Five fatal flaws of animal activism

Animal rights activists are fanatics who have no respect for human life or property, and their rights groups are having the right to their campaign

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A mink in a battery cage at a farm in Finland. Photograph: Tiit Hunt/AP

"Animal rights activists are fanatics who have no respect for human life or property, and their rights groups are having the right to their campaign." Such was the response of a spokesperson for the Fur Commission, USA, to the recent exposés of the US fur industry by Mercy For Animals and Compassionate Consumers. Ms Rachel Ward, of the Fur Commission, USA, has a point. Animal rights activists are fanatics who have no respect for human life. Indeed, they don't even have a respect for animals. It is not that they are not "pro-animal" enough, or that they are not "pro-animal" in the right way, or that they are not "pro-animal" in the way that Ms Ward would like them to be. They are simply not "pro-animal" at all. Animal rights activists are fanatics who have no respect for animals because they do not recognize that the exploitation of animals for food, clothing, entertainment, research, and so on is wrong.

Animal rights activists are fanatics who have no respect for animals because they do not recognize that animals are sentient beings who are capable of experiencing pain and suffering, and who have a strong interest in not being used as property for the benefit of others. Instead, they think that it is "humane" to treat animals as property, as long as we do not do something that we regard as "cruelty" or "unnecessary" or "inhumane" or "unethical" treatment. Animal rights activists are fanatics who have no respect for animals because they do not recognize that animals have a right not to be treated as our property, regardless of how we treat them.

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