June 29, 2026

Background and Future Plans Regarding Population Management at the Monkey Mountain

At the Monkey Mountain in the Ichikawa City Zoological and Botanical Garden, Japanese macaques have continued to give birth throughout 2026. While some babies are healthy, there have unfortunately been cases of miscarriages or postnatal deaths; we continue to care for these animals while cherishing every precious life on a daily basis.

In this statement, we would like to address concerns regarding whether "the current number of Japanese macaques has become excessive," and explain the history of population management for our Japanese macaques as well as our future plans.

[Background]

As a member of the Japanese Association of Zoos and Aquariums (hereinafter referred to as "JAZA"), we naturally formulate breeding plans and manage all animals in our care in compliance with JAZA's animal welfare guidelines.

Regarding our Japanese macaques, we have historically established breeding plans annually by the summer of the preceding year. In years requiring population control, we managed numbers by administering reproductive suppressants to the females.

For the 2026 plan, we decided not to implement reproductive restrictions for the following reasons: we had suspended the use of suppressants due to the duration of prior administration; there was a change in staff responsible for the Monkey Mountain, necessitating observation of the monkeys' sexual behavior; and, given that Punch was born in July 2025 and was raised by hand, we believed the presence of younger individuals would be more effective for integrating Punch into the group. This decision led to the high number of births in 2026.

This surge in births was within our anticipated range. Given that we have previously managed populations larger than the current one, we do not consider the current population size in 2026 to be significantly excessive or to create a stressful environment for the Monkey Mountain.

[Future Plans]

In March of this year, when Punch became a subject of significant public interest, JAZA conducted an animal welfare survey regarding the Japanese macaques at our zoo. We submitted our husbandry manual, enrichment records, and breeding plan, and while we generally received their understanding, we also received advice on further improvements, such as refining our reproductive control techniques and formulating a breeding plan with a medium to long-term perspective.

In response, our zoo has established a breeding plan for the foreseeable future that will limit breeding in the Monkey Mountain area to either virtually none or a very small number of offspring.

Coincidentally, the supplementary budget recently passed by the Ichikawa City Council includes funding for the "expansion of the back-of-house facilities." This initiative is not merely aimed at expanding living space; with an eye toward promoting future enrichment efforts, it paves the way for various possibilities, such as the expansion or renovation of the Monkey Mountain area.

Currently, our top priority for the Monkey Mountain is the successful integration of Punch into the troop; however, we remain committed to ensuring a more comfortable life for all our Japanese macaques, not just Punch.

We ask for your continued support and care for Punch and the other Japanese macaques living on Monkey Mountain.

Ichikawa City Zoological and Botanical Garden