

Animal Sanctuary Info

Preserving Wilderness and Farm Animals

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Thinking About Wilderness, part 1

Thinking About Wilderness

Part 1: How much of the Earth is protected by sanctuaries?

There was a time when people gave no thought to wilderness; when our orientation to the natural world was a guaranteed issue of food, shelter and avoidance of pain. Given our 120,000 odd years in the global coordination of species and the biological toll our behavior has collectively wrought, we have come a long way from that innocent past, as we approach the staggering 7 billion number of individuals. Typically, such numeric prodigiousness would be construed as a biological success, but we know it is not. As Marilyn Hempel, editor of the Population Press recently pointed out, "if fertility remains constant at the levels of 2005-2010, the population of the less developed regions will increase to 9.8 billion in 2050 instead of the 7.9 billion projected by assuming that fertility declines [those projected by the most recent United Nations Population

Prospects publication].” Indeed, says Hempel, “without further reductions of fertility world population could increase by nearly twice as much as currently expected!”



Given that slightly less than 13% of the terrestrial planet and 1% of the world’s marine areas are so far protected under any of the more than thirty standard protection indicators, particularly those designated by the IUCN, this consumptive species of ours faces a daunting dilemma that every working conservationist is more than familiar with. The corridors and parks set aside for the sole benefit of the Other — Nature; or those areas explicitly recognized as protected for habitat, sustainability and development — often driven by the needs of indigenous human habitans, as well as the integrity of the ecosystems they are dependent upon — leaves much doubt as to our willingness or ability to concede something beyond ourselves, those of us who comprise the majority of human denizens, living in urban environments across the planet.

Factoring in the increasing levels of animal consumption by humans and the equation becomes yet more murky, in a world of dramatic climate shifts.

Part 2: [Animal rights and habitat protection](#)

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