

December 4, 2020

Paul K. Martin
Inspector General
National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)
300 E Street, S.W.
Suite 8V39
Washington, DC 20546-0001
Via online submission to NASA [OIG Cyberhotline](#)
cc: public-inquiries@hq.nasa.gov

Dear Inspector General Martin,

On behalf of Rise for Animals (Rise; formerly the New England Anti-Vivisection Society), I am writing to relay our concern regarding troubling evidence of nonhuman primate euthanasia at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Ames Research Center (Ames). We respectfully request that the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) investigate this mass euthanasia for evidence of waste and misconduct given that the indiscriminate nature of this mass euthanasia suggests retirement to sanctuary was never considered, resulting in prolonged animal suffering and years of wasted resources.

Documents We Reviewed

In formulating the recommendation below, Rise reviewed Ames' 2018–2019 animal disposition records, which Rise obtained through a Freedom of Information Act Request, and an accompanying letter from NASA's Office of Communications addressed to Rise, dated September 24, 2020.¹

Finding: NASA Killed Every Nonhuman Primate in Its Possession in February of 2019

The animal disposition records we reviewed reveal that on February 2, 2019, Ames—which had in its possession every nonhuman primate NASA owned—euthanized all twenty-seven nonhuman primates. The explanation for euthanizing the larger colony of 21 nonhuman primates was:

¹ *Animal Disposition Records & Accompanying Letter*, Ames Res. Ctr. (NASA), Animal Research Laboratory Overview (ARLO) (2018–2019), <https://arlo.riseforanimals.org/entity/ames-research-center-nasa-2140/records/17723>, (last visited Dec. 2, 2020).

“This was an aging Parkinsonian colony that had never been used on study, but was maintained as long as possible as a dormant closed colony developing health problems due to age led to the decision to humanely euthanize.”

The explanation for euthanizing the smaller colony of 6 nonhuman primates stated:

“This was an aging colony that had not been used on study in many years, but was maintained as long as possible as a dormant closed colony developing health problems due to age led to the decision to humanely euthanize.”

NASA’s Office of Communications confirmed that no primates were spared euthanasia, as they stated in the September 24th letter to us that “according to the IACUC, there have been no primate departures from the Ames Research Center.”

Request: Investigate Mass Euthanasia and Failure to Consider Post Research Adoption

According to USDA-APHIS data, Ames was the only NASA research facility that possessed nonhuman primates in 2019. By euthanizing all 27 animals in 2019, NASA killed every nonhuman primate it had that day. Moreover, NASA’s Office of Communications explicitly stated that according to the IACUC, no nonhuman primates were retired to sanctuary by Ames. By indiscriminately euthanizing every one of the 27 animals, it is clear that NASA did not afford them with adoption consideration on a case-by-case basis. This is true both for the primates with Parkinson’s disease as well as the primates who were simply experiencing effects of aging.

We believe the decision to mass euthanize every nonhuman primate NASA had in its possession is strong evidence of waste and misconduct. These primates could have been sent to a sanctuary years ago. Instead, NASA chose to keep them housed on-site, at great expense, as they deteriorated in captivity. As such, I respectfully request that the OIG investigate this mass euthanasia for evidence of waste and misconduct given that the indiscriminate nature of this mass euthanasia suggests retirement to sanctuary was never considered.

Thank you for your consideration of this request, and for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Nathan Herschler
Executive Director