

# Animal cruelty in circuses



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How many times have people witnessed or heard about animal cruelty?

Circuses are one of the many places where animals are treated poorly. One of the many endangered species that are forced to 'join' the circus is the largest land mammal, the elephant. Wild animals, such as the elephant, are taken from their natural habitat to perform uncomfortable tricks for human entertainment. They suffer from the drastic changes in climate, the inappropriate shelters and transportation conditions, and the countless beatings.

There needs to be a greater respect for animals, not dominance over animals. The Roman Empire was a time period of proving man's superiority. Blatant cruelty was found in their circuses. In 70 amphitheaters, elephants, hippopotamuses, rhinoceroses, crocodiles, giraffes, lions, tigers, bears, deer and more were butchered just for the fun of it. 8 thousand animals were killed on the first two days of the opening of the Coliseum in Rome itself. This was only a display of warriors' skills and courage. It was to prove their dominance over nature.

These cruelties came to an end around the fifth century A. D (Preece & Chamberlain 9). It only ended because of the fall of the Roman Empire and the economic decline when in September of 1999, the Clyde Beatty-Cole Bros. Circus had been charged under the U. S. Animal Welfare Act for mistreating elephants. In 1998, inspectors from the U. S. Department of Agriculture found several elephants with wounds. They said the wounds were caused by abuse of an ankus, a large hook that is used to force animals to obey commands.

Circus officials denied the allegations and claimed that the elephants suffered from infected hair follicles (Hosaka 1). Animal activists boycott and protest against the circus, however, they still can not drive away the public. According to a vice president with the Clyde Beatty-Cole Bros. Circus, Renee Storey, attendance at shows is growing (2). If crowds continue to go to the shows, the circus will continue. This leads to more animal sufferings. Inhibitions could not be afforded.

It was the dark ages for humans, but it was a period of relief and happiness for the animals. However, the excitement of the extravagances spread to other places throughout Europe (10). It's so difficult to find a safe, competent place for wild animals. The advancements people are making to make their lives better are making animals' lives worse. If they are left in the wild, they are at risk of being shot by poachers. If they are in circuses, they are abused and are at risk of being killed if they happen to escape and accidentally kill people.

If they are in zoos, there are still in unsuitable conditions. There seems to be no place comfortable and safe for animals to go. But we need to eliminate the worst that has happened to animals. We need to establish a better respect for animals. They can not voice their feelings, thoughts, or opinions. We need to fight for them by protesting, writing letters, and reporting violations to authorities. All forms of animal cruelty need to be stopped before many more species are added to the endangered species list and sadly, the extinct list.