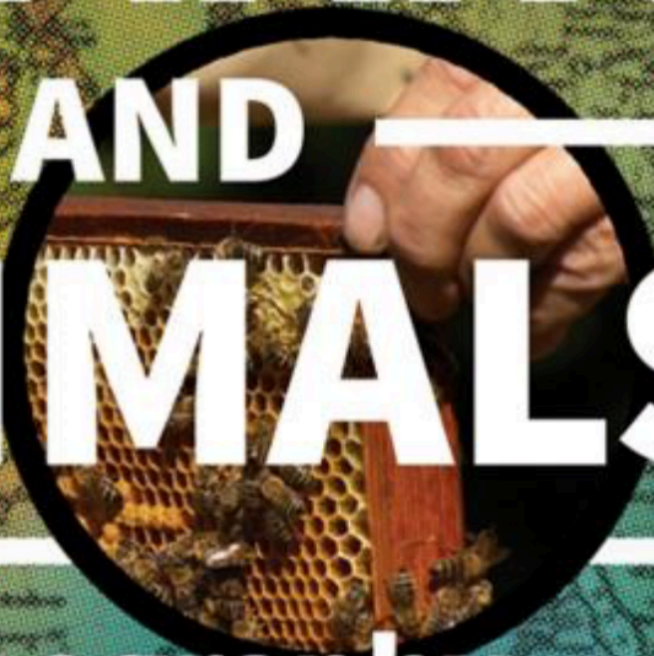


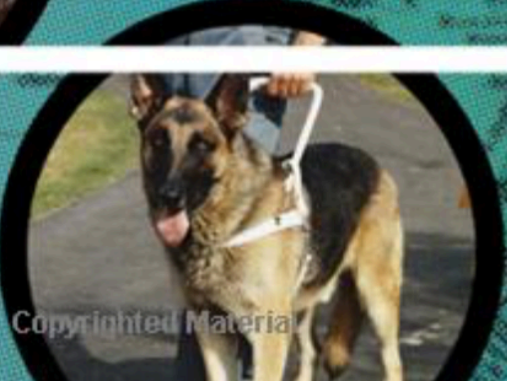
HUMANS — AND — ANIMALS



**A Geography
of Coexistence**



Julie Urbanik and Connie L. Johnston, Editors



imposed by restrictions on hunting, harvesting, or fishing. Battles between defenders of wildlife and those injured by the law, such as big businesses, homeowners, or small-scale farmers, often make protection of species a long and costly legal process. Once conservation actions are authorized, controversies persist regarding enforcement techniques, surveillance concerns about habitat and species monitoring, and the powers of unelected, transnational conservation organizations.

Jenny R. Isaacs

See also: Biodiversity; Bushmeat; Flagship Species; Northern Spotted Owl; Poaching; Wildlife Management

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Endangered Species Act. *See* Human-Wildlife Conflict; Wildlife Forensics; Wildlife Management; Primary Documents

Ethics

Ethics is a phenomenon spanning all cultures and places. Its manifestation through social institutions and theories varies greatly, but moral norms are inescapable in human groups and societies; “honor among thieves” is one wry expression of this. Some explain ethics as deriving from divine commands, others through rules of logic, and still others through humanity’s evolution as a social species. Whatever its origins, ethics is central to the human experience—so much so that human beings are quintessentially *moral primates* living in *mixed communities* of people, animals, and nature. So too, our basic ethical orientations—like love, friendship, mutual aid, and fairness—are shared on a continuum with at least some other animals.

For a formal definition of ethics, we are well served by Socrates (470–399 BCE). He conceptualized ethics as the study and deliberation over *how we ought to live*. Ethics is thus a conversation about the moral values that inform (or fail to inform) our way of life. It is a concern for what is good, right, and just in our individual and collective lives. This involves a process of critique and vision. We criticize what detracts from the well-being of ourselves and others (human or nonhuman), while at the same time we envision how we might improve that well-being. It is for this reason that politics and public policy always have a moral dimension, and all social movements for justice, animal protection, or conservation are motivated by ethical concerns. Hence ethics and politics are two sides of the same coin, with politics being *ethics writ large*.

The single most important concept in ethics of every sort is that of *moral value*. Whether a being or thing has *intrinsic* or *extrinsic value*—that is, value in and of themselves versus value in terms of their use to others—is the point of departure for all ethics. This distinction helps us decide who or what matters ethically and to whom or what we have moral responsibilities. When someone or something matters from an ethical point of view, they are considered part of a *moral community*.

This is not simply an either/or choice, however, as intrinsic and extrinsic values are often intermixed, resulting in *co-values* that require nuanced ethical interpretation. For instance, human beings have intrinsic value, rooted (at least in part) in the fact that we are a thinking (*sapient*) and feeling (*sentient*) species. This means we are self-aware and capable of feeling emotions and making decisions. The evidence is clear that some other animals, such as wolves and deer, are also sapient and sentient. For this reason (at least in part) they have intrinsic value, too. Moreover, because of our mutual sentience and sapience, the well-being of people, wolves, and deer can be harmed in similar ways. Each of us can feel pain, experience suffering, and/or be frustrated when we are not able to achieve goals appropriate to our individuality and species.

Yet deer, wolves, and people all have extrinsic value too (sometimes called *instrumental value*). For instance, deer are an important source of food for wolves in North America and were an important part of subsistence hunting (hunting for food, not sport or trophies) for First Nations. So wolves also were extrinsically important to these cultures as teachers of hunting skills, and even partners in the hunt itself. At the same time, they were trapped and their bodies were made into tools, clothing, ceremonial dress, and the like.

In the cultural geography of North America, wolves are also instrumental symbols for larger worldviews of nature and society. For some, wolves have intrinsic value and are a flagship (iconic) species for the protection of wild spaces and biodiversity everywhere. For others, wolves have no intrinsic value. They have been and are villains, varmints, and vermin, predators of innocent domestic animals and wildlife, and creatures that should be wiped off the landscape.

And still, people are extrinsically valuable to deer and wolves when we help them to thrive by preserving their habitat or protecting them from unnecessary harm. Domestic and international policies for the protection of the environment and wildlife, and the educational, legal, and political activities of the animal and environmental movements, are examples of how humans prove valuable to deer, wolves, other animals, and their habitat.

Overall, scholars of human-animal relations frequently consider people to be members of a *more-than-human* moral community. This is true for many animal advocates and members of the general public as well, even if nonscholars do not explicitly use ethical terms and arguments to frame their points of view. Yet in the vast majority of academic fields (including geography), anthropocentrism has been the dominant ideology. *Anthropocentrism* (human-centered) is the belief that only human beings have intrinsic value; animals stand outside the moral community, and we need not trouble ourselves about their well-being.

The dominance of anthropocentrism is slowly changing, however, with the emergence of subdisciplines like animal geography and the ongoing concern for animals in interdisciplinary fields like environmental studies. In these venues a variety of alternative ideologies has arisen, collectively known as *nonanthropocentrism*. These alternatives take many forms, inspired by diverse moral commitments to individual animals (*biocentrism*), ecosystems (*ecocentrism*), or the whole community of life (*geocentrism*). Yet despite the differences that exist between forms of non-anthropocentrism, they all share a belief that the moral community extends beyond *Homo sapiens*, and that other animals (sometimes ecosystems too) deserve ethical consideration.

William S. Lynn

See also: Advocacy; Animal Law; Human-Animal Studies; Wolves

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