On World Monkey Day - Monkeys Make It Full-Circle - From Electrocution to Rescue, Rehabilitation and Finally to Release

Friday 12 December, 2025

This **World Monkey Day** marks a profound full-circle moment for **International Animal Rescue (IAR) Costa Rica.** On 14 December 2025, **five howler monkey**s, each rescued from life-threatening injuries, will r**eturn to the wild** in a release that symbolises both recovery, hope, and IAR's mission to rescue, rehabilitate, and return wildlife to the forests where they belong.

The release will take place on Costa Rica's Pacific coast, close to the areas where several of the monkeys were originally found. It is here that their journeys began, amid electrocution, trauma and injury, and it is here that their new chapters will begin.

Among them is Nilo, electrocuted in Esperanza, Nosara on 31 July 2024, who survived deep burns and nerve damage. Through a long rehabilitation including wound care, physiotherapy, and social reintegration, today he climbs confidently again.

The newest member of the group, Seiba, was electrocuted in San Juanillo on 30 October 2025. Despite severe burns, she recovered extraordinarily well and has regained full climbing ability, making her release especially meaningful.

Together, **these five monkeys demonstrate the entire arc of IAR Costa Rica's life-saving work.** Their release also comes at a time when **IAR Costa Rica has been awarded GFAS Accreditation, a global recognition of excellence in animal care**, operational standards and ethical practice, years in the making.

Reflecting on that journey, Kristin Leppert, Program Director for Wildlife at GFAS, shared:

"I remember my first conversation in 2020, when they shared the vision for a new centre in Costa Rica. When we met in 2021, it was clear the journey ahead would be long. And yet here you are, doing exactly what you promised to do. Most importantly, thank you for your commitment to the highest standards of animal care and operational excellence. We are thrilled to welcome IAR Costa Rica to the GFAS family and proud to stand in support of your work to protect Costa Rican wildlife."

But amid this celebration, the **challenges facing Costa Rica's wildlife remain urgent** - and preventable. The **reality behind the rescues is that these electrocutions should never happen.**

Uninsulated electrical cables continue to pose one of the gravest threats to howler monkeys and other arboreal wildlife in Costa Rica. Many of the animals entering IAR Costa Rica's rescue centre arrive with catastrophic injuries that require months of intensive care.

Francisco, a Veterinarian at IAR Costa Rica, has treated countless electrocuted animals and sees the crisis firsthand:

*"**Every week we treat monkeys that should never have been injured in the first place. These electrocutions are entirely preventable.** When power lines are uninsulated and transformers remain exposed, wildlife pays the price. Our No Es Pura Vida campaign exists because electrocution is not part of the Costa Rica we want to represent. Protecting wildlife should be a national priority, and insulating power lines and the decree the Government agreed to 18 months ago, is one of the simplest and most effective steps we can take. Until the decree is followed, we will continue seeing animals arrive with burns, neurological damage, and trauma that could have been avoided."*

As these five monkeys return to the forest, their release is both a triumph and a call to action. IAR is urging rapid implementation of Costa Rica's Ministerial Decree on wildlife-safe electrical infrastructure, alongside coordinated efforts between power companies, municipalities and conservation groups.

Their release is a reminder of what becomes possible when rescue, policy change and community support work together, but also what is at stake if progress stalls.

IAR invites the public to support its efforts to end this crisis. With animal admissions at the rescue centre up from last year, the organisation is appealing for donations to expand its capacity to care for injured

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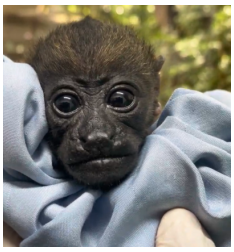

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animals and advocate for policy enforcement.

This World Monkey Day, let's raise awareness and demand the protection they urgently need.

You can find out more here: https://www.internationalanimalrescue.org/projects/howler-monkeys

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