

18 September 2018

**The
International
Primatological
Society**



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Wilmington Blue Rocks
Clark Minker, Club President
Dave Heller, Managing Partner, League Director & CEO
801 Shipyard Drive, Wilmington, DE 19801
Sent via Email: info@bluerocks.com

Dear Mr. Minker and Mr. Heller,

I am writing on behalf of the elected officers of the International Primatological Society (IPS), a non-profit society of over 1,300 members dedicated to the study and conservation of primates. We are writing in the hope of working with you to discontinue your organization's affiliation with Timothy Lepard and his "Team Ghostriders" act which features capuchin monkeys riding on the backs of dogs. At its 2008 biannual Congress, the IPS voted unanimously to adopt a position statement that strongly opposes the use of nonhuman primates as performers, photo props and actors in the media. We adopted this position because using primates in these ways disregards significant negative welfare and conservation consequences. Specifically:

- Many of the monkeys used as performers are removed from their mothers shortly after birth and are denied opportunities for species-typical development;
- While primates may appear to tolerate these performances, it is important to realize that much of the training occurs out of public view, where aversive techniques cannot be monitored or reported;
- Many nonhuman primate species are not only susceptible to diseases that afflict humans but can also transmit pathogens to humans directly, especially when they are in proximity to audiences, including children and the elderly;
- The unnatural and inappropriate portrayal of nonhuman primates inaccurately conveys their natural biology and behavior. Seeing primates dressed up and performing frivolous activities for entertainment has been shown to negatively affect public attitudes related to their conservation:

<http://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0118487>

On behalf of the the world's leading experts on primate care and conservation, we respectfully request that you discontinue having Team Ghost rider perform at the Wilmington Blue Rocks games. We are aware that a variety of organizations have voiced disapproval of these practices in the past. Ours is an organization of globally-recognized scientists and conservationists, speaking on behalf of the primates in these shows and their wild relatives worldwide. We hope you will honor our request.

We would be happy to provide any supporting information or documentation that you request and look forward to the end of these frivolous events for the sake of primate welfare and conservation.

Sincerely,

Karen B. Strier
President, IPS