

Dangerous Wild Animals (Northern Ireland) Order 2004

Guidance on the keeping of Lemurs



**Environment &
Heritage Service**
www.ehsni.gov.uk

- 1. Species names of commonly kept lemurs:**

	Family <i>Lemuridae</i> including (but not limited to) the Genera <i>Lemur</i> , <i>Eulemur</i> , and <i>Varecia</i> .	Including Ring-tailed lemurs, Black lemurs, Ruffed lemurs (all subspecies).
	Family <i>Indriidae</i> , including (but not limited to) the Genera <i>Indri</i> and <i>Propithecus</i> .	Including the Indri and Sifaka species.

- 2. Additional information**

All lemurs, except for the broad-nosed gentle lemur and the grey gentle lemur (*Hapalemur* species) require a licence.

Lemurs have sharp teeth and can give a nasty bite, have agile hands and a high level of intelligence.

- 3. Conservation status**

All members of *Lemuridae* and *Indriidae* are classified as Annex A species under EC Regulation 338/97 (relating to the Convention on Trade in Endangered Species (CITES)).

Special permits must be obtained to buy, sell, breed or use Annex A species for any commercial purpose.

- 4. Housing overview**

Lemurs can be kept indoors or in caged enclosures outdoors, as long as their temperature requirements are met.

- 5. Keeping experience** In order to protect the welfare of these animals, keepers must be able to demonstrate a good knowledge of husbandry and handling of the species they wish to keep.
- There should normally be a second named person nominated and included on the licence who is competent to care for the animals should the owner be absent or incapacitated.

Housing Recommendations

- 6. Construction** Cage floors should be constructed from a solid material to prevent damage to the animals' feet. These animals have a high level of dexterity and learn by observing. They may easily learn to undo bolts and other closure methods, therefore cages must be secured by key operated locks, with the keys left out of their reach.

It is recommended that outdoor enclosures have a roof, and there must be a heated shed or nest box space where the primates can shelter from the weather.

- 7. Fencing** Fencing must be strong enough to withstand the weight of animals climbing on it, and the mesh size used must be small enough to prevent the animals becoming entangled. If the enclosure fencing is the only means of separation from visitors, it is strongly recommended that the mesh size is small enough to prevent people putting their fingers through it.

As small primates can very quickly work out how to undo bolts and catches, doors must be padlocked at all times.

- 8. Size** The size of enclosure used should be based on the size of the group. For two animals, the recommended minimum enclosure size is 1.5 x 2 x 2 m (5.5 x 5.5 x 6 ft). For every lemur added to the group, the floor size should be increased proportionately.
- Each cage should have sufficient perching areas and nest boxes to enable all the animals in the enclosure to use them at the same time.
- If smaller indoor enclosures are used, the animal must have the secure range of a larger exercise area during a portion of the day.
- 9. Temperature** Lemurs are all tropical species, and their main housing areas should be kept between 18 and 29° C (65-85 ° F). Unlimited access to outdoor enclosures is acceptable during cooler weather, as long as the nest box area is kept warm and the primates have the ability to go in and out at will.
- Any heating source used must be covered to ensure it does not cause burns to the animals.
- 10. Lighting** Lemurs require 12 hours of daylight. Natural light is the best light source, however it should be supplemented with full spectrum lights if the animals do not have regular outdoor exercise.
- 11. Ventilation** If kept indoors, a suitable form of ventilation must be provided to ensure that there is sufficient airflow through the enclosure.

- 12. Drainage** The drainage of outdoor enclosures must be capable of rapidly removing all excess water. Drains should be designed to avoid injury to the animals, and sited so as not to impede their movement. Any open drains, other than those carrying surface water, should be outside the enclosure. Any faecal material must be disposed of in an environmentally sound manner.
- For indoor enclosures, the floor covering must be able to absorb any spilled water or urine. This substrate should be changed regularly.
- 13. Cleanliness** Faeces and food debris should be removed on a daily basis. Water bowls, hammocks, and toys should be disinfected regularly. The base of the enclosure should be cleaned, and bedding thrown away regularly, with particular attention being paid to the cleanliness of the nest boxes.
- Hard surfaces within a small primate enclosure should be cleaned daily with a detergent, with particular attention being paid to shelves and perches where the animals sit regularly.
- 14. Social dynamics and behavioural considerations** It is recommended that lemurs are kept in groups of a minimum of two animals. Larger groups should consist of one adult male and several adult females. Same sex groups, non-breeding pairs and juvenile animals may also be kept together. More than one nest box, water bowl, and feeding station should be made available to the group. This will allow lower ranking animals to feed without undue stress from dominant animals.

15. Prevention of escape

Enclosures should be locked when the owners are not in attendance. A double door with a space of approximately 2m² (18 ft²) separating the two gates should be erected at the entrance to outdoor enclosures, allowing the keeper to enter without a risk of the animals escaping. Both gates should be padlocked.

Lemurs should not be left unattended in the house when out of their enclosures. Even within a locked house, they have the ability to learn to turn keys and work door handles. If the animals are allowed to run free inside a room, external doors must be locked and windows must be closed or protected with mesh to prevent escape.

16. Food, drink and bedding

Primates in captivity have a tendency to be overweight. Appropriate diets, either complete or a mixture of foods should be provided.

Food should be offered twice a day, making sure that it is not going to be contaminated with faeces. *Varecia* species (Ruffed lemurs) are mostly tree dwelling, and should have food provided at a perch, while Lemur species (Ring-tailed lemurs) are ground dwelling, and should have food offered on the ground.

Fresh clean water must be constantly available.

Dry inedible bedding should be provided in at least two nest boxes, to allow the animals to hide away from their surroundings and to sleep during the day.

- 17. Visiting interval**

The animals must be visited at appropriate intervals, normally at least twice every 24 hours. However, these social animals thrive with lengthy contact and interaction.
- 18. Exercise and Enrichment**

The enclosure or exercise room should be big enough for the animals to actively move around. The use of enrichment to encourage natural behaviour is desirable.

For small primates, enrichment could include hammocks made from cloth or mesh that can be removed to be cleaned; hanging rope swings; hiding spaces, such as hollow logs; tree limbs or logs at various heights to promote climbing, and food puzzle games that encourage foraging time.
- 19. Provision for capture and transportation**

Lemurs can be transported in a locked wire or plastic cat carrier. A licence, issued by the Department of the Environment, for the keeping of these animals may specify restrictions on the movement of these animals and procedures to be followed.
- 20. Emergency planning**

There should be a written contingency plan in place to be used in the event of an emergency, for example fire, flood, animal escape or injury to the keeper.

21. Notification Requirements

A licence, issued by the Department of the Environment, for the keeping of these animals may specify procedures to be followed in the event of an escape and on the provision of information to the Emergency Services (e.g. the Fire Service) on the dangerous wild animals being kept.

You are required to notify the Department of the Environment of any intentions to breed the animals.

22. Prevention and control of spread of infectious disease

Provision should be made to allow separation of sick or injured animals from a group.

The keeper should provide details of their veterinary arrangements with a practice prepared to treat the species they keep. A schedule of veterinary care, including routine parasite control and vaccinations is necessary, and the keeping of records of veterinary attention is essential.

Animals acquired from outside the United Kingdom may be subject to rabies quarantine regulations. Anyone requiring further information should contact the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

There are no transmissible diseases carried by these animals that pose a risk to the general public as long as there is no direct contact, and visitors are not allowed to handle the animals or their by-products.

Explanatory Notes

These notes have been produced to provide people wishing to keep dangerous wild animals with guidance on the requirements they may have to meet. In determining whether or not a licence should be issued, the Department of the Environment will consider the information provided by the applicant when applying for a licence. The Department will also arrange for a suitably qualified person to carry out an inspection of the premises at which the animal or animals will be kept and the inspector's report will also be taken into consideration. It is at the Department's discretion to waive certain recommendations, or add additional ones, to the guidance provided in this document. There is a right to appeal within 21 days if a licence is refused or if the applicant contests conditions applied to a licence.

Contact Information

For further information on the Dangerous Wild Animals (Northern Ireland) Order 2004, contact the Department of the Environment, Environment & Heritage Service, Biodiversity Unit on 028 9056 9605

For CITES enquiries:

Wildlife Licensing and Registration
Service
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For rabies quarantine enquiries:

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