

### **Nicky the Marmoset**

Nicky came into RSPCA care when she was found as a stray in Notting Hill in June 2019. We suspected she may have escaped after falling from the upper level of a building.

When a vet examined her, Nicky's condition was a concern: she was suffering from metabolic bone disease, called rickets in humans, and also had hair loss and bruising.



An RSPCA inspector tracked down Nicky's owner but when they visited the owner's home, they could see that Nicky had been living in unacceptable conditions. Primates are intelligent, sentient and highly social animals with complex needs. But Nicky had been kept in a cage that was too small and which lacked suitable substrate. There was no ultra violet lighting - which is so important for bone health - and she had little environmental enrichment or mental stimulation and no companionship.



Nicky's owner was found guilty of offences under Section 9 of the Animal Welfare Act 2006 and disqualified for ten years from keeping a primate as a pet. He was also made to pay a £250 fine, costs of £1,200 and a £30 victim surcharge. Nicky will live out the rest of her natural life at a specialist primate boarding facility in a suitable environment where she will be able to socialise with other members of her species.

### **Charlie the Squirrel Monkey**

Charlie, a three-year-old squirrel monkey, was found in September 2012 confined in a barren bird cage in a cold, dark office on an industrial estate in West Drayton, near Heathrow. His entire cage was filthy and covered in dried faeces and urine.

Squirrel monkeys live in the tropical rainforests of Central and South American in large troops. About half their time is spent travelling and foraging for insects, covering a home range of around 2–5km<sup>2</sup>.

Charlie was alone, with no access to the outdoors or natural sunlight, no heating (a long-broken heat lamp was in easy reach) and with a large guard dog in the room. He was subjected to the constant background noises of passing trains and noises from a tyre yard and car wash. Charlie was taken for walks in Hyde Park on a harness and extendable lead – a likely stressful experience.

When Charlie was found he was underweight and his tail was bent and balding. He was scratching and rubbing the end of his tail due to the urine burns he probably got from sitting on the cage floor. Despite these appalling conditions, Charlie put on weight and in time was introduced to other squirrel monkeys at Monkey World Ape Rescue Centre in Dorset. He is now happily living in a large outside enclosure, part funded by the RSPCA, with the company of two females.

His owner pleaded guilty to offences under Section 9 of the Animal Welfare Act 2006. He was disqualified from keeping animals for two years, fined £400 and ordered to pay £100 costs.

### **Mikey the Marmoset**



Mikey, a four-month-old common marmoset, was handed over to his new owner in a car park after being sold by a couple for £650 via an advert in the local newspaper. Realising something was wrong – Mikey was hunched over and only able to shuffle around – Mikey’s new owner took him to an exotic pet dealer who alerted the RSPCA.

Mikey was found to be suffering from advanced metabolic bone disease and had seven bone fractures. The disease was in such an advanced stage, and restricted his movement to such an extent, that Mikey had to be euthanased by a vet to end his suffering.

Selling such a young animal would undoubtedly lead to long-term welfare problems as common marmosets naturally stay with their birth group at least until adulthood, which for males is around 17 months of age.

Not only had the owners failed to diagnose or treat the condition, they sold a very sick animal to someone who, as far as they were aware, knew nothing about caring for primates. The couple stated they were not aware Mikey had any problems when they sold him. However the veterinary examination indicated the fractures pre-dated the sale by around two weeks.

Both defendants were found guilty of four offences under Sections 4 and 9 of the Animal Welfare Act 2006 and disqualified from keeping any animal for life. They also had to pay £2,713 each towards RSPCA costs and £325 each to the woman who purchased Mikey. Both were given a community order to complete 300 hours of unpaid work. A deprivation order was also put in place for the four adult marmoset monkeys they still owned, including Mikey’s parents, who were then rehomed at Monkey World.