

KEEP ME OFF YOUR PLATE!

Why Eating Wild life is Not the Answer to Environmental Problems!



It is often claimed, and rightly so, that domesticated species, do harm to the environment. Their cloven hoofs compact the soil, and damage creek banks. Their huge numbers pollute the waterways, and contribute significantly to climate change by excreting large volumes of methane. The production methods of farming these animals often is cruel.

The answer that we so often hear, is to start eating native species, such as kangaroos, wallabies and possums instead. True, these species have evolved to be a part of their environment, so they don't impact on it in the same way as cows, sheep and pigs do. However there are many valid reasons why eating wild living species is not the answer it is claimed to be.

Unviable

The first reason that eating native wildlife is unviable is the human population. Should there be a significant shift to eating native animals, there are quite simply not the numbers of native animals to support such human dietary change. There may have been enough wild animals to support the aborigines, but that was over 200 years ago when the human population of Australia was small. Now there are over 21 million Australians, and the number is climbing.

The second reason is that there is very little flesh on these animals. They are wild animals, and their muscles are toned and strong. They have not been bred for hundreds of years into fat fleshy animals as have sheep, cows, goats and pigs who have been specifically bred for the purpose. You would need to kill three kangaroos to have the equivalent flesh of one sheep. As there are 26-27 million sheep and lambs slaughtered in Australia for consumption annually, that's a lot of kangaroos to replace just sheep alone in the Aussie diet.

The third reason is that kangaroos and wallabies are not easily farmed. Hunting huge numbers in the wild for human consumption is not practical due in part to the large distances to proper hygienic facilities. Farming kangaroos has been tried before and found not to be viable. They are difficult to contain and require expensive fencing, they stress easily and are difficult to round up, they take a long time to grow, and there is little flesh obtained for the amount of effort put in. Possum farming has also been touted. Possums are not a herd species, are highly territorial, nocturnal, naturally shy and stress easily. Possum farming would involve cage systems which are inherently cruel.

Intrinsic value

Humans do not own these native animals. These species have their own lives to live, as do all native species, in what little habitat remains to them. Their habitat should be protected, as should their right to be left in peace to live their lives in their natural state, their right to perform all of their natural behaviours and raise their little ones without fear of humans and the hunters gun. We should not have a claim over them for the simplistic desire of fulfilling an addiction for flesh.

Cruelty

If the preceding issues aren't enough, killing wildlife is inherently cruel. Few populations of kangaroos or wallabies are able to live their lives without constant fear of the human hunter, without having their families destroyed, and their alpha males killed. They can easily die of capture myopathy - literally of fright - even if they have escaped the hunter. This constant hunting pressure has had an enormous effect on the make up of kangaroo mobs and wallaby populations. With so many of the larger strong males killed, as they provide more flesh, hunters are killing younger and younger animals, and more females. There are many activists who are concerned that we are quickly reaching the point of no return - even with some species currently regarded as common.

With the hunting comes injured roos, joeys at foot who are old enough to hop away, but not old enough to survive on their own, and pouch

young who are bashed to death on the spot. Is this what you want on your conscience?

Re-educate your tastebuds

Yes there are problems with eating domestic animals, and there are just as many with eating wild animals. The absolutely best thing you can do for the environment, climate change, and for the animals, is to adopt a plant-based diet. In order to be healthy there is no biological need for humans to eat animals, you can get all essential proteins from plant-based foods, and in fact you will be much more likely to live a long and healthy life without animal products.

The added bonus is that it takes far less land to feed someone on a plant-based diet - 27 hectares for the average Australian diet, compared with 4 hectares per person for a vegetarian diet. So the more people that adopt a plant-based diet, the more land that can be given back to nature, giving threatened and endangered wild species the chance to recover. The more trees that can be planted to soak up carbon, the cleaner our air, lessening the effects of climate change.

But Aren't They a Pest?

In Tasmania the Forester Kangaroo is fully protected, so can't be killed for food. This doesn't stop the killing under crop protection permits of thousands of Foresters every year, despite small number of the species. Bennetts Wallabies and Tasmanian Pademelons are killed in large numbers in Tasmania, with the "season" on them running for 12 months of the year. Brushtail possums too are killed in large numbers. The main problem that these species cause is that they eat pasture put aside for stock. Less of a problem is eating crops, which, if properly fenced, can be protected. The solution to this problem - stop eating meat - the less livestock, the less pasture required!

Not sure where to start? Ask us how!



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