in our urbanizing world. The zoo is a leader in local and global conservation, animal care and welfare, learning, and science. A historic Chicago landmark founded in 1868, the not-for-profit Lincoln Park Zoo, is a privately-managed, member-supported organization and is free and open 365 days a year. Visit us at [lpzoo.org](http://lpzoo.org).