

# Crucial difference in animal welfare and rights

## Understanding why extremism has nothing to do with legitimate concern for animals

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During a speech at the Animal Rights 2001 Convention, Bruce Friedrich said, "If we really believe that animals have the same right to be free from pain and suffering at our hands, then, of course we're going to be, as a movement, blowing things up and smashing windows." Blowing things up? That's pretty strong language for the Vegan Campaign Coordinator of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, otherwise known as PETA. Many Americans believe PETA is a mainstream animal welfare group promoting humane treatment of animals and providing local animal shelters for stray or abused cats and dogs. But the facts reveal otherwise.

### Animal Welfare vs. Animal Rights

Like most animal rights groups, PETA is not an animal welfare organization. Animal welfare groups seek to ensure the humane treatment of animals like a local humane animal shelter. Rather, as pointed out by [Animalscam.com](http://Animalscam.com), animal rights groups seek equal rights for animals with humans to prevent people from using or owning animals in any way. Animal welfare organizations have been around for centuries. Animal rights groups emerged in the 1980s with the rise of PETA.

Animal rights groups defend their position by claiming many other animals are psychological beings just like humans, with an experiential welfare of their own. Therefore, humans and animals are the same and equal, and we have no right to use animals for food, clothing or medical research.

PETA believes that animals deserve the most basic rights. These include consideration of their own best interests regardless of their usefulness to humans. Like humans, they are capable of suffering and have interests of their own. Therefore, animals are not ours to use—for food, clothing, entertainment, or experimentation, or for any other reason. "Our goal," PETA President Ingrid Newkirk told the Animal Rights 2002 Convention, "is total animal liberation."

Those that raise animals disagree. Pets are normally loved by their owners and well cared for. Farm animals are raised in an "environment that reduces stress and recognizes the science-based behavioral, physiological and physiological needs of each species" notes [animalagalliance.org](http://animalagalliance.org). "Regardless of species," notes [animalagalliance.org](http://animalagalliance.org), "an animal held in an environment that creates undue stress will not thrive" reducing productivity for the farmer. The same is true for biomedical work. Good research demands good treatment of test subjects.

[Animalrights.net](http://Animalrights.net) has identified over one hundred animal rights groups. Besides PETA, one of the largest is the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS). HSUS

was established in 1954 by splintering from the conservative American Humane Association, a true and highly respected animal welfare organization. HSUS became an animal rights organization in the 1980s after seeing the financial success of PETA.

Many people accuse HSUS of deliberately playing off its name. Activistcash.com reports that HSUS's fund raising campaigns leads donors to believe HSUS is a pet loving organization, working on behalf of dogs, puppies, cats, kittens. Like nearly all animal rights organizations, HSUS does very little to help improve animal welfare in any community. Although HSUS could afford to operate humane animal shelters in every state, it operates none. Rather, it is in the forefront of the effort to legally redefine pets as "companions" and their owners as "guardians."

Like many other animal rights groups, HSUS pours huge sums of money into referendum and legislative campaigns to stop any use of animals. "Along with other heavy hitters like the Fund for Animals and Farm Sanctuary," notes activistcash.com, "HSUS scored a big victory in Florida in 2002 when a ballot initiative passed that gave constitutional rights to pregnant pigs."

Among other things, the new rights for Florida pigs banned farmers from using "gestation crates." The crates are necessary to humanely keep sows healthy during pregnancy and to prevent them from accidentally rolling over and crushing their newborn piglets. The new law did nothing to improve the welfare of pigs, but did make pig farming economically unsustainable. The Fund for Animals and Farm Sanctuary accomplished exactly what they wanted. Today there are virtually no pig farms in Florida.

HSUS, PETA and other animal rights groups increasingly achieve their goals of "total animal liberation" by employing an "any means necessary" philosophy. A growing number take the law into their own hands, crossing the line from peaceful protest to violent crime. For instance, PETA's Friedrich emphasized the use of violence in his speech at the 2001 Animal Rights Conference, "I think it would be great if all of the fast-food outlets, slaughterhouses, these laboratories, and the banks that fund them exploded tomorrow... Hallelujah to the people who are willing to do it."

### **The Dark World of Violence and Terrorism**

Two of the most violent animal rights groups are the Animal Liberation Front (ALF) and the Earth Liberation Front (ELF). Both are groups considered by the FBI as terrorist organizations whose purpose is to bring about social and political change using force and violence.

ALF is described by the FBI as a loosely organized movement committed to ending their perceived abuse and exploitation of animals. Established in Great Britain in the mid-1970s, the American branch of ALF began its operations in the late 1970s. Individuals do not "join" ALF by filing paperwork or paying dues, but simply by engaging in "direct action" against companies or individuals who utilize animals for research or economic gain. The FBI's Domestic Terrorism Section Chief, James F. Jarboe, testified to the House Resources Subcommittee on February 12, 2002, "direct action generally occurs in the form of criminal activity to cause economic

loss or to destroy the victims' company operations.”

Despite the destructive aspects of ALF's operations, its operational philosophy usually discourages acts that harm any animal, human and nonhuman. Yet, ALF activists have engaged in a steadily growing campaign of violent activity against fur companies, mink farms, restaurants, and animal research laboratories. In his February 2002 congressional testimony, Jarboe said, “ALF has become one of the most active extremist elements in the United States.” He continued, “Estimates of damage and destruction in the United States claimed by ALF during the past ten years...[are] more than 45 million dollars.”

Both ALF/ELF declare solidarity between the two groups and have crossover leadership and membership. The FBI's Executive Assistant Director of Counterterrorism/Counterintelligence, Dale L. Watson, testified before the Senate Intelligence Committee on February 6, 2002 that during 1996 to 2001 ALF/ELF together committed approximately 600 criminal acts in the United States resulting in damages in excess of 42 million dollars.

According to Watson, arson is the tool of choice for ALF/ELF. ALF/ELF activists consistently use improvised incendiary devices equipped with crude but effective timing mechanisms, often constructed using instructions found on ALF/ELF websites. ELF, for instance, claimed responsibility for the arson fires set at a Vail, Colorado, ski resort in October 1998 that destroyed eight separate structures and caused \$12 million dollars in damages. In a communiqué issued after the fires, ELF claimed that the fires were in retaliation for the resort's alleged destruction of the last remaining lynx habitat in Colorado.

In another example, a jury convicted ALF activist Rodney Coronado of arson in the multi-million dollar 1992 torching of a Michigan State University animal research lab. During the trial it came out that days before Coronado committed this terrorist crime, PETA President Ingrid Newkirk requested he FedEx her any documents he stole prior to torching the facility. The FBI intercepted the FedEx package and found the stolen documents and a video of a masked Coronado committing the crime.

Particularly disturbing is a donation by PETA of \$45,200 to Coronado's “support committee” and a “loan” of \$25,000 to his father. The father never repaid the loan, leading many to speculate Coronado was working for PETA.

Coronado received a sentence of 57 months in federal prison in 1995. Following his release, Coronado openly confessed to at least six other arsons for which the statute of limitations had passed. While speaking to over 100 college radicals at the American University in January 2003, Coronado demonstrated the “correct” way to build a firebomb out of household materials. A few days later, ALF activists tried to burn down a McDonald's restaurant in Chico, California, using a firebomb that matched Coronado's recipe.

Coronado got his start with the Sea Sheppard Conservancy Society. Sea Sheppard protects fish and animals of the sea by ramming and sinking fishing ships, firing machine guns and throwing acid on their decks. The Capital Research Center's Organization Trends February 2004 issue reports Sea Sheppard's fleet of boats, called “Neptune's Navy,” has sunk at least ten ships and rammed countless others

around the world. According to activistcash.com, Coronado assisted in sinking two of these ships in Iceland in 1986.

Paul Watson, one of the original co-founders of Greenpeace, formed Sea Sheppard after Greenpeace threw him out in 1977 for his violent actions. He told the 2002 Animal Rights Convention, "There's nothing wrong with being a terrorist, as long as you win." Like most terrorists, he also justifies his violence by shifting blame to others. "We should never feel like we're going too far in breaking the law," continued Watson, "because whatever laws you break to liberate animals or to protect the environment are very insignificant compared to the laws that are broken by that parliament of whores in Washington. They are the biggest lawbreakers, the biggest destroyers, the biggest mass-murderers on this planet right now."

Watson's goal is to ultimately force the shut down of the global fishery industry. He has a "seething hatred of the people whose livelihood he threatens," notes activistcash.com. However, this goal does not prevent him from eating fish, or even hamburgers for that matter. In this Watson differs from most animal rights extremists, who are usually avid vegetarians that demand everyone else follow their lead.

### **Economic and Social Violence**

Not all violence by animal rights advocates against people and corporations is physical. While ELF burned down a resort to protect the lynx in the fall of 2001, the Washington Times broke the story on December 17, 2001, of a lynx fraud by seven federal and state wildlife biologists. The biologists planted fur of a rare and threatened Canadian lynx on rubbing posts in the Wenatchee and Gifford Pinchot National Forests in the state of Washington. DNA testing of the samples matched that of a lynx living inside an animal preserve and an escaped pet lynx being held by one of the biologists until its owner retrieved it.

Had the fraud gone undetected environmentalists and animal rights advocates would have used the evidence to invoke the Endangered Species Act, closing roads to vehicles and banning off-road vehicles, snowmobiles, skis and snowshoes, livestock grazing and tree thinning. Such closures historically have decimated the local rural economy. Nonetheless, the guilty biologists claimed they were merely "testing" the reliability of lynx survey methodology and received no discipline.

In their single-purpose zeal to protect all animals from man in every way, animal rights organizations can do tremendous economic and social damage, often to people and causes they otherwise claim to support. In one of hundreds of examples, the anti-fur campaign that started in the 1970s traumatized Inuit native Canadians who depended on the fur trade for a living.

The tragedy started with a feel-good, well-coordinated and funded campaign against the fur trade by numerous environmental and animal rights groups supported by Hollywood celebrities. Public outrage resulting from pictures showing the clubbing of seals led politicians to ban Canadian seal products in the United States in 1972 and the European Economic Community in 1983. Finding more humane methods of harvesting the seals was never an option. Activists demanded

and got a complete ban.

The bans destroyed the seal-furring industry, deeply embittering the native Inuit's. They claim the "feel-good" environmentalists, animal rights activists and Hollywood celebrities have no understanding of what's involved with wildlife, or have any consideration about what effect their actions have on the rest of the world.

While many animal rights supporters are unaware of this unintended consequence, ignorance is not an excuse for the leaders of the animal rights groups. Stephen Kakfwi, the Premier of the Northwest Territories, told the January 30, 2003 New York Times, "I'm still bitter about what was done to us. We pleaded with Greenpeace and the others. We told them that we will have to turn to oil and gas and mining for jobs" in order to survive. The animal rights groups apparently didn't care even though they claim to be against oil and gas exploration and development as well. They continue their relentless anti-fur campaign today.

### **Animal Welfare, Not Animal Rights**

No one doubts that many animal-oriented industries needed to be more humane in their treatment of animals. Yet, throughout recent history, human beings adopted more and more humane standards of animal "welfare" for their pets, livestock, and laboratory animals. It makes sense. Farmers know that cared-for livestock animals produce more and better products. Medical researchers know that their scientific work is meaningless without healthy lab animals.

Animal welfare and user groups are optimistic. Research and better technology will allow improvements in animal welfare in the future. However, in an attempt to turn ordinary Americans against the responsible stewardship of animals, animal rights activists use shrill rhetoric, headline-grabbing stunts, and violent crimes to prevent humans from using or owning any animal. This could have terrible consequences for our way of life.

The people who are doing the most to promote animal welfare today are the very ones that the animal rights movement wants to put out of business. So watchdogs of this issue like those at [Animalscam.com](http://Animalscam.com) are correct in recommending that if you want to support the humane treatment of animals, support your local animal shelter, your local humane society (not the animal-rights-oriented Humane Society of the United States), or your local zoological park. Because animal welfare groups deserve your help. Animal rights extremists do not.

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