Welfare Assessment

The Chimpanzee Welfare Assessment Process

The objective of the Chimpanzee Welfare Assessment Process (hereafter simply “the Assessment”) is to provide organization feedback on their care and management practices as they relate to addressing and improving the welfare of the resident chimpanzees.

The Assessment is aimed to (a) leverage what is known about chimpanzee welfare in the scientific literature to (b) encourage best practices in relation to those in place at peer organizations (accredited zoos and sanctuaries) and (c) summarize various measurable metrics into simple, understandable scores that (d) encourage continued refinement of management and prioritization of effort/resources and (e) ultimately improve chimpanzee welfare as a result.

The Assessment is as intentionally objective and empirical as possible. Whenever possible, important elements are quantitatively measured rather than subjectively rated. While this is not possible for every characteristic of chimpanzee management, it is the preferred method and helps both in terms of comparisons with peer organizations and measuring progress and improvement over time.

Measures are completed in two ways:

- By the assessor during scheduled and unscheduled site visits
- By the organization under the direction of the assessor. In these cases, measures are verified by the assessor during unscheduled visits.

The three areas of focus are:
**SOCIAL**: Assessing the social life of the chimpanzees living in their groups

**SPACES**: Assessing the quantity and quality of physical spaces in which the chimpanzees reside

**PROGRAMS**: Assessing the management practices that potentially affect chimpanzee welfare

The result is a score (from 0-100) for each of these three areas and an overall score that is the average of the three areas, which represents the overall capacity of the organization to address the welfare of the resident chimpanzees.

The scores are solely the result of the assessment process and are a reflection of what was seen and assessed during scheduled and unscheduled site visits. They also do not make any attempt to adjudicate past practices.

The first welfare assessment was conducted at Project Chimps sanctuary in Georgia. The organization has been provided a detailed report on the assessment findings. The assessment is a pilot project of ChimpCARE in which the evaluatory tool is developed and refined and is funded by the Arcus Foundation.
Overall, the organization is doing very well to meet the welfare requirements of the resident chimpanzees. The chimpanzees live dynamic social lives and the housing is good. There are some fundamental programmatic weaknesses that should be prioritized to continue to improve.

- Large average group size and stable compositions observed. Individual chimpanzees appear dynamic and content.
- Many complex and dynamic indoor spaces. Benefits of expansive outdoor spaces are tempered by relative lack of access.
- While some programs are well developed, others require further refinement. Collaboration with like organizations is encouraged.