

Humans must be humane

I found Martin Green's comments on fur (Feb. 17) about as superficial as a mink coat while his attempted justification of the leghold trap read more like a leg pull than a serious argument.

Green implies that since more unintended animals are killed in road accidents than in traps, the use of traps is justified. At first glance this seems to make sense, but a moment's thought reveals the error.

If we substitute a human example — many children die from malaria — does this justify us in not attempting to prevent typhoid? Some may say it's wrong to compare children with other animals, but since both are capable of suffering the comparison seems valid.

To deliberately cause pain without good reason is at best callous and at worst sadistic. Since leghold traps cause a great deal of pain and (as Green agrees) wearing fur is unnecessary, the traps should be banned.

In most countries, the car's utility value is far greater than that of the fur coat. So one could argue that injuries and death suffered by animals in road accidents are acceptable. In any case, the fact that cars kill animals doesn't excuse the leghold trap or any other cruelty.

Green's second point is that inhumane methods of killing animals are of no concern because wild animals die in ways that seem "equally 'inhumane.' "

Nobody disputes that nature is hard, but again, that's no excuse for human cruelty. The point about being "humane" is that it only applies to humans. It describes the nobler qualities that make us different from other animals. As civilized beings, we are morally bound to be humane. Once we agree it's OK for people to act inhumanely, we undermine the basis of civilization and open the door to barbarity.

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