

absolutely no doubt that the methods used for killing whales are, in the majority of situations, extremely cruel' is most probably correct.

It will be interesting to hear, in due course, the findings of the International Whaling Commission's group which currently is looking into the humaneness of the present commercial method of killing cetaceans.

The Cruel Seas - man's inhumanity to whales by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Wildlife Department (1991). 20 pp. Obtainable from RSPCA Wildlife Department, Causeway, Horsham, West Sussex RH12 1HG. Free on receipt of a 34p sae.

Dog and cat overpopulation

Many urban areas throughout the world have a problem with surplus dogs and cats. Owners allow their animals to breed and then have difficulty in finding homes for the offspring. Some of the young are abandoned and become strays, others are taken to the local animal welfare society, hopefully for rehoming, but usually for euthanasia. The strays are often caught and dealt with in the same way. Large numbers of animals are involved; in the United States for example, it has been estimated that some 27 million kittens and puppies are born each year and that, at times, up to 17 million of these are unwanted and killed.

The problem persists year after year without, seemingly, much being done to control the basic cause - the overbreeding of the parent stock. In an attempt to highlight this mass killing and to suggest ways towards its reduction the International Society for Animal Rights and the Association of Veterinarians for Animal Rights held, in September 1991, an International Symposium on Dog and Cat Overpopulation. The proceedings of this meeting have now been published as a spiral bound volume made up of the texts of the papers presented at the meeting. The contributions range from technical reports of new sterilization techniques, through assessments of the scale of the problem and the method towards its resolution in such countries as India, the USA and Israel, to accounts of how the media should be handled so that local communities can be persuaded to accept mandatory dog and cat neutering schemes.

The quality of the papers varies somewhat as does, at times, the photocopy quality of the print. The whole volume, however, is a most valuable contribution to our knowledge and understanding of the complex biological, social and economic forces which lead to the build-up of these large populations of unwanted dogs and cats. Hopefully this knowledge and understanding will eventually result in the adoption of rational and humane ways of dealing with this massive welfare problem.

Killing the Crisis, not the Animals. Proceedings of an International Symposium on Dog and Cat Overpopulation (Washington DC, 20-21 September 1991). 194 pp. Obtainable from International Society for Animal Rights, 421 South State Street, Clarks Summit, Pennsylvania 18411, USA. Price US\$20. Price Economy Air to UK US\$22.32.