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animals:

Why We Must Expand Our Moral Circle to Include Invertebrates

The great 13th-century Persian poet [1257] 1902, 12655) wrote:

How sweet are the words of the noble Firdausi, upon whose grave be the mercy of the Benignant One!

A shadow must there be, and a stone upon that heart, that could wish to sorrow the heart even of an

Eight hundred years later, UK animal welfare legislation still
vision of these noble medieval poets.

Article 13 of the Lisbon Treaty explicitly recognises animals as sentient beings, enshrining more theoretically than practically the recognition of animal sentience in EU law. Even prior to Brexit, however, the UK mostly did not apply this recognition to invertebrate animals, who constitute approximately 99.9998% of all animals on our planet (Bar-On, Phillips and Milo, 2018). This amounts to a gargantuan number of individual lives: Bar-On et al. major study estimated that there are around a *sextillion* (a trillion billion or 10^{21}) invertebrate animals on Earth at any given moment. According to other estimates, the number of individual invertebrate animals may be closer to *ten sextillion* (i.e. 10^{22} - Tomasik, 2009; Ray, 2017), or even several orders of magnitude higher than this (Ray, *ibid.*). Our planet is teeming with neglected, mistreated and suffering life. There is no clearer it spares no thought for the well-being of the vast majority of non-human animals.

In addition to failing to challenge the continued infliction of immense violence and suffering against report stage in the House of Lords, also excludes *all invertebrate animals* from even the slightest ethical consideration. In other words, the Animal Welfare (Sentience) Bill provides no protection and gives no moral consideration to at least around 99.9998% of non-human animals!

This is convenient from the tyrannical standpoint ecies, which tends to

Currently, however, even the very few invertebrate animals such as octopuses who have long been granted the status of vertebra (Barnes, 2021) in laws on animal experimentation on account of their particularly high cognitive abilities, are omitted from the proposed legislation, which is to say that these sensitive beings are still bei

Schukraft (2019) has pointed out that if a ban on boiling crustaceans alive was introduced across the
of anima

Researchers have long ago found strong evidence that crustaceans feel pain (Sample, 2007). Already in 1982 it was discovered that the injection of morphine-HCL in the crustacean mantis shrimp *Squilla* mantis produces dose-dependent pain relief (Maldonado and Miralto, 1982). The weight of evidence

carries its own grave risk of creating immense suffering and even existential peril for humanity itself (e.g. Hawking et al., 2014; Russell, 2021).

The development and implementation of advanced suffering-reducing approaches to dealing with invertebrate beings may not even be particularly expensive. However, we must pursue harm reduction because behaving ethically towards countless other sentient creatures is the right thing to do even when it is very difficult.

One of the major tasks ahead for effective altruists is to attain far greater and more detailed understanding of the best strategies for humane interventions into highly complex ecosystems and animal population dynamics with the aim of minimising both individual and total suffering. Benevolent actions can lead to extremely negative unintended consequences, which is why there is a need for meticulous thinking and research about possible interventions and their effects.

Another major investment in the development of a truly compassionate civilisation would be the introduction of humane education in schools, teaching children the value of justice, kindness and care towards all sentient, feeling beings. There is some evidence that cultivating animals also has a significant generalising positive effect, increasing the likelihood of more compassionate interpersonal attitudes and more amiable relationships with their peers (Unti and DeRosa, 2003). Teaching children kindness to animals can help them to become kinder, more peaceable humans.

There is broad public support for expanding animal protection beyond the scope of the proposed legislation. According to a UK national survey conducted by the non-profit research organisation Rethink Priorities (2021), t

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