

Ethical theories

Consider how keeping animals in captivity (zoos, aquariums, etc) is viewed by the different ethical theories.

In different philosophical ideologies animals being kept in captivity would be seen differently due to opposing moral and ethical beliefs. These include consequentialist, deontology and environmental. Consequentialists want the best outcome even if the action is wrong. In deontology the morality of the action should be decided on whether the decision is right or wrong, rather than the consequence.

Consequentialist ideas include; respect for nature, contractarian and utilitarianism. Consequentialists want the best outcome even if the action is wrong therefore, they would allow animals to be kept in captivity for breeding or benefit of humans for food. A utilitarian wants to maximize welfare of the largest group and get the best for them. They would allow animals in captivity to provide food for humans as they are the bigger group but would also allow zoos for breeding programs that were helping species for survival. Respect for nature believes that respecting nature will impact everyday life and improve life for all species. The focus is on the species rather than individuals. Due to this animals kept in captivity would only be allowed if it was for breeding programs. Animals would be allowed to be kept for animal testing as if a vaccine was found a lot of people would be helped and the suffering of the animals would be justified.

Deontological ideas include; animal rights and relationship importance. Animal rights believe that animals should suffer for humans and all animal suffering should be only done if there's a direct benefit for them. Animal rights wouldn't allow animals to be kept in captivity unless it directly benefited them. For example keeping animals for food to feed humans wouldn't be accepted as the animals don't gain anything, animal breeding programs on the other hand would be allowed as saving a species would be acceptable as it's directly helping them. Animal testing would only be allowed if the information gained was used for animal needs instead of human. Relationship importance is the theory that moral decisions should be based on personal relationships between animals and the people instead of whether the decision is right or wrong. This ideology would allow animals to be kept in captivity as long as the animals don't have emotional bonds with humans. Animals used in animal testing would be only used if they were specifically bred and born in laboratories. Animals in zoos would be allowed if they were going to live better in captivity than in the wild for example animals that are hunted a lot or are used to breed and repopulate the species

Environmental ideas include; human centered, sentience centered and environment centered. Human centered believe that an animal's life is worth less than a person's so the suffering of animals is allowed for the benefit of humans. Animals would be allowed to be kept in captivity especially for animal testing. Sentience centered theories are based on feelings and whether they can feel pain. Animals kept in zoos would be allowed as long as all welfare needs are met, it's important to them that animals aren't suffering. Animals wouldn't be allowed to be kept for testing as they would be suffering. Environmental theorists wouldn't allow animals to be tested on as nature should be respected. Animals kept in zoos would only be allowed if they weren't forced to change their natural nature.

In conclusion most beliefs would allow animals to be kept in captivity, the majority would allow this for the benefit of humans more than animals.