

HOW CRUEL CAN WE BE?

Europe-wide protest at the cruelty of leghold traps has resulted in an EC import ban on furs from animals caught in this inhumane way. The powerful fur trade is trying to create a loophole by drafting "humane trapping standards" through the International Standards Organisation which met in Toronto in September. Governments that adopt the standards being put to them for approval would be exempt from the ban. *The Observer* published the following response from Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan to its article on the subject.



No immunity to inhumanity. A wildcat caught in the jaws of a leghold trap. Credit and copyright: A. Huber/Bildarchiv OKAPIA.



my dear Editor,

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The article by Polly Ghazi in The Observer of Sunday 20th September left me dumb-founded. That bureaucrats of the International Standards Organisation should meet to draw up "humane trapping standards" is mind-boggling. That they should haggle, under pressure from the fur trade, or scientists on its payroll, to decide "which injuries will be 'acceptable' for animals caught in leghold traps" is another tragic example of what Homo Sapiens can be capable of.

How long can public opinion tolerate that members of "the restraining and killing traps committees" (dominated by the multi-billion dollar North American fur industry) should legislate on how many toes, ribs and tendons can be crushed, or how long it may take for an animal to be put out of its misery? What would their children think of them if they knew?

We must surely cease to treat fur-bearing creatures as utilitarian objects which can be tortured and sacrificed to satisfy the vulgar tastes of a minority of the world's women. As Christina Thomas of the British Veterinary Association said "If you are going to use an animal, the least you can do is to give it a truly humane death." No leghold trap can do this. They are obscene relics of the darkest parts of history and should be banned the world over. Mark Twain was right when he wrote: "Man is the only species that blushes - or needs to."

*Mr. Donald Trelford, Editor
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yours sincerely,

Sadruddin Aga Khan