

Are Wild Animals Best Left to Live in the Wild?

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On November 12, 2006, Laurie Denger, of the Dayton Daily News, published an article titled "Wild animals best left to live in wild".

<http://www.daytondailynews.com/search/content/oh/story/living/pets/2006/11/12/ddn111206lifecritter.html>

The thesis of her article was that keeping monkeys as pets poses a major health hazard. My response to her article, which was submitted on November 18, 2006, is given below:

A recent article on wild pets ("Wild animals best left to live in the wild", November 12, 2006) noted that the Humane Society of the United States feels that monkeys pose a public health hazard and should not be kept as pets. This is not surprising given that the Society, which has no affiliation with local animal shelters, is the wealthiest animal rights organization in the world and routinely campaigns against hunting, circuses, wearing fur, and eating meat.

The claim that monkeys pose a public health hazard is based on the observation that macaque monkeys may carry the herpes B virus, which can be fatal to humans. However, in spite of the fact that millions of people are exposed to macaque monkeys on an annual basis, there is no known case of herpes B infecting the general public. That's right. Millions of people visit the monkey temples of southeast Asia, some of whom get bitten, and yet no tourist or worker at these temples is known to have contracted the herpes B virus. In short, experience has shown that monkeys pose very little health hazard.

The campaign against keeping monkeys and other wild animals as pets should be seen for what it is: a religious movement that believes humans should have no contact with animals. Were it to succeed, it would have a devastating effect on domestic animals for without us they would all go extinct.