

The footage on the photos and videos of the attack on the young bonobo male Bili in Wuppertal, are heart breaking. Bonobos can show repeatedly aggressive behaviour towards new males integrated in a group, biting hands, feet, ears and the anal area. Although this behaviour is seen frequently in both captive and wild bonobos, the attacks on Bili are extremely violent.

A possible explanation is that Bili was not nursed by his mother, but was hand raised. For bonobo males the mother bond is very important and they live Given this exceptional situation Bili's history we support the needs for a solution based on Bili's welfare and wellbeing. We are also aware that there are no optimal solutions.

We do not support any solution that results in a long-term solitary isolation. No enrichment or good human care can replace the 24 hour needs of a highly social animal. Long term solitary confinement can lead to mental disorders. We will never support euthanasia of a healthy ape. We are also concerned about the transfer of Bili to another zoo as this will not only cause a lot of stress but there is no guarantee that the integration in another group will cause less attacks.

We believe the best option, for this moment, is to keep Bili in Wuppertal Zoo where the staff use the Fission Fusion structure of Bonobos to create a safe social structure for Bili where he can recover and bond with the other bonobos. The Fission Fusion structure, that also occurs among wild bonobos, means that the groups splits regularly in small subgroups and, in turn, the subgroups change in composition. This provides an opportunity to separate Bili from the individuals who provoke the attacks and that he would also be accompanied by one or two other bonobos.

We are open to considering any options that further can improve the situation and we will continue to monitor the situation on the ground.

Please note that we are focussing on the welfare situation of Bili and not on the discussion on zoos in general.