

Wild animals
used in circus
acts are
routinely
beaten, poked,
and shocked



What You Can Do

- Don't go to circuses that use wild animal acts
- Spread the word by telling your friends and writing letters to your local newspaper
- Ask businesses to drop their sponsorships of circuses with wild animal acts
- Ask your state and local representatives to prohibit these acts in your community
- Report animal abuse to local authorities and the USDA
- Suggest an animal-free circus for your community

About The HSUS

Founded in 1954, The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) is the nation's largest animal protection organization, with nearly 10 million members and constituents. We work to create a humane and sustainable world for all animals, including people, through education, advocacy, and the promotion of respect and compassion.

Celebrating Animals | Confronting Cruelty



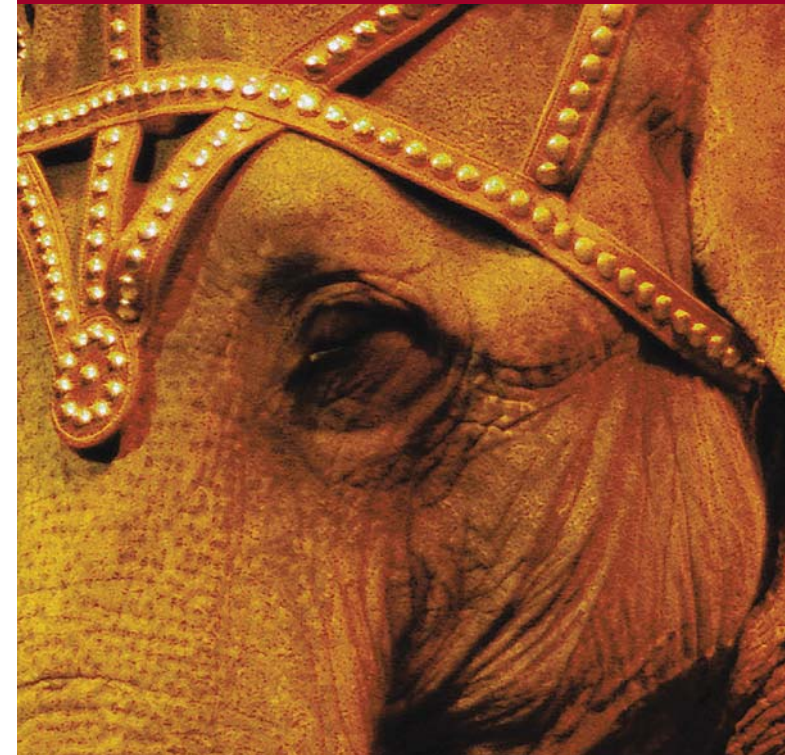
THE HUMANE SOCIETY
OF THE UNITED STATES

2100 L Street, NW Washington, DC 20037
humanesociety.org

©2007 The HSUS. All rights reserved.
Printed on recycled paper, acid free and elemental
chlorine free, with soy-based ink.



[Animals in Entertainment]



THE TRUTH
Behind the
BIG TOP



THE HUMANE SOCIETY
OF THE UNITED STATES

Years of Abuse

CIRCUSES may seem like good family fun. But behind the scenes there's something no circus wants you to see: the suffering of the animals. Wild animals used in circus acts are routinely beaten, poked, and shocked with electric prods, all to force them to perform unnatural tricks for an unsuspecting viewing public. This abuse continues year after year.

Trainers use these tactics to try to dominate wild animals and force them to act against their natural instincts. Tigers are made to jump through flaming hoops, elephants are forced to wear tutus or balance themselves on small balls, and bears are required to ride tricycles, just for our amusement.

Caged for Life

THE ANIMALS' MISERY continues off the stage. Animals traveling in circuses are rarely allowed out of their small, often dirty cages except to perform. After a show, they're typically locked up to travel to the next town.

Elephants are chained inside boxcars and trucks during transport. Lions and tigers may remain in small travel cages with only enough room to stand and turn around.

The trucks and trains they travel on may have no heat or air conditioning. Animals may be deprived of food and water for extended periods during travel and training.

Dangerous to the Public

ELEPHANTS who have endured inhumane training methods sometimes strike back at their trainers or rampage through audiences, causing injuries and death. Circus lions and tigers have escaped and performing chimpanzees have injured audience members when adequate barriers were not in place. All the training in the world cannot take the "wild" out of wild animals. There's no telling when they might attack or attempt to flee. And escaped animals are often killed in the interest of public safety when recapture is difficult or delayed.

Current Laws Don't Do Enough

THE ANIMAL WELFARE ACT, enforced by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), creates only minimum standards for animals in traveling exhibits—and it is poorly enforced. Persistent violators are rarely prosecuted, and those who are usually only face fines.

Animal trainers sometimes use cosmetics on animals to cover up injuries from ankle restraints and open sores from beatings, and they may hide abused animals from view during inspections.

Fortunately, some communities are taking action—either by banning circuses that use animals or by prohibiting them from using ankuses or bullhooks, sticks with sharpened metal hooks that trainers use to beat, pull, push, torment, and threaten elephants. These communities have sent a clear message that they won't tolerate such abuse within their boundaries.

The Bottom Line

CIRCUS acts that use wild animals are inhumane, plain and simple. Animals don't perform because they choose this way of life. They have no choice—they're beaten until they comply.

We do have a choice, though. With so many available alternatives in family entertainment, there's no reason to support a circus that uses wild animals.



Lions and tigers may remain in small travel cages with only enough room to stand and turn around.

