

captivity in zoos in this country, at least, until the 1960's. However one regards this particular criterion, the point is that sea lions, dolphins, and some other marine mammals are very adaptable to human care -- like most many gregarious animals such as horses and dogs they become attached to their human "family" and respond very well to the conditions of "captivity."

As far as their health and care are concerned, responsible handlers and keepers of these animals normally have good records for the survival of their charges. Since in most cases, the livelihood of the trainers and handlers depends on the lives of their animals, it makes only good business sense, even if nothing else were involved, to take the best of care of the animals. Sea lions and dolphins in the wild are particularly subject to many natural parasites, bacterial and viral illnesses. In the care of their human keepers, these ailments are given prompt treatment. While exact statistics are not available, certainly the longevity of these animals in captivity is improving as the volume of medical and nutritional knowledge has increased.

Another point: The standing crop of sea lions in the coastal waters of the Eastern Pacific is quite probably vastly greater than the harvest of sea lions for exhibition. We realize that one of the purposes of the Marine Mammal Protection Act is to allow time to do determinative studies concerning which of these species of animals may be truly endangered. However, casual inspection of the offshore California islands should suffice to assure one that in relation to the small number of animals required for exhibitions in this country, the population is in no way threatened.

Again, in the case of dolphins, although the percentage of the population taken for shows and exhibitions has certainly increased dramatically since the 1950's and early '60's when these animals first came to prominence in the public eye, the number taken for these purposes is certainly very small compared to the number killed by man by accident (in tuna fishing, for example) or on purpose (by other nations for food). It is quite possible that had these animals not been put on exhibition by Marine Studios (Marineland of Florida) and then by countless other oceanaria no one would now care enough about them to realize they were being needlessly killed in fishing accidents.

Concerning the "tricks" and "acts" which these animals are asked to do for demonstration to the public, these behaviors are simply, and can be nothing but, extensions of natural behaviors. The retrieval of objects, on land or in the water, is simply an example of a behavior seen all the time in the wild in these animals -- they retrieve in their hunting, they play with bits of sea-weed, sticks, rocks, and anything they can get their mouths on. Simply to ask them to get a ball instead of some sea-weed, is not degrading or