Potential Ban on Chimp Testing Threatens Hep B Research

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A new proposal from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) could prevent the use of chimpanzees in critical research aimed at developing treatments and vaccines for the hepatitis B virus (HBV), Bio News Texas reports. The controversial proposal would consider captive chimpanzees “endangered” like their wild counterparts, thereby designating them inaccessible to researchers. Scientists involved in petitioning the proposal explained that since only humans and chimps can be infected with the hepatitis B virus, and since the research required to develop an HBV vaccine can’t be ethically conducted on humans, the potential ban could effectively stop the development of a hep B cure in its tracks. The FWS proposal will remain open for discussion for 60 days, during which time both researchers and animal rights activists are likely to lobby intensely.

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