



## **Guidance on the keeping of Small Primates: Tamarins, Capuchins and Squirrel Monkeys**

Dangerous Wild Animals (Northern Ireland) Order 2004





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| <b>1. Species names of commonly kept small primates:</b> | Species of the genera <i>Saguinus</i> and <i>Leontopithecus</i> | Tamarins         |
|  | Species of the genus <i>Cebus</i>                               | Capuchins        |
|  | <i>Saimiri sciurius</i>   | Squirrel Monkeys |
- 2. Additional information**
- All members of the *Saguinus* and *Leontopithecus* genera, and of the Cebidae family (the “New World Monkeys”), are included in the Schedule to the Order. Captive requirements for species that are not listed in Paragraph 1 above may be different from those listed below. Further information should be sought from the Department of the Environment before a licence application is made.
- Marmosets do not require a licence under this legislation.
- These primates have sharp teeth and can give a nasty bite, have agile hands and a high level of intelligence.
- 3. Conservation status**
- Some tamarin species and some Cebid monkeys are classified as Annex A species under EC Regulation 338/97 (relating to the Convention on Trade in Endangered Species (CITES)).
- Special permits must be obtained to buy, sell, breed or use Annex A species for any commercial purpose.

- 4. Housing overview** Small primates can be kept indoors or in caged enclosures outdoors, as long as their temperature and exercise requirements are met.
- 5. Keeping experience** In order to protect the welfare of these animals, keepers must be able to demonstrate a good knowledge of husbandry and handling of the species they wish to keep.  
  
There should normally be a second named person nominated and included on the licence who is competent to care for the animals should the owner be absent or incapacitated.

## Housing Recommendations

- 6. Construction** Cage floors should be constructed from a solid material to prevent damage to the animals' feet. These animals have a high level of dexterity and learn by observing. They may easily learn to undo bolts and other closure methods, therefore cages must be secured by key operated locks, with the keys left out of their reach.  
  
Outdoor enclosures must have a roof, and must provide shelter, and a heated shed or nest box space where the primates can shelter from the weather.
- 7. Fencing** Fencing must be strong enough to withstand the weight of the animals climbing on it, and the mesh size used must be small enough to prevent the animals becoming entangled. If the enclosure fencing is the only means of separation from visitors, it is strongly recommended that the mesh size is small enough to prevent people putting their fingers through it.

**8. Size**

The size of enclosure used should be based on the size of the group. For smaller members of the small primate group (100-500g body weights (3.5-17.5oz)) the recommended minimum cage size is 0.9 x 0.9 x 2 m (3 x 3 x 6 ft) with a wire roof or ceiling.

For the larger species with a bodyweight of 500-1000g (17.5- 35 oz), the minimum recommended enclosure size is 1 x 2.5 x 2.5 m (4 x 8 x 8 ft)

Each cage should have sufficient perching areas and nest boxes to enable all the animals in the enclosure to use them at the same time.

If smaller indoor enclosures are used, the animal must have the secure range of a larger area within the house during a portion of the day.

**9. Temperature**

These monkeys are all tropical species, and their main housing areas should be kept between 18 and 29° C (65-85 ° F). Unlimited access to outdoor enclosures is acceptable during cooler weather, as long as the inside enclosure is kept warm and the primates have the ability to go in and out at will.

Any heating source used must be covered to ensure it does not cause burns to the animals.

**10. Lighting**

Most primates require 12 hours of daylight. Natural light is the best light source, however it should be supplemented with full spectrum lights, particularly for tamarins.

**11. Ventilation** A suitable form of ventilation must be provided to ensure that there is sufficient air flow through the enclosure.

**12. Drainage** The drainage of outdoor enclosures must be capable of rapidly removing all excess water. Drains should be designed to avoid injury to the animals, and sited so as not to impede their movement. Any open drains, other than those carrying surface water, should be outside the enclosure. Any faecal material must be disposed of in an environmentally sound manner.

For indoor enclosures, the floor covering must be able to absorb any spilled water, or urine, and should be changed regularly.

**13. Cleanliness** Faeces and food debris should be removed on a daily basis. Water bowls, hammocks, and toys should be disinfected regularly. The base of the enclosure should be cleaned, and bedding thrown away regularly, with particular attention being paid to the cleanliness of the nest boxes.

Hard surfaces within a small primate enclosure should be cleaned daily with a detergent (washing-up liquid), with particular attention being paid to shelves and perches where the animals sit regularly.

Tamarins, in particular, will scent mark their enclosure. In order to preserve this, a thorough cleaning of the enclosure with disinfectant should only be done sparingly.

**14. Social dynamics and behavioural considerations**

The small primates listed above are all best kept in a family group, with an adult pair, and their offspring. Same sex groups, non-breeding pairs and juvenile animals may also be kept together. More than one nest box, water bowl, and feeding station should be made available to the group. This will allow lower ranking animals to feed without undue stress from dominant animals.

It is recommended that small primates are kept in groups or, if kept singly, are provided with plenty of human interaction.

**15. Prevention of escape**

Enclosures should be locked when the owners are not in attendance. Cage mesh should be small enough to prevent the primates' hands getting stuck. A double door with a space of approximately 2m<sup>2</sup> (18 ft<sup>2</sup>) separating the two gates should be erected at the entrance to outdoor enclosures, allowing the keeper to enter without a risk of the animals escaping. Both gates should be padlocked.

Small primates should not be left unattended in the house when out of their enclosures. Even within a locked house, they have the ability to learn to turn keys and work door handles. If the animals are allowed to run free inside a room, external doors must be locked and windows must be closed or protected with mesh to prevent escape.

**16. Food, drink and bedding**

Primates in captivity have a tendency to be overweight. Appropriate diets, either complete or a mixture of foods, including fresh fruit and vegetables, should be provided.

Specialist advice should be sought by owners on the appropriate diet and supplements for the species they propose to keep.

The occasional high protein item is advisable for these species: crickets, mealworms, boiled eggs are all appropriate.

Fresh clean water must be constantly available.

Dry inedible bedding should be provided in at least two nest boxes, to allow the animals to hide and to sleep during the day.

**17. Visiting interval**

The animals must be visited at appropriate intervals, normally at least twice every 24 hours. However, these social animals thrive with lengthy contact and interaction.

**18. Exercise and Enrichment**

The enclosure or exercise room should be big enough for the animals to exercise. The use of enrichment is desirable.

For small primates, enrichment could include hammocks made from cloth or mesh that can be removed to be cleaned; hanging rope swings; hiding spaces, such as hollow logs; tree limbs or logs at various heights to promote climbing, and food puzzle games that encourage foraging time.

Climbing equipment, swings and branches will provide opportunities for exercise, enrichment and expression of natural behaviour.

**19. Provision for capture and transportation**

If the animals cannot be caught by hand, some thought should be given to the inclusion of catch-up facilities in the enclosure. The use of a smaller cage or a narrow chute may aid the capture and treatment of individual animals if required.

Small primate species can be transported to a veterinary surgeon in a locked wire or plastic cat carrier. A licence, issued by the Department of the Environment, for the keeping of these animals may specify restrictions on the movement of these animals and procedures to be followed.

**20. Emergency planning**

There should be a written contingency plan in place to be used in the event of an emergency, for example fire, flood, animal escape or injury to the keeper.

- 21. Notification Requirements** A licence, issued by the Department of the Environment, for the keeping of these animals may specify procedures to be followed in the event of an escape and on the provision of information to the Emergency Services (e.g. the Fire Service) on the dangerous wild animals being kept.
- You are required to notify the Department of the Environment of any intentions to breed the animals.
- 22. Prevention and control of spread of infectious disease** Provision should be made to allow separation of sick or injured animals from a group.
- The keeper should provide details of their veterinary arrangements with a practice prepared to treat the species they keep. A schedule of veterinary care, including routine parasite control and vaccinations is necessary, and the keeping of records of veterinary attention is essential.
- Animals acquired from outside the United Kingdom may be subject to rabies quarantine regulations. Anyone requiring further information should contact the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
- There are no transmissible diseases carried by these animals that pose a risk to the general public as long as there is no direct contact, and visitors are not allowed to handle the animals or their by-products.

## Explanatory Notes

These notes have been produced to provide people wishing to keep dangerous wild animals with guidance on the requirements they may have to meet. In determining whether or not a licence should be issued, the Department of the Environment will consider the information provided by the applicant when applying for a licence. The Department will also arrange for a suitably qualified person to carry out an inspection of the premises at which the animal or animals will be kept and the inspector's report will also be taken into consideration. It is at the Department's discretion to waive certain recommendations, or add additional ones, to the guidance provided in this document. There is a right to appeal within 21 days if a licence is refused or if the applicant contests conditions applied to a licence.

## Contact Information

*For further information on the Dangerous Wild Animals (Northern Ireland) Order 2004, contact the Department of the Environment, Northern Ireland Environment Agency, Biodiversity Unit on (028) 9056 9557*

### **For CITES enquiries:**

Wildlife Licensing and Registration  
Service  
Global Wildlife Division  
**Department for Environment,  
Food and Rural Affairs**  
Zone 1/17 Temple Quay House  
2 The Square, Temple Quay  
Bristol BS1 6EB

Tel 0117 372 8691

### **For rabies quarantine enquiries:**

Quarantine Section  
**Department for Environment,  
Food and Rural Affairs**  
Area 209  
1a Page Street  
London SW1P 4PQ

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