

Thailand chunky monkey on diet after gorging on junk food

By Richard A. Somma
The Associated Press

BANGKOK — A morbidly obese wild monkey who gorged himself on junk food and soda left behind by tourists has been rescued and placed on a strict diet of lean protein, fruit, and vegetables.

Wildlife officials caught the chunky monkey — nicknamed “Uncle Fat” by locals — after photos of the animal started circulating on social media.

Wild monkeys roam free in many parts of Thailand, attracting tourists who feed and play with the animals. Most of the monkeys are macaques like Uncle Fat, and they typically weigh around 20 pounds.

Uncle Fat weighs three times that, tipping the scales at around 60 pounds.

“It was not easy to catch him,” said Kacha Phukem, the wildlife official who conducted the capture and rescue in late April. “He was the leader of his pack, and when I tried to go in, I had to fight off a



UNCLE FAT. A wild obese macaque named “Uncle Fat,” who was rescued from a Bangkok suburb, sits in a rehabilitation center in Bangkok, Thailand. Most macaque monkeys like Uncle Fat typically weigh around 20 pounds, but he weighs three times that, tipping the scales at around 60 pounds. (AP Photo/Sakchai Lalit)

critical condition where there is a high risk of heart disease and diabetes.”

Uncle Fat is believed to be between 10 and 15 years old. To help him lose weight, his new diet is limited to 400 grams worth of lean protein, fruit, and vegetables twice a day. Supakarn said she hopes within a few months they can consider releasing him to the wild.

She said Uncle Fat is an example of why people shouldn’t feed wild monkeys unhealthy food.

“I understand that people feel sorry for the monkeys and want to feed them when they see them,” Supakarn said. “But please don’t feed them food that people like to eat, like snacks and soda. It is very bad for their health and the problem is entirely manmade.”

flock of them with sticks.”

The subordinate monkeys fed into Uncle Fat’s bad habits.

“He had minions and other monkeys bringing food for him, but he would also re-distribute it to younger monkeys,” said Supakarn Kaewchot, a veterinarian in charge of the monkey’s diet. “He is now in

China conducts demolitions at Tibetan Buddhist study site

BEIJING (AP) — Chinese authorities in southwestern Sichuan province have evicted followers and razed hundreds of homes at one of the world’s largest centers of Tibetan Buddhist learning in a months-long operation that has drawn protests from Tibetans in exile.

Local officials in Garze prefecture say they are carrying out demolitions to prevent overcrowding and to renovate Larung Gar, a sprawling, mountainside settlement that housed more than 10,000 monks and nuns who stayed and studied for months at a time. Authorities are reportedly seeking to cut the population by half, to 5,000.

Overseas Tibetan groups say the forced evictions and demolitions are meant to put a damper on the practice and spread of Tibetan Buddhism. Larung

Gar’s academy has increasingly attracted large numbers of disciples from China’s Han ethnic majority as well as foreign visitors.

Earlier this year, a video circulated on social media that purportedly showed young Tibetan nuns from the monastery being directed to sing about their

Chinese-ness and pledge patriotic loyalty inside a government building.

Several United Nations special rapporteurs wrote to the Chinese government

in November to express concern about “serious repression” of Buddhist Tibetan cultural and religious practices in the region.

Scientists find 38 million pieces of trash on Pacific island

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in the gyre cause the buildup of plastic items on places like Henderson Island.

“As we get more and more of these types of studies, it is bringing home the reality of plastic in the oceans,” Bowen said.

Firefighters rescue turtle trapped in power station

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He said the turtle’s front right flipper was missing and it was believed to have swum during high tide when the gate was opened.

Razif said the two firefighters waded into the water and battled strong currents to free the turtle, which was hauled to safety and released back to the ocean.



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