

Trumpeter (1990)

ISSN: 0832-6193

THE BEAST IN THE BELLY: HOW HUMAN FOOD
CHOICES AFFECT WILD ANIMALS

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Trumpeter



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Introduction

People love animals. As pets, in zoos, at circuses, in storybooks, at birdfeeders, in the wild, and on farms. People particularly love farm animals, though not as much in barnyards as on dinner plates.

Let us penetrate the mystique surrounding farm animals. Compared to the wild animals from which they were selectively bred beginning 12,000 years ago, domesticated animals are artificial inventions of humans. From the now extinct urus, came the cow. From the wild boar, came the pig. From the jungle fowl of the Bay of Bengal, if not first from the egg, came the chicken. From the wild turkey, the turkey. Cows, pigs, chickens and turkeys perform no role in the web of life. If every farm animal perished from the face of the earth, the ecosystem would benefit with greater biodiversity. Instead of millions of billions of broiler hens might flourish a covey of California Condors or a whopping number of Whooping Cranes. Today farm animals face no peril of extinction. Thus some people avoid eating them not just to prevent farm animals' deaths but also to prevent their births.

Meanwhile farm animals are alive, marching to death. The annual funeral procession in the United States alone reaches six billion. This figure is not the fabrication of some satanist, but is supplied by the USDA. The farm animals boil down to 215 pounds of meats that the average North American annually eats. Calculated in whole lives, both human and animal, an average North American family consumes 12 cattle, 1 calf, 2 lambs, 29 pigs, 984 chickens, and 37 turkeys. Still this omits all the cows milked dry and all the hens who count their chicks but never hatch them.

Our food choices affect animals both on the farm and in the wild. To the above shopping list add over 1,000 fish, many thousands more sea animals such as shrimp and other small fry, and a grab bag of hunted animals. Finally, uncounted wild animals lose their lives due to how we produce what we eat, be that a cow, a cod or a cabbage. Consider the woodchucks shot during the day and the raccoons trapped during the night by the organic farmer to protect

some carrots and cabbage. Even consider the lilies of the field. Certain gardeners defend with poison and snares, with pick and axe, with tooth and nail, their ornamental flower beds.

Beef Cattle

The form of animal agriculture that remains the most humane, at least to the farm animal, is cattle ranching. This might be attributed in part to the steer's sheer bulk. No edifice economically could enclose thousands of such beasts of burgers. Most cattle spend only half a year, the last half of their lives, fenced-in at the feedlot. Unsheltered from either hot summer sun or cold winter wind, they finally are provided shelter only at the slaughterhouse. The first six months of their lives, however, they freely roam on the open range. Tales of the cowboy tending his girl cows might inspire us to bucolic visions of cattle grazing peacefully alongside deer. Hardly so.

While wild species of grazing animals roam to other grasslands long before they endanger the grass, lethargic, bulbous bovines just stay put. Cattle trample streams, compact soil, and devour vegetation beyond the critical point of regeneration. Cattle grazing destroys more Western land than all other human activities combined, but humans are the last to suffer. First suffers the land, next its vegetation, then its wildlife.

Deer, elk, pronghorn antelope, bison, bighorn sheep, wild horses, indeed almost every competing wild mammal suffers in the American West because of the burger king of the jungle. In their battle for their cattle, hunters further reduce wild populations. And to prevent potential predators upon cattle from restoring any natural balance, ranchers wage war on them too. Wherever cattle are not safe from predators, predators are not safe from ranchers. Jaguars and grey wolves and grizzly bears have disappeared almost entirely, while coyotes, bobcats, mountain lions, wolves, bears, badgers and foxes are shot from the ground and from helicopters, trapped in snares and steel-jaw legholds, bombed with cyanide explosives, subdued with dogs, poisoned with tainted meat baits, and burned or suffocated in their dens.

Most of the American West appears like a battle-field behind barbed wire. Not to keep out people, but to keep in cattle. Ranchers erect barbed wire fences tall enough to keep in cattle, not tall enough to keep out deer and pronghorn antelope, but just tall enough to cause the wildlife's injury and death. In fact barbed wire ranks second only to hunting as the leading cause of death to deer and pronghorn. Every sunrise illuminates impaled or snared wildlife whose grass was not greener on the other side of the fence.

Overgrazing has been an eco-catastrophe throughout world history. It continues to be a primary cause of desertification. On U.S. federal lands, statutes require

that sufficient forage remain to serve the needs of wildlife. Yet the summer drought of 1988, for instance, left next to nothing for cattle and less than nothing for wildlife. Jim Mower, an officer for range and wildlife in Utah, says that many ranges during the drought were "so overgrazed, there isn't enough fuel on the ground to start a fire." Cowburnt, Edward Abbey called it.

Licensed hunters nevertheless wait in reserve, ready to limit the growth of any wild grazers that threaten the food supply of the nation's cattle. North Americans possess particular fondness for horses, however, so would protest in outrage against a hunting season on wild horses which ranchers would wish to encourage. Despite evidence that a few thousand wild horses have little or no effect on rangelands where millions cattle and sheep graze, since 1985 U.S. government agents have rounded up over 60,000 wild horses. Fewer than 25,000 remain.

Once rounded up, what then? Earlier, some were killed right in pens, others auctioned off to slaughterhouses. Until recently, they were transferred free to anyone who agreed to provide a home for them for one year. Such adoptions often served merely as a delay and a detour on the way to cans of dog food. Legal battles currently are pending to decide the fate of the horses languishing in pens like their cattle cousins in feedlots. Few officials have considered freeing the horses and removing instead the cattle. So much for a home where the cattle come home and the deer and the antelope play.

While North Americans forest disappear slowly but steadily, Central and South American rainforests disappear quicker than you can say, "Cheeseburger." South Americans turn trees into lumber, Central Americans convert forests into pastures. Pasture for cattle. Cattle for beef. Beef primarily for burgers.

Grazing in either Central or North America results in similar habitat loss. But far many more species of plants and animals make their homes in the Central American rainforests. Most of those animals we North Americans never have heard of, while the migratory songbirds we previously had heard we never again may hear. The songbirds spent their summers in North America and their winters in Central America. Deprived of their winter homes with central heating, they have become casualties along with the cattle. Silent spring. Soundless summer. Inaudible autumn. What is the sound of one wing flapping?

Game Animals

Cattle ranchers possess limitless personal supplies of beef, so hardly hunt deer for food. They hunt deer for fun. Other hunters do eat what they kill, and a few do need to hunt if they are at all to eat meat (whether or not anyone really needs to eat meat).

Hunting garners some undeserved bad press. Hunters who kill only what they

eat are worthier of respect than supermarket shoppers who contract the factory farmer and the slaughterer to perform their grim tasks. People who view their meat first through cellophane join ranks in the animal kingdom with scavengers, consumers of carcasses leftover by the predators. Hunters who eat what they kill share membership with the class of predators whose role in nature serves to prevent the herbivores from eating all the plants. Though game animals suffer the bullets and arrows of outrageous fortune and die brutally and prematurely, at least they enjoy a healthy and normal life in the wild. Unlike their colleagues on the factory farm, wild animals do stand some running chance of eluding their captors.

Precisely because wild animals live in the wilderness, hunters lobby alongside environmentalists to assure that the wilderness remains relatively intact. Animal husbandry is a year-round occupation, so farmland displaces wilderness habitat equally year-round. In contrast, legal hunting is seasonal, confined usually to the fall. The remainder of the year is relatively peaceful, during which time the wildlife can recuperate and reproduce. In time for the next hunting season.

During hunting season, wilderness becomes a battlefield unsafe for all animals — game and non-game alike — and for all humans, hunter and non-hunter alike. United States game wardens are nine times more likely to be killed on the job than inner city cops. Some hunters shoot anything that moves. Other hunters acknowledge this and, when defecating in the woods, wipe themselves with camouflage toilet paper to prevent their being mistaken for white-tail deer.

Hunting garners some deserved bad press. Many hunters enjoy the thrill of the kill more than the taste of the meat. What they kill, they often do not eat. A deer hunter, for instance, less likely boasts of how many pounds of meat with which the deer dressed his dining room table than of how many antler points with which the buck decorates his dining room wall. A weekend hunter who straps a dead deer atop the roof of his Lincoln leviathan arrives home in the big city with a frozen carcass wind-beaten into inedibility. No point in hiding a trophy in the trunk. Who could admire it there?

Trophy hunting (and that is exactly what hunters call it) is a violation against the laws of nature, an aberration unknown among mentally healthy wild predators. Only domesticated cats and dogs display such deviant behaviour. Trophies traditionally are awarded as prizes to winners of some game. The very word "game" in "game animal" betrays hunting's real intent. Only certain hunters engage in a quest for food. For most, hunting is a game. A war game. In which the enemy does not shoot back.

Game animals are not the only wild animals who lose. The extermination and extirpation of predators already has been discussed. Anytime a predatory species makes a comeback, it is placed on the game list. Open season. No bag limit. Some hunters and trappers make fur coats out of predators, but nobody

makes meals out of them. When one generation hunts predators into extinction, the sons and grandsons then justify their hunting game animals else the animals overpopulate and starve to death. The false cry of wolf.

Federal and state wildlife agencies, funded by license fees and weapons taxes for hunting and trapping, certainly would not bite the hand that feeds them. by manipulating habitat, they benefit the welfare solely of game animals at the expense of the biological diversity of all the other animals. Clearcutting mature forests promotes the growth of brush upon which deer browse. Flooding meadows creates wetlands in which ducks flourish. Some wildlife "refuges" now are little more than duck farms. Look here, Ranger Rick says, see how many wood ducks we now have. But nothing is spoken about the dwindling population of wood thrush that inhabited the woodland before Ranger Rick damned it into a swamp. With one hunter to every seven people who oppose hunting, hunters have gotten away with this for so long because they are the ones with guns in their hands. A more assertive environmental ethic is arising. Hunters know it and their troops are assembling lobbies to combat new legislative assaults.

While illegal poaching will continue, someday licenses will be granted only to subsistence hunters, only to people who cannot afford sirloin steak and who just barely can afford shotgun shells. Until then, one simple law awaits enactment which, if enforced, could reduce hunting considerably. All hunters should be compelled to eat their quarry.

Farm Animals

In May 1989, a predator attacked hens in a chicken coop in New Hampshire. The farmer, hearing the commotion, appeared promptly with a gun. Bang! Bang! Nothing newsworthy. Farmers, in order to protect their farm animals, legally can shoot predators. Any predator. All predators. That includes a neighbour's dog. And that includes endangered species. In this chicken coop coup, the deposed predator was an endangered Lynx (*Felix lynx*). Something newsworthy. Shooting a Lynx in New Hampshire normally carries a \$1,000 fine and one year imprisonment. Except in the defense of scrambled eggs and chicken soup.

One more factor distinguishes this case. The Lynx was able to find entrance into the coop because the chickens had exit out of it. The site was a family farm, rare among increasingly predominating corporate-owned factory farms. When farmers are Gramps and Ma who live next door to the barn where Timmy and Lassie tend Bessie and Elsie, and next door to the chicken coop where the cock and the hen scratch in the earth and bathe in the sun, the conditions for the farm animals can be relatively idyllic. But when the farms are factory farms, the scenario is the worst imaginable.

Once upon a time, Old MacDonald had a farm. Today Senior President Donald, MBA, manages an "intensive husbandry operation." From birth to death, from artificially-inseminated conception to conveyor-belt evisceration, pigs, calves, turkeys and chickens are automated. Technology conceives them, incubates or gestates them, houses them, carries in feed to them, carries out faeces from them, drugs them, transports them, slaughters them, packages them, freezes them, microwaves them, performs almost every function except eat them. That pleasure is delegated to the consumer.

Factory farm animals amazingly tolerate such grim treatment. Of course they would die of cancer if they did not first die of slaughter. Enduring their short lives, they suffer from a multitude of more immediately manifested illnesses, both physical and mental. They routinely are fed antibiotics to combat the high incidence of disease. And chickens and turkeys systematically are debeaked to prevent their neurotic cannibalism. The only activities factory farming encourages are sleeping and eating. The fact that factory farm animals do continue to eat is held as evidence by farmers that the animals must be content. Wild animals, however, under such confinement do refuse to eat. A hunger strike. For improved living conditions.

One argument can be posited in favour of factory farming. Separated from all contact with the sun and the stars, with the wind and the wild, farm animals cannot fall prey to wild predators. And the wild predators do not fall victim to farmers. And the food chain has fewer missing Lynx.

Fish

Compared to meat-eating, fish-eating opens a whole new can of worms. Fish are not warm-blooded and most fish that people eat are wild, so fish are a class apart from farm animals. To those who subscribe to the Western hierarchical scheme of higher and lower life forms, among the animals that humans eat fish rank rather low. Hence the life of a fish might be valued less than the life of a cow, a pig or even a chicken. On the other hand, an entire fish can be consumed in a single meal, while a chicken might last several meals or a pig several months or a cow stretch over several years. Eternity's ledger has not yet measured how many hundreds of lives of fish equal the life of a single cow. Rather than compare apples with oranges and fish with cows, we might compare more tangibly and fruitfully factory farming with fishing.

Compared to the slaughterhouse, fishing has much to commend it. The Huck Finn kind of fishing, fishing with a hook and line, one-on-one, one angler to one fish. Up at sunrise casting in the stream. A lazy day sitting by the pond. Drifting by the setting sun across an open lake. The old man and the sea, and all of that. Reeling in the fish sometimes becomes a battle, but once he or she

lands it the angler immediately can knock the fish unconscious or simply knock it dead (although many never bother).

Most commercial fishing, however, comes with lots of strings attached. Nets. Large schools of fish captured in nets beat frantically against each other, struggle to exhaustion, until finally they suffocate aloft in the air which their gills cannot breathe. Frightened to death, such fish pump their bodies full of adrenaline until the slow strangulation induces rigor mortis. Both adrenaline and rigor mortis detract from the flavour of fish. Nor do they add much in favour of commercial fishing. Nets are an ancient device, but purse-seine and driftnets that stretch long miles belong to the technological age of the feedlot and the factory farm.

The tuna fishing industry with its purse-seine nets particularly attracts the wrath and scorn of environmentalists. Yellowfin tuna and dolphins, for reasons unknown, swim together, the dolphins above, the tuna below. Fishing fleets depend on the dolphins to lead them to their quarry, then spread out nets to encircle and capture both. With care, the fleets could free the dolphins. But who cares? Instead the dolphins are drowned or are maimed or if young are separated from their mothers, or if released are severely traumatized. Because Americans have not yet developed a taste for dolphin meat, the drowned dolphins are dumped back into the sea. Or maybe not always. Few cats raise questions about the origins of tuna-flavour catfood.

Since 1960, tuna fishers needlessly have slaughtered six million dolphins. A cetacean holocaust. Boycott planners urge people to eat only albacore or chunk white tuna because these are caught by methods that do not kill dolphins. Purists abstain from all brands of all tuna because certain tuna fishers kill dolphins. And ethically motivated vegetarians, those odd absolutists, abstain from all brands of all tuna because all tuna fishers kill tuna.

Purse-seine nets contribute just a drop in the bucket of brine when measured against the total devastation rendered by driftnets. These are lightweight expanses of synthetic netting set adrift as submerged walls through which no marine animals can pass. Fishing fleets extend their curtains of death to twenty miles. All told and untold, how many miles altogether? Over 20,000 annually. How many fish altogether? No one is counting.

We do know that millions of netted fish of low market value are dumped dead back into the sea and that the driftnets drown, in addition to fish, also whales, dolphins, porpoises, sea lions, sea birds, turtles ... in short, every living creature in sight. And because the nets extend to a depth of 30 feet, they drown every living creature beyond sight too.

The nets do not discriminate. Nor do they disintegrate. Japanese fishing fleets alone abandon or lose 400 miles of the synthetic fibre driftnets every year. Discarded and dislodged nets float beyond the grasp of human greed and continue entangling animals who in turn become bait for other marine life who in turn

become entrapped.

Ocean fish catches no longer are as bountiful as just twenty years ago. This is due both to depletion and to pollution. When an oil spill occurs off the coast of Alaska the news media bemoans the damage to the fishing industry. Not to the fish — to the fishing industry. Step in human ingenuity. Some species of marketed fish now are raised in ocean pens. Fishing is fast becoming farming. Worldwide farming of salmon, for instance doubles every two years. Farmed salmon already constitutes one-tenth of all salmon sales. But there is a catch.

Aquatic farming techniques generate a set of problems similar to those inherent to terrestrial factory farms. During the nearly three years necessary for a salmon to achieve maximum body size, its food is fortified with synthetics and laced with drugs. Still it suffers high susceptibility to disease and parasites. And due to overcrowding, it displays the neurotic behaviour of self-mutilation and cannibalism. A true chicken-of-the-sea.

While the same underwater corrals that keep in the farmed fish also keep out predatory fish, protection against predatory birds is ensured with a gun. Fish farmed in freshwater ponds are the most vulnerable. To protect the catfish in their commercial ponds, one California fish farm employed full-time hired guns. They shot egrets, herons, hawks, avocets, kingfishers and other birds by the thousands. This went on for years until 1988 when a local birder smelled something fishy.

Invertebrate Sea Animals

Lobster and crab. Oyster and clam. Scallop and squid and shrimp. Some possess eyes, others not. Those we cannot look into the eye we may view as less than animals and treat accordingly. We even call them seafood, not sea animals. While none may scratch its head over issues beyond the attainment of sustenance and shelter, nor shed a tear for its poisoned peers in the Chesapeake Bay, the shrimp does experience pain, the oyster deprivation, the lobster distress.

We may never see for ourselves the veal calf confined in its crate or may never bring ourselves to wring the neck of a live chicken. But the lobster presents quite a different story. Sold live in fish stores, supermarkets and restaurants, it is packed in the tank as tightly as a sardine in a can and deprived of food so its feces will not sully the water. It would starve to death were it not first boiled to death. More humanely pour the boiling water over the lobster or more cruelly place the lobster into the boiling water. Twin terrors. Either way, the lobster finds itself in hot water.

Whether a lobster or any invertebrate sea animal is entitled to the same (few) inherent rights as a veal calf or a broiler chicken is a complex issue better left

to marine phylogenists and moral philosophers. Our own discourse shall retain some backbone and examine instead the incidental kill to larger marine animals by the nets set for shrimp and squid. Actually the tragedy should seem vaguely familiar but with new performers, a cast of thousands.

Nets intended for shrimp have been drowning sea turtles, among them the Kemp's ridley, identified as one of the twelve most endangered species in the world. Turtle Excluder Devices (TED) could have prevented this for many years, but the shrimp industry seeks one legal loophole after another in order to delay regulations requiring their use on shrimp nets. While political issues are debated, thousands of turtles are abated, trapped in physical loopholes. Why exactly has the shrimp industry fought so long and hard? Because approximately one-tenth of the shrimp escape with the turtles.

Meanwhile nearby Mexican shrimp trawlers continue their business as usual. They long have used monofilament gillnets. Lightweight and nearly invisible underwater, these nets intended for tiny shrimp nevertheless ensnare fish, seabirds, turtles, porpoises, dolphins and even whales. Use of these nets is illegal in U.S. waters, but sale to U.S. markets of the netted shrimp is not. More legal loopholes. Someday Greenpeace, initiator of a boycott against Icelandic fish, may call for a boycott against Mexican shrimp. Not that any self-respecting fish or shrimp would consider itself Icelandic or Mexican.

Since 1981, hundreds of vessels from Japan, Taiwan and South Korea daily ply international waters of the North Pacific in search of squid. Squid, under the culinary name calamari, remains an obscure dish in American cuisine. Squid fishing, however, eventually will affect the availability of all forms of sea animals for the dinner table. The vessels set out walls of monofilament nylon nets that stretch for 20 to 35 miles and that drift across 30,000 to 40,000 miles every single day. All forms of marine animals die in these nets but the devastation in international waters remains unmonitored. Some call it the biological strip mining of the sea.

In contrast to the tuna industry whose slaughter of dolphin is merely expedient, the crab industry's is quite intentional. The Chilean crab industry, for instance, kills dolphins solely to provide bait for their traps. The king crabs captured off the coast of Chile are marketed mostly to the United States and Europe. As consumption of the prized delicacy has increased, the populations of both crabs and dolphins off the Chilean coast has plummeted. So the species in addition to dolphins they now use as bait include sea lions, seals, and even penguins.

Animals and Agriculture

No human activity causes as profound an impact on wildlife as does agriculture. Half of the continental United States once was forest or prairie or wetland but

now is either pasture or cropland. Where once roamed bears and buffaloes now grow beans and tomatoes. Urbanization and irrigation, draining and damming, all spell doom for wildlife habitat. And therefore for wildlife. Yet all this is history, like so much water over the dam.

Until recently, small farms were contour ploughed, terraced, or bordered by wetlands, woodlots, windbreaks and orchards. All provided food and habitat for a diversity of wildlife. Today, however, several adjoining farms are merged under single corporate ownership into massive monocultures. Big business brings in big equipment. Big equipment cannot manoeuvre around natural obstacles. So, no more wetlands, no more woodlots, no more windbreaks, no more wildlife. Illinois, for instance, is one great desert of corn and soy.

Grandma and Grandpa once planted corn while singing "One for the blackbird, One for the crow, One for the cutworm, And one to grow. But now their grandchildren are agribusinessmen whose tune might be, "Poison the blackbird, Shoot the crow, Spray the cutworm, And four to grow." Speeding upon the land in an insulated, air-conditioned, stereo-equipped tractor while pondering over world grain markets and machinery down-payments, the modern farmer has lost identification with the land that farmers formerly possessed and identification of the wildlife that the land formerly possessed.

Four acres of forest can support seven pairs of breeding birds, marshes can support six pairs, grassland four pairs, cropland one or none. Forget the reptiles and amphibians. "Lesser" species are less documented, not documented or just forgotten. Many species of birds, turtles, and snakes listed as threatened or endangered owe their demise directly to agriculture. Admittedly, some species, notably rodents, blackbirds and sparrows, flourish with modern agriculture. Despite the baits and traps. But not despite the insecticides. In rare cases where insecticides kill only insects, they kill all insects, not just target insects that threaten crops. By limiting the biomass of the food supply for animals higher in the web of life, insecticides then reduce wildlife populations. The more accurate term for "insecticides" is "biocides."

Farming practices in North America annually destroy six million tons of topsoil. Nature creates one inch of topsoil every 10,000 years. Who is winning? Rather, is anyone not losing? Siltration from cropland erosion, along with the insecticides carried in the soil, have exterminated many species of freshwater fish. Fertilizers in the eroded soil pose yet another danger. The fertilizers boost growth of plants in the water the same as on land. But the aquatic plants that benefit most are microscopic algae. The algal blooms block sunlight from other larger plants, killing the plants that birds and turtles feed upon. Furthermore, as both the algae and the larger plants die, sink to the bottom, and decompose, they deprive the water of oxygen; fish suffocate by the thousands and shellfish by the millions in such waters. Starvation or suffocation. The frying pan or the fire.

In contrast to agriculture's damage to wildlife is agricultural damage by wildlife. Crops are eaten by deer, raccoons, woodchucks, rabbits, squirrels, mice, crows, blackbirds (grackles, cowbirds, starlings, redwings), finches, sparrows, pheasants and ducks, to name a few.

Few farmers feel generous enough to feed the indigenous inhabitants of the land. Instead some crop farmers are as quick on the draw as cattle ranchers and chicken farmers. Through special hunting and trapping permits, farmers are encouraged to defend their crops from furry visitors year round. As though regular hunting season were not long enough. While regulations for hunters vary from state to state, from province to province, from country to country, most declare an open season with no bag limit on farm visitors: These include crows, porcupines, squirrels, skunks, rabbits, raccoons, woodchucks and opossums. The annual death toll by hunters and farmers? With no bag limit, no one is counting. Or no one is telling.

If we choose to eat organically-grown foods, we are exonerated from responsibility for much of the dismal affairs of modern agriculture. But we are not let off the hook entirely. Woodchucks and raccoons pose greater threats to homestead organic farms bordered by more monocultures. If you were a chuck or coon, which would you choose? Organic produce studded with yummy insects or chemically-fertilized crops sprayed with gummy insecticides?

The organic farmers at green markets boast of corn picked fresh this morning but never whisper stories of the raccoon hunt last night. The next time you chat, ask more than how they deal with insects. Ask how they cope with chucks and coons. Such a question compares with asking war veterans how many of the enemy they killed. Expect no answers.

As an organic gardener, this author gained the confidence and sought the advice of local organic farmers. How did they resolve their territorial disputes with the other local inhabitants, the chucks and coons? "It was them or us," proclaimed Farmer A, "them" being a family of eight woodchucks who appeared that spring. Two days and eight shotgun shells later, it was no longer them. Farmer B stuffs their burrow entrances with smoke bombs. A less sanguinary strategy, but just as fatal. Farmer C hooks up his auto tailpipe to the burrow entrances and runs the motor. The car to nowhere. Farmer D kept four cats to tend to the rabbits and four traps to tend to the chucks. One trap tends also to the cats. Farmer E erected a barbed wire fence six feet high to keep out the coons and two feet deep to keep out the chucks. Farmer F electrifies his fence and hears the coons letting out yelps in the middle of the night. Farmer G sets out poisoned bait.

Conclusion

Future human generations will regard our century as The Golden Age, that is, the age when gold was the measure of all things. Our mistreatment of wild animals is only one consequence of greed. For a long list of consequences, consult *Earth First! Journal*. Our treatment of wild animals will not change until our economic values change. Economy opposes ecology.

The equations are apparent. More people equal greater demand for food. Human appetite for plant foods equals more cultivation equals less wilderness equals few wild animals. Also human appetite for animal foods equals more husbandry and hunting and fishing equals fewer wild animals. More people equals fewer wild animals.

The solutions also are apparent. Over five billion humans alive today seem enough. Meanwhile, due solely to human exploitation, another species of animals becomes extinct every hour. Some estimate every minute. Pessimists fear, too late, by the end of this decade nearly all wild animals will be dead as the Dodo. Optimists hope, not too late, the time has come to side with the scapegoat, the sitting duck and the underdog.

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Citation Format

Braunstein, Mark Mathew (1990) THE BEAST IN THE BELLY: HOW HUMAN FOOD CHOICES AFFECT WILD ANIMALS *Trumpeter*: 7, 4.
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