

# MEMORANDUM



**To:** Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commissioners  
**From:** Colonel Curtis Brown, Director, Division of Law Enforcement  
**Date:** December 5, 2017  
**Subject:** Amendment to Chapter 68A-4.001 F.A.C., General Prohibitions

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**Purpose:**

Staff will seek approval to advertise an amendment to the General Prohibition Rule. The amendment will prohibit the feeding of free roaming, non-human primates in order to promote greater public safety and decrease health concerns associated with free-roaming, non-human primates.

**Summary:**

Currently, there are 3 established species of free-roaming non-human primates in Florida. The latest census of each troop, conducted in 2016, estimates 3 squirrel monkeys, 39 vervet monkeys and 175 rhesus macaques. As the population of free-roaming non-human primates increases across the state, public health and safety concerns also increase due to public contact with the primates. In an effort to reduce the risk of public contact, staff recommends an amendment to the General Prohibition rule to include the prohibition of feeding free-roaming, non-human primates. When free-roaming, non-human primates are fed by humans, they often develop a dependency on humans as a source of food and become territorial over the area where feeding occurs. This dependency can lead to increased aggression, which may result in injuries and disease transmission to humans. Presently, free-roaming, non-human primates are being fed in neighborhoods, public areas and rights of way, which creates public safety and traffic issues. For example, recently staff has received confirmed reports of free-roaming macaques in Apopka, Fruitland Park, Dunnellon and Ocklawaha.

Rhesus macaques, originating from an introduction to Silver Springs State Park years ago, have been seen outside of the Park area and it is likely that the population has begun to expand its range. Many of these macaques have tested positive for Herpes B, which is a potentially fatal disease to humans if not treated immediately. Herpes B can be transmitted through a bite, scratch or through bodily fluids such as blood, urine and feces. While no documented cases of Herpes B from free ranging macaques to humans have occurred in Florida, the risk will continue to grow as public contact with these animals increases.

**Staff Recommendation:**

Staff is requesting Commission approval to advertise the proposed amendment and file for adoption as soon as possible, as allowed by Section 120.54(3) Florida Statutes, without further public hearing unless requested.

**Staff Contact and/or Presenter:**

Major Rob Beaton, Captive Wildlife Section, Division of Law Enforcement