

Blackwell Series on Public Philosophy

In Defense of Dolphins Thomas White

Discussion Questions

- Does the fact that we distinguish between "people" and "animals" in everyday language suggest an anthropocentric bias?
- What's your reaction to the following argument? Fishing for tuna "on dolphin" is defensible because
 - 1) it provides an affordable source of protein for humans
 - 2) the number of humans who benefit from this practice is far greater than the number of dolphins harmed
 - 3) there's no risk that this fishing practice will make dolphins "endangered" or "extinct" in the eastern tropical Pacific
- Dolphins at entertainment facilities with access to the open ocean don't leave. Should this be understood as meaning that they freely choose to stay?
- What's your reaction to the idea that the criteria for "intelligence" may differ dramatically among different species?
- If the book's claims are correct, does this mean that the use of dolphins at entertainment facilities constitutes "slavery"?
- Is it ever acceptable for a "person" to be considered someone's "property"?
- The book suggests that the current treatment of dolphins is wrong.

- Could a similar argument be made regarding such nonhumans as chimpanzees, gorillas, elephants and the larger whales? Should they be considered other candidates for "nonhuman persons"?