

# Arguments For Re-Introducing Predators Into Damaged Eco-Systems

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Another niche animal rights essay dealing with the direction I'd like to see the legal animal rights movement heading in.

Judging by the 42 million views on a video promoting the reintroduction of wolves into yellowstone park, this argument has majority support, so I'd simply like to firm up the majority opinion, in arguing that:

We should for the most part & for now respect wild animals' right to breed, kill other animals and live full lives in wild habitat from a pro-animal rights perspective.

As well, with the goal of rebuffing any claims by a small sub-section of the vegan community that allowing animals to kill other animals in any way diminishes the argument for people with moral agency going vegan.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ysa50BhXz-Q>

## **A Virtue Ethics Argument for Respecting Animal Capabilities**

If the wonder that we experience in viewing wild animals is not 'how similar to us they are', but their 'real opportunities to do and be what they have reason to value' and one sufficient reason we grant this freedom at least to a basic extent to humans is they have a desire to achieve what they find valuable then; the fact non-human animals experience this desire too means we ought to extend these freedoms to animals.

So a holistic worldview of not wanting to reduce both the quality and quantity of positive experiences humans can have with animals, as well as animals with other animals.

## **An Existentialist Ethics Argument for Granting Collective Property Rights for Animals**

If you desire the ability to live a full life on your property because it satisfies a desire you have to meet your basic needs and you're in favor of guardianship laws to protect this ability for severely mentally disabled people in court because they can't defend themselves then; you should really desire non-human animals who also have these needs have a legal right to their wild habitat as property and should enjoy guardianship laws which protect their legal rights in court through the appointment of a guardian to represent the case of one or a group of animals unless another reason is specified on pain of living in bad faith.

This centers the discussion on how you may be excluding other groups because it's the social norm. If there's one on average norm that unites existential ethicists

a la Simone De Bouviour in the Ethics of Ambiguity, it's that of a desire to live authentically, so not acting in a way you don't believe due to outside social pressures, like that acting without compassion is necessary to what it means to be a man.

Everyone has some values they were brought up with that inform their meta-ethical system. It's up to us to test out those values as we go along against new ones we discover and decide what kind of world we want to live in. We are meaning-seeking creatures innately, we can if we choose to, seek the happy flourishing of ourselves and others in the process, instead of living a life predicated on taking from others happy flourishing unnecessarily.

Getting to a stage in human civilization where we are able to derive meaning from compassionately caring for the basic needs of every person could be a great thing, just like we could find meaning in getting to see more land freed up for wildlife, where animals are able to express all their capabilities.

## **Answers To Questions Frequently Asked Down This Philosophical Rabbit Hole**

**Q: If a human child were about to be attacked and devoured by a lion, wouldn't stopping that be the right thing to do? Why then should we be obligated to allow the lion to devour the gazelle?**

A: Hearing about any human getting killed by a predator reduces most humans' quality of life because we know most of our interests are to be separate from wild animals. So putting in infrastructure and training with guns to prevent avoidable loss of human life brings us meaning.

If you put up a wall around half the planet to separate carnivores and herbivores and just chucked the carnivores lab-grown meat, herbivores would just be frustrated they couldn't roam in the way they want to & carnivores would experience a worse quality of life for not being able to express their capabilities, so there would be less pain in the world in the case of animals eating each other, but there would be much less happy flourishing, which is suffering animals gladly take on to get to experience, like putting up with annoying offspring in order to have offspring, so a worse state of affairs.

**Q: If a group of humans were incapable of intellectually or emotionally desiring not to hunt non-human animals, and chose to live in dense wildlife habitat for a 150 years... and aliens who were similarly incapable of desiring not to hunt animals, came down and started living among them, hunting only those humans who were incapable of desiring not to hunt animals... but not to extinction, and serving an ecological niche, would you try to stop them?**

A: If these humans had been separate from modern society for at least ~150 years, I would have nothing inherently against the aliens doing that, but I would still be tempted to kill off the aliens out of simple symbolic loyalty to my own kind.

Wild animals form sovereign political communities. This claim might seem odd because animals are not rational, but the authors argue that sovereignty does not depend on rational agency but rather exists to “allocate individuals to territories; to allocate membership in sovereign peoples; and to enable diverse forms of political agency including assisted and dependent agency” (Donaldson and Kymlicka, 2011, p. 61). Once this is established, Donaldson and Kymlicka argue that intervening in nature to stop suffering is a violation of sovereignty. Of course, they recognize that violations of sovereignty can be justified in emergency situations like the Rwandan Genocide. They hold that the situation of nature is not akin to this emergency situation because it is a systematic problem, so it is more alike countries with high crime rates, which is obviously an unjustifiable reason to intervene.

**Q: Does having no strong arguments against amoral aliens coming down and killing amoral humans hurt the case for veganism?**

A: No, it helps keep the legal animal rights movement focused on preventing the harm that we are responsible for. So it helps people understand:

1. The really clear timeline of how we destroyed wild habitat and domesticated prey animals to live these lives of confinement and desires with no ability to express them. &...
2. How with modern technology we can restore wild habitat and free up land for the animals common wild ancestors to express their capabilities in.

If aliens capable of understanding ethics came down and had interests to kill any sentient life where they could just eat plants, of course that would still be unjustifiable under the ethical system I advocate for. And that situation relates to almost everyone on earth.

**Don't you have a double standard where you're willing to see animals harmed more than humans, why wouldn't it be okay to set predators on a human society which was overpopulated?**

We can reason with people, get them to use birth control, and drown them in gifts to get them to see the error of their ways. The reason to re-introduce predators is so you can maximize a net global calculus of happy flourishing in the world, where animals are getting to express their capabilities in dense wildlife habitat as opposed to the mono-culture environments lack in species diversity causes.

Art, science, roads, houses, and hospitals bring humans happy flourishing, it's what most people desire to put their mind towards to improve on the humble jungle shack.

**Q: But even ideally, wouldn't you want to see us give lab-grown meat to carnivores?**

A: No, humans accept suffering to continue living in their habitat. No impoverished community would accept being flown away from everything that makes them who they are to live in some sky rise. It's the same for animals and their ranges being reduced or being chucked lab-grown meat rather than getting to chase down prey. I'm not arbitrarily discriminating against animals here, hence not speciesist.

**Q: What if Venus flytraps evolved into massively complex slaughterhouses to confine and kill large mammals in nature, would you not intervene? (A bizarre question I know, but one authored and popularised by a youtuber called Avi)**

A: For sure I would, I can accept many interventions, like rescuing injured wildlife, curing animal viruses, etc. The reason to allow predators is they preserve a more complex ecology where more animals can experience happy flourishing.

And if people accept my arguments, then they are obligated to be vegan and try to alleviate the pain of any large animals they come across where the consequences for one's self aren't dramatic, the same way you should get your shoes wet to rescue a child drowning in a canal.

As well, if you had a gun and saw a wolf about to attack a deer, the most altruistic act you could take would be to kill the deer and give it a quicker death because if you kill the wolf, that makes it more likely for more animals to be born into a boom and bust cycle of for instance lots of weak offspring surviving and then many dying young when there's a drought.

**Q: How is letting carnivores kill other animals vegan?**

A: I define veganism as simply "an animal products boycott."

I make the point of saying it's one campaign tactic among many, aimed primarily at achieving the end of animal agriculture.

And that personally I see the principle behind the action as being grounded in the legal animal rights movement, seeking collective legal rights for animals to have a refuge in dense wildlife habitat where they aren't subject to human cruelty. In a similar way to how the act of boycotting South African products or the act of boycotting the Montgomery bus company was grounded in a larger civil rights movement.

The concept behind veganism has roots going back as far as ancient India and the vegan society didn't even bother trying to come up with various definitions for 20 years or so, they just knew they wanted to start their own society after a series of debates in which they voiced their concern that we should also be advocating the boycott of the dairy and egg industries, for both consequentialist welfare concerns and deontological rights-based concerns.

For further reading check out: How to simply explain what veganism is and argue for it

**Q: Aren't you using happy flourishing in a weird way here?**

A: Maybe, I'm still developing my virtue-existentialist ethics. For further reading check out this essay by Martha Nussbaum called *Beyond Compassion and Humanity; Justice for Non-human Animals*. I think she contradicts herself when she denies the entailments of her philosophy are that one should not kill animals for taste pleasure & that we should respect animals' right to bodily integrity, play & control over one's environment. But otherwise, it's a great essay sketching out the case for valuing all animals' autonomy to seek meaning on our own terms to a basic degree:

It goes beyond the contractarian view in its starting point, a basic wonder at living beings, and a wish for their flourishing and for a world in which creatures of many types flourish. It goes beyond the intuitive starting point of utilitarianism because it takes an interest not just in pleasure and pain [and interests], but in complex forms of life. It wants to see each thing flourish as the sort of thing it is. . . [and] that the dignity of living organisms not be violated.

**Q: But don't conservationists typically re-introduce predators for selfish aesthetically-driven reasons or out of the fallacious belief that nature is good in itself and should be maintained?**

A: I'm sure it happens, but regardless that's not my position.

**Q: Isn't the natural world full of suffering?**

A: Suffering is a necessary part of happy flourishing.

**Q: This all still just reads as speciesism, no?**

A: I see it as speciesist to not let animals express their capabilities in their wild habitat. Most people who raise the issue of wild animal suffering want to treat non-human animals like infant humans who if they were as intellectually capable as us in adulthood would want to separate themselves off from wild habitat also. It's fanciful.

If adult humans want to risk their life living out in the middle of nowhere in bear country, they're welcome to. We can still protect our young and disabled, knowing most of us grow up to have interests to be separate from wildlife habitat, other animals simply don't.

## **Appendix: Formal language versions of the initial arguments**

### **3a. Virtue Ethics – Respect for Animal Capabilities**

P1) If the wonder that we experience in viewing wild animals is not 'how similar to us they are', but their 'real opportunities to do and be what they have reason to value' and one sufficient reason we grant this freedom at least to a basic extent to humans

is they have a desire to achieve what they find valuable THEN the fact non-human animals experience this desire too means we ought to extend these freedoms to animals.

P2) The wonder that we experience in viewing wild animals is not ‘how similar to us they are’, but their ‘real opportunities to do and be what they have reason to value’ and one sufficient reason we grant this freedom at least to a basic extent to humans is they have a desire to achieve what they find valuable.

C) Therefore the fact non-human animals experience this desire too means we ought to extend these freedoms to animals.

### **3b. Existentialist Ethics – Property Rights for Animals**

P1) If I should desire the ability to live a full life on my property because it satisfies a desire I have to meet my basic needs THEN I should desire guardianship laws to protect this ability for severely mentally disabled people in court because they can’t defend themselves

P2) I should desire the ability to live a full life on my property because it satisfies a desire I have to meet my basic needs

C1) Therefore I should desire guardianship laws to protect this ability for severely mentally disabled people in court because they can’t defend themselves

P3) If I should desire guardianship laws to protect this ability for severely mentally disabled people in court because they can’t defend themselves THEN I should desire non-human animals who also have these needs have a legal right to their wild habitat as property and should enjoy guardianship laws which protect their legal rights in court through the appointment of a guardian to represent the case of one or a group of animals unless another reason is specified on pain of living in bad faith

C2) Therefore I desire non-human animals who also have these needs have a legal right to their wild habitat as property and should enjoy guardianship laws which protect their legal rights in court through the appointment of a guardian to represent the case of one or a group of animals unless another reason is specified on pain of living in bad faith



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