



KERATAN AKHBAR ONLINE

Tajuk	:	'Coconut Monkeys', Too, Need Our Attention
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'Coconut monkeys', too, need our attention



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Sahabat Alam Malaysia (SAM) welcomes the [comments](#) by the Natural Resources and Environment Ministry on the keeping of monkeys as pets.

We appreciate the ministry's concern that apartments and industrial areas are not ideal places for the keeping of macaques. Life in captivity would be stressful for these animals in addition to the stress experienced as a result of captivity and confinement.

SAM is therefore pleased that the department is reviewing the licences of pet owners in urban and apartment buildings and hopefully will end the issuance of licences for urbanised and high rise residential places.

The other area of concern is the keeping of macaques by villagers for agricultural purposes. These macaques are acquired when they were babies and trained in the skill of coconut plucking. Often, they are tethered to a tree with a chain attached to their neck.

Similarly, village macaques in a socially deprived environments and often kept on their own with little stimulation, would see development of stereotypic behavior such as pacing or over- grooming as a result of boredom.

The welfare of primates should override all other priorities. The ministry should look into the appointment of an independent consultation body made up of qualified personnel experienced in primate care who would be able to advise enforcement officers on the welfare needs of primates kept.

Licence applications by primate owners should then be subject to a review of the inspection report with recommendations agreed to by the body as a whole.

Such a system would greatly benefit the work of local authorities who are overstretched, lack guidance and who are demonstrably, and understandably, inconsistent on the issue.

SAM calls for the prohibition of the buying and selling of primates and that the keeping of them as pets be phased out.