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Animals have a right to be free

By Alia Gan (Madam)

I REFER to Dr Andy Ho's commentary ("Of animals, rights and moral agency"; Aug 18).

Animals are not humans and should not be treated as such. They cannot be held accountable for their actions - they kill for food or to protect themselves or their young because it is their nature to do so.

The argument of "rights in exchange for responsibility" does not apply to animals precisely because they are not human. That does not mean they have no right to liberty. Liberty is not just for humans, but for all living things that are born to be free.

Animals feel not just physical pain but also mental anguish such as stress. This can be observed in animals in captivity. It is apparent in animal mothers whose babies are taken away from them.

It is also apparent in animals that are not able to do the things they would normally do in their natural habitat due to their confinement.

Human morality demands that we recognise that animals have a right to be free, just like humans.

Alia Gan (Madam)