

Moreover, we would question the motives of 'hysterical animal rights activists' who liberate animals from farms. Surely it is the activists and their methods that should be outlawed—not the fur trade.

As long as governments carry out conservation programmes to maintain viable populations of wild fur-bearing animals, there will always be skins as a byproduct. Why destroy an industry that provides employment for thousands of people worldwide, producing a product that gives warmth and pleasure to so many?

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Food for ranched animals—species depredation?

While watching a recent TV programme on cetaceans I heard a passing comment on the serious harm done to some western Atlantic porpoise populations by the demand for flesh used to feed mink bred for furs. This aspect of animal-keeping has concerned me for some time.

Because exploitation of some animals is culturally accepted, and because large-scale killing of them in the wild may be harmful, the idea that they should be captive-bred or ranched on a commercial scale is seen as a satisfactory alternative.

This may be so where herbivores are concerned, but when the species kept in this way is carnivorous the problem of the source of food for an exceptionally large and localized population is usually ignored. Since this normally involves large quantities of other creatures acquired as cheaply as possible, it is likely to result in the exploitation of wild populations of some other, apparently more numerous, creatures.

There appears to be a determined effort on the part of many people, and hunting, shooting and fishing individuals in particular, to ignore the fact that constant surpluses do not exist under natural conditions. They may occur where predators are exterminated extensively and where ecosystems are seriously disturbed, but otherwise there are roughly balanced but fluctuating cyclical systems where everything depends on everything else for continued existence. You cannot systematically remove large parts of some populations without affecting other species, with the possibility of creating a widespread disruption with a knock-on effect.

If we are asked to applaud the organization of captive-breeding, farming or ranching of some species, then we must be certain that we are not condoning the initiation of potentially serious inroads on populations of other species.

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Acronyms and abbreviations used in this issue of *Oryx*

BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation	NNR	National Nature Reserve
EEC	European Economic Community	NRA	National Resistance Army (Uganda)
ICBP	International Council for Bird Preservation	TRAFFIC	Trade Records Analysis of Flora and Fauna in Commerce
IPPL	International Primate Protection League	UNLA	Uganda National Liberation Army
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources	WWF	World Wildlife Fund