

The chimpanzees in one of the Zambia reserves surprised scientists – they began to wear blades in the ears and ... in other “unexpected” places. It all started in 2010, when one monkey inserted a blade of grass in the ear. For no reason. Just like that. Soon others followed her.

Later, another group of chimpanzees in the same center went further – they adorned themselves with blades not only in the ears, but also “behind”. It looked like a strange fashion trend without any benefit.

Scientists from the universities of Utrecht and Dares Salaam closely monitored this behavior and found out: the chimpanzees copied each other. Moreover, as it turned out, these groups had common rangers who sometimes inserted blades or matches in the ears for cleaning. Perhaps the chimpanzees were simply imitated to people – and then they began to copy each other.

Such “useless” habits are rare in animals, especially in the wild. But in captivity, where there is less stress and more free time, monkeys have a space for “creativity” and communication.