



ANALYSIS OF THE INTERNATIONAL LEGAL TRADE AND DOMESTIC TRAFFICKING OF LONG-TAILED MACAQUE (*Macaca fascicularis*) IN THE PHILIPPINES

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ABSTRACT – The Long-tailed Macaque *Macaca fascicularis* (LTM) is one of the most widely dispersed, adaptable, and exploited primate species in the world. It is extensively utilized in biomedical research and to a lesser extent as wild meat, harvester of crops, and pet. To better understand the trade dynamics of the LTM in the Philippines, we conducted a study by gathering and analyzing data from online trafficking, CITES trade database, private zoos, government wildlife rescue centers, and seizure records. We surveyed 20 Facebook groups in 2022 and documented 41 posts offering to sell 49 LTM individuals. The CITES Trade Database had 719 records for the period 1980–2019. The Philippines exported between 111,258 (exporter-reported) and 147,188 (importer-reported) live LTMs. Decade-to-decade comparison showed that the export of live individuals steadily declined by 35%–56% between succeeding decades. Export of specimens from the Philippines appeared to be increasing for unknown reasons but could not be determined conclusively due to the use of various units of measurement. The Philippine authorities seized a total of 58 live LTMs between 2010 and 2022. Seizure records did not show the true scale of LTM trafficking because illegally-kept LTM pets were usually reported as rescued or voluntarily-surrendered when retrieved from keepers or brought to rescue centers. In May 2022, at least 292 individuals were in 20 government wildlife rescue centers throughout the Philippines. While the LTM is a protected species in the Philippines, poaching for the pet trade is widespread although the true scale remains unclear. The poaching and human-macaque conflict could be a threat to LTM populations in their natural habitats in the Philippines. Developing preventive measures and raising awareness on illegal hunting and illicit trade should be prioritized to ensure the persistence of LTMs in the wild.

Keywords: biomedical research, CITES, social media, wild meat, zoonosis



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