

# CHIMPANZEES AS PETS: THE FACTS



- As infants, chimpanzees are affectionate, playful, and irresistibly cute. For this reason, people often buy them from breeders to keep as pets. But chimpanzees do not make good pets!
- Chimpanzees are extremely intelligent, making it difficult to keep them stimulated and satisfied in a human environment.
- Chimpanzees grow up fast, and by the age of five they are stronger than most adult humans. They become destructive and dangerous, and can no longer live in a human household.
- Chimpanzees can and will bite. Many chimpanzee owners have lost fingers and suffered severe facial damage.
- To alleviate this danger many owners will remove the chimpanzee's teeth, make them wear shock collars, and even remove their thumbs.
- Chimpanzee infants belong with their mothers. Free-living chimpanzees nurse for five years and don't typically reach puberty until around age 13. Chimpanzee mothers typically share life-long bonds with their offspring.
- When chimpanzees become too large and dangerous to be kept in human homes, they must be given up. They are usually sold into entertainment or biomedical research, since zoos will not accept chimpanzees who have been raised in human homes.
- Chimpanzees can live longer than 60 years in captivity. Those who are raised as pets are often cycled through a variety of miserable situations. It is not uncommon for a chimpanzee "pet" to later be exploited by both the entertainment and biomedical research industries.
- Currently many organizations are working to educate people on the dangers of owning chimpanzees. Sanctuaries are needed to provide permanent homes for chimpanzee "pets" who have been discarded.