

Thai City Fixing up Monkey Problem

今回は、タイの街ロップブリーで話題になっている「サル問題」のニュースです。この街では「long-tailed macaque」と呼ばれるサルが観光の名物でもありましたが、パンデミック後に状況が一変し、サルたちの行動が手に負えない状態に！本文では、手に負えない状態を意味する「unruly」や檻などに閉じ込められた状態「captive」など、野生動物の問題に関連した単語が登場します。人と動物がうまく共存するためには何が必要か、レッスンで話してみましょう。



1. Article

Read the following article aloud.

People will no longer have to fight with monkeys in the historic Thai city of Lopburi.

That is because of new efforts to keep the animals from reproducing and to limit their movements.

Monkey City

Before public health measures to control COVID-19 closed businesses in Lopburi, about 3,000 long-tailed macaques lived there. The people of the city fed them and even had a yearly party for them. Tourists came to the city north of Bangkok to see the macaques in what was known as "Monkey City."

The macaques are believed to bring good luck. They live in the nearby forests and have long been a part of the city's history. But after Lopburi came out of the [pandemic](#) lockdown in the middle of 2022, people found that the monkeys had become [unruly](#) without people feeding them.

Groups of macaques had taken over buildings. They stole food and caused accidents by walking in the streets. Groups of the monkeys also fought each other, shocking local people. Some of the townspeople put up cages around their homes to keep the monkeys out.

Stealing food

Wisarat Somngam is a local researcher with the non-governmental organization, Ecoexist Society. He said the monkeys would steal from people by taking any container they thought might contain food. People began to carry slingshots, a small weapon that shoots stones, to protect against the monkeys.

Earlier this year, officials began their efforts to catch the macaques. By May, they were increasing the effort to prevent the monkeys from reproducing that began during the pandemic.

"Our goal is to [neuter](#) all the monkeys, 100 percent of them," said local [veterinarian](#) Patarapol Maneern from the government wildlife department in September. The monkeys would then be put into an area where they will be looked after, he said.

Capture of monkeys

Now, the situation in the city seems to be under control, as the officials have captured 1,600 of the monkeys. Some animal rights groups agree the monkeys should be neutered, but they do not want them to be kept in [captivity](#).

Edwin Wiek is founder of Wildlife Friends Foundation Thailand. He said, "The monkeys are suffering because currently they're in a cage that is not designed for them." Wiek pressed the government to increase funding for the government wildlife department to train people in animal care and treatment.

The people of Lopburi are happy that the streets are safe again. Clock maker Chalit Nithiwkram said, "Things have become a little easier because most of the monkeys were captured. Life is easier." He said his business is improving because people are no longer afraid to park near his shop.

For others, the monkeys are important to Lopburi. Supaporn Reanprayoorn operates a store near a temple where monkeys often gathered. "Monkeys are part of Lopburi's identity," she said. She sometimes gave them a little food. "Let tourists take pictures with them—just a hundred or two," she joked.

I'm Andrew Smith.

Artorn Pookasook reported this story for Reuters. Jill Robbins adapted it for Learning English.

2. Key phrases and vocabulary

First repeat after your tutor and then read aloud by yourself.

1. **pandemic (n.)** a situation in which a disease quickly spreads between and through countries

The COVID-19 pandemic created many serious problems for people around the world.

2. **unruly (adj.)** to be out of control

The police asked the unruly soccer fans to leave the stadium.

3. **neuter (v.)** to perform an operation to remove the sex organs of an animal

An animal doctor can neuter a pet cat or dog for a small fee.

4. **veterinarian (n.)** an animal doctor

A veterinarian checked the health of the sheep on the farm.

5. **captivity (n.)** the situation of being in a cage or in a zoo

About twenty-five percent of all giant pandas live in captivity today.

3. Questions

Read the questions aloud and answer them.

1. In the past, people in Lopburi, Thailand, lived with macaques peacefully. Why did that change? What happened?
2. What things did the citizens and the government do to try to solve the problem?
3. What do animal rights groups want the government to do?
4. Are there any problems with wild animals in the city or town where you live?
5. What things do you think should be done so that people and wild animals can live together peacefully?