

# Ethical Interventions in the Wild

## An Annotated Bibliography<sup>1</sup>

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

The question of the disvalue suffered by animals in nature, that is, the problem of suffering and other harms suffered by animals in nature, has taken on a new relevance at present, becoming a matter of great practical importance, to be addressed in applied ethics. Taking this disvalue into account, several authors have examined its moral implications.

This paper reviews the main literature that has dealt with those issues over the last years. It presents an annotated bibliography of principal works on this question. The existence of subsequent inclusion of essays in a collective work is indicated in the notes.

Only monographs and articles published in journals are included. Nonetheless, there are several writing pieces on the topics of interest that are available on the internet and have not been published as monographs or in academic journals: Pearce 2009, 2012, 2013; Tomasik 2009a, 2009b, 2013; McMahan 2010a, 2010b. While only essays in English are annotated, there are several essays published in other languages: Bonnardel 1996, 2005; Laporte 2000; Guyard (2002) 2012; de Lora 2007; Horta 2007, 2011, 2013, 2014; Torres Aldave 2009, 2011; Longueira Monelos 2011; Cunha 2011a, 2011b, 2012, 2014a, 2014b; Faria 2011, 2012; Dorado 2012; Cunha and Garmendia 2013.

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2. A BIBLIOGRAPHICAL EXAMINATION OF THE LITERATURE  
ABOUT ETHICAL INTERVENTIONS IN THE WILD

Clark, Stephen R.L. 1979. "The Rights of Wild Things". *Inquiry* 22 (1-4): 171-88. <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00201747908601871>. doi: 10.1080/00201747908601871.

In this paper, Clark examines Ritchie's reductio that granting natural rights to nonhuman animals will force us to the conclusion that we must protect animal preys against predators that wrongly violate the victims' rights. Clark shows that we should defend nonhuman animals against large or unusual dangers, when we can; but he claims that we should not seek to protect nonhuman animals against other nonhuman animals, because we shall easily slip into thinking that they owe us something for which they should pay. He concludes that nonhuman animals may have rights, even rights of welfare, without any absurd implication. The paper was included in this book: Clark, Stephen R.L. 1997. *Animals and Their Moral Standing*, 16-30. London: Routledge.

Gould, Stephen Jay. 1982. "Nonmoral Nature". *Natural History* 91: 19-26.

In this essay, Gould claims that Buckland's considered predation as the primary challenge to an ideal world, and that Buckland pointed out that carnivores increase enjoyment and diminish pain. In response to Buckland, Gould presents several cases of disvalue in nature, related to parasitism. Gould also argues that the answer to the dilemma of why cruelty exists in nature can only be that there isn't any answer; it is a strategy that works for ichneumon flies and that natural selection has programmed into their behavioral repertoire. He concludes that if nature is nonmoral, then evolution cannot teach any ethical theory at all. Included in: Jacobus, Lee A., ed. 2010. *A World of Ideas: Essential Readings for College Writers*, 8th edn., 635-48. Boston: Bedford.

Sagoff, Mark. 1984. "Animal Liberation and Environmental Ethics: Bad Marriage, Quick Divorce". *Osgoode Hall Law Journal* 22: 297-307. <http://digitalcommons.osgoode.yorku.ca/ohlj/vol22/iss2/5>.

In this essay, Sagoff argues that the granting of rights to animals should lead to concentrating efforts on ensuring basic welfare of animals in

nature. He maintains that a liberationist position should involve ecosystem management to benefit wildlife. He explains that it is not possible to be both an environmentalist and an animal liberationist: the environmentalist sacrifices the lives of individual animals to preserve the authenticity, integrity and complexity of ecosystems; and the liberationist sacrifices these to protect the rights and lives of animals. He concludes that an ethics based on the appreciation of the animals does not help to understand or justify an environmental ethic. Included in: Schmidt, David, and Elizabeth Wilcott, eds. 2002. *Environmental Ethics*, 38-44. New York: Oxford University Press.

Sapontzis, Steve F. 1984. "Predation". *Ethics and Animals* 5 (2): 27-38. <http://digitalcommons.calpoly.edu/ethicsandanimals/vol5/iss2/4/>.

In this paper, Sapontzis examines the so-called predation reductio: humans are obligated to alleviate avoidable animal suffering; animals suffer when they are preyed upon by other animals; therefore, humans would be obligated to prevent predation; but such an obligation would be absurd; therefore, humans are not obligated to alleviate avoidable animal suffering. He argues that we are morally obligated to alleviate unjustified animal suffering that it is in our power to prevent without occasioning as much or more unjustified suffering. He points out that animals suffer when they are preyed upon by other animals, and claims that we are morally obligated to prevent predation whenever we can do so without occasioning as much or more justified suffering than the predation would create. Included in: Sapontzis, Steve F. 1987. *Morals, Reason, and Animals*, 229-48. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Jamieson, Dale. 1990. "Rights, Justice, and Duties to Provide Assistance: a Critique of Regan's Theory of Rights". *Ethics* 100: 349-62. doi: 10.1086/293181.

In this paper, Jamieson argues that Regan's own views concerning duties of assistance are inadequate, because Regan does not tell us under what conditions we have duties to assist those who are threatened by agents, and we sometimes have duties to assist those in distress if they are not threatened by agents. Jamieson maintains that if we try to supplement Regan's theory with a class of nondiscretionary duties different than duties of justice, then Regan's response becomes *ad hoc*. Jamieson claims that to limit the duty to

render assistance permits Regan to avoid an argument that if animals have rights, then we have duties to protect them from their predators. Jamieson points out that there are serious difficulties with circumscribing the duty to assist in the way that Regan does.

Naess, Arne. 1991. "Should We Try to Relieve Clear Cases of Extreme Suffering in Nature?". *Pan Ecology* 6 (1): 1-5.

In this essay, Naess argues that the development of life on Earth clearly presupposes the process of dying. He explains that because it is totally out of our reach completely to eliminate prolonged extreme suffering, it is of no practical value to discuss its ethical status, but its existence makes general glorification of nature strange. He maintains that respect for the dignity of free nature and proper humility do not rule out planned interference on a greater scale, as long as the aim is a moderation of conditions of extreme and prolonged pain, of both human and nonhuman animals. He explains that the higher levels of self-development of a mature being require the assistance of any living being to develop its potentialities.

Rolston, Holmes, III. 1992. "Disvalues in Nature". *Monist* 75 (2): 250-78. [https://www.pdcnet.org/pdc/bvdb.nsf/purchase?openform&fp=monist&id=monist\\_1992\\_0075\\_0002\\_0250\\_0278](https://www.pdcnet.org/pdc/bvdb.nsf/purchase?openform&fp=monist&id=monist_1992_0075_0002_0250_0278). doi: 10.5840/monist199275218.

In this paper, Rolston claims that there are many disvalues in nature (predation, parasitism, selfishness, randomness, blindness, disaster, indifference, waste, struggle, suffering and death), but there is value too, and transformation of disvalue into value. He claims that we wrongly evaluate nature when we restrict value to human consciousness, and we make value a prisoner of the particular sort of experiential biology and psychology that humans happen to have, or even of the particular sort of culture that humans happen to have chosen. He argues that since the world we have is the only world logically and empirically possible under the natural givens on Earth such a world ought also to be. Included in: Brennan, Andrew, ed. 1995. *The Ethics of the Environment*, 87-115. Aldershot: Dartmouth.

Dawkins, Richard. 1995. "God's Utility Function". *Scientific American* 247 (6): 80-5. doi:10.1038/scientificamerican1195-80.

In this essay, Dawkins gives several examples that demonstrate that the utility function of life, that is, the one that is being increased to become as great as possible in the natural world, is DNA survival. He maintains that the sex ratio in wild animals is generally 50:50, something without economic sense in several species. He points out that longevity is not valued for its own sake but only for the sake of future reproduction. He explains that maximization of DNA survival is not directly related to happiness. He suggests that the total amount of suffering in the natural world is huge. He concludes that the universe has no design or purpose. Included in: Dawkins, Richard. 1995. *River Out of Eden: a Darwinian View of Life*, 95-134. New York: Basic Books.

Ng, Yew-Kwang. 1995. "Towards Welfare Biology: Evolutionary Economics of Animal Consciousness and Suffering". *Biology and Philosophy* 10 (4): 255-85. <http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007%2FBF00852469>. doi: 10.1007/BF00852469.

In this paper, Ng uses evolutionary economics and population dynamics to help answer basic questions in welfare biology: which species are affective sentients capable of welfare, whether they enjoy positive or negative welfare, and whether their welfare can be dramatically increased. He argues that more complex niches benefit the evolution of more rational species. He points out that evolutionary economics also supports the common-sense view that individual sentients failing to survive to mate suffer negative welfare. He discusses the contrast between growth maximization, average welfare, and total welfare maximization. He shows that welfare could be increased without even sacrificing numbers of wild animals, at equilibrium. He concludes that we must aspire to understand more about animal suffering, so that we are able to alleviate the suffering of wild animals in the future.

Kirkwood, J.K., and A.W. Sainsbury. 1996. "Ethics of Interventions for the Welfare of Free-Living Wild Animals". *Animal Welfare* 5 (3): 235-43.

In this essay, Kirkwood and Sainsbury argue that there are circumstances in which the wellbeing of wild animals can be improved by therapeutic inter-

vention, but the difficulties, and their potentially harmful consequences, should not be underestimated. They point out that there are sound arguments for not intervening for the welfare of wild animals that are sick or injured as a result of natural (as opposed to human-induced) processes, except perhaps to give euthanasia to individuals that may be suffering from severe pain or distress. However, they conclude that treatment and rehabilitation is a course of action consistent with current ethical approaches to the welfare of nonhuman animals implemented where the harm has been caused directly or indirectly by humans, or where the harmed animals are to some degree under human stewardship.

Alward, Peter. 2000. "The Naive Argument against Moral Vegetarianism". *Environmental Values* 9: 81-9. <http://www.environmentandsociety.org/mml/alward-peter-naive-argument-against-moral-vegetarianism>. doi: 10.3197/096327100129341985.

In this paper, Alward claims that if it is morally wrong for humans to eat the meat of certain animals, it is also wrong for lions and tigers and other carnivores to do so; and the differences in cognitive capacities and biological needs between humans and other animals do not undermine this conclusion. He points out that if eating the meat of an animal that was killed for the purpose of being eaten is morally wrong, then we are under an obligation to prevent carnivores from eating meat when we can. He concludes that, given the cruelty of allowing an animal to starve to death, if no alternate food source can be found for them, it seems that we are under an obligation to mercy-kill them.

Benatar, David. 2001. "Why the Naive Argument against Moral Vegetarianism Really Is Naive". *Environmental Values* 10: 103-12. <http://www.ericademon.co.uk/EV/EV1006.html>. doi: 10.3197/096327101129340769.

In this essay, Benatar explains the "innocent argument against moral vegetarianism", using the terminology of Peter Alward. According to Benatar, Alward's argument caricatures the vision of moral vegetarians, and Alward's answers fail against several objections. For Benatar, the dependence of carnivores regarding meat-eating is a morally relevant difference between them and humans, provided the acceptance of what is considered by Benatar a more refined moral vegetarian thesis: eating the meat of an animal with certain properties who was killed for the purpose

of being eaten is morally wrong if it was made by anything less than very weighty reasons. Benatar does not consider it immoral that nonhuman animals must kill in order to survive, but he thinks it is unfortunate and regrettable.

Musschenga, Albert W. 2002. "Naturalness: beyond Animal Welfare". *Journal of Agricultural and Environmental Ethics* 15: 171-86. <http://link.springer.com/article/10.1023%2FA%3A1015040708125>. doi: 10.1023/A:1015040708125.

In this paper, Musschenga claims that a concern for the development of natural capabilities of a wild animal should be distinguished from the preservation of the naturalness of its behavior and appearance. He asks whether we have moral reasons to respect concerns for the naturalness of an animal's living that transcend its welfare. He argues that the moral relevance of such considerations can be grasped when we see animals as entities bearing nonmoral intrinsic values. He considers that caring for an animal's naturalness should then be understood as caring for such intrinsic values, and these provide moral reasons for action only if they are seen as constitutive of the good life for humans. He concludes by reinterpreting the notion of indirect duties regarding animals within the framework of a perfectionist ethical theory, which goes beyond and supplement the direct duties towards animals.

Bovenkerk, Bernice, Frans Stafleu, Ronno Tramper, Jan Vorstenbosch, and Frans W.A. Brom. 2003. "To Act or Not to Act? Sheltering Animals from the Wild: a Pluralistic Account of a Conflict between Animal and Environmental Ethics". *Ethics, Place and Environment* 6 (1): 13-26. <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13668790303539#>.U8K0V0e8DBY. doi: 10.1080/13668790303539.

In this essay, Bovenkerk, Stafleu, Tramper, Vorstenbosch and Frans explain that lost or ill seals in the Netherlands are rescued and taken into shelters, and afterwards reintroduced into their natural environment. They analyze the moral assumptions behind the arguments of both the proponents and opponents of sheltering within a morally pluralistic framework. They point out that sheltering on too large a scale would be contrary to the efforts to maintain an independent or wild seal population, which means that a certain amount of caution is called for, but there is no decisive reason

to completely prohibit shelters in the current situation. They conclude that the acceptability of sheltering wild animals depends on the specific circumstances in which an animal is encountered.

Cowen, Tyler. 2003. "Policing Nature". *Environmental Ethics* 25 (2): 169-82. doi: 10.5840/enviroethics200325231.

In this paper, Cowen argues that utilitarian, deontological and holistic approaches support modest steps to limit or control the predatory activity of carnivores on their victims. He explains that the axiom that controlling nature is intrinsically evil is incompatible with other axioms: animal welfare matters, animals deserve moral consideration, and painful death of an animal is bad. He does not conclude it is necessary to support the control of nature with certainty, because it is possible that the predator/prey relationships do not matter for moral philosophy; but that there is a problem with not engaging in control of nature when the cost is zero. He concludes that we should take the issue of controlling nature seriously and at least we should limit current subsidies for carnivorous animals; but control of nature need not be absurdly costly or violate what, according to Cowen, are common sense intuitions.

Fink, Charles K. 2005. "The Predation Argument". *Between the Species* 13 (5). <http://digitalcommons.calpoly.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1041&context=bts>.

In this essay, Fink claims that the so-called predation reductio (the claim that we should not be concerned about animal interests since otherwise we will have a reason to be concerned about predation) cannot be easily dismissed, as many philosophers have tried to do, like Peter Singer and Tom Regan. He presents Steve Sapontzis' answer to the predation argument. Fink argues that it is not inherently absurd to suppose that there is an obligation to protect animals from natural predators, even if this obligation has limited practical application; nor does it conflict with our deepest moral convictions, except, perhaps, in the case of ethical holists. He points out that if someone has the conviction that we should strive to reduce the amount of suffering in the world, then assisting prey animals, in some cases at least, is one way in which this might be accomplished.



Clarke, Matthew, and Yew-Kwang Ng. 2006. "Population Dynamics and Animal Welfare: Issues Raised by the Culling of Kangaroos in Puckapunyal". *Social Choice and Welfare* 27 (2): 407-22. <http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007%2Fs00355-006-0137-8>. doi: 10.1007/s00355-006-0137-8.

In this paper, Clarke and Ng discuss the killing of kangaroos at the Puckapunyal Army base (Australia) due to conservationist reasons, and address animal welfare issues related to population dynamics. They argue that natural selection benefits the maximization of the number of surviving offspring, and claim that this need not result in the maximization of the welfare of individuals in the species. They illustrate the contrast between growth maximization and welfare maximization for a single population, and they then discuss this in terms of competing populations. They point out that the variant of different birthrates does not affect the population sizes at equilibrium. They conclude that welfare could be much higher at lower birthrates without even reducing numbers, at equilibrium.

Hadley, John. 2006. "The Duty to Aid Nonhuman Animals in Dire Need". *Journal of Applied Philosophy* 23 (4): 445-51. <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1468-5930.2006.00358.x/abstract>. doi: 10.1111/j.1468-5930.2006.00358.x.

In this essay, Hadley claims that most moral philosophers accept that we have obligations to provide at least some aid and assistance to distant strangers in dire need. He points out that philosophers who extend rights and obligations to nonhuman animals, however, have been less than explicit about whether we have any positive duties to free-roaming or wild animals. He argues that our obligations to free roaming nonhuman animals in dire need are essentially no different to our obligations to severely cognitively impaired distant strangers. He addresses three objections to the view that we have positive duties to free-roaming nonhuman animals, and responds to the predation objection to animal rights. He examines the problem of how demanding morality will be once it is thoroughly purged of speciesism.

Morris, Michael C., and Richard H. Thornhill. 2006. "Animal Liberationist Responses to Non-Anthropogenic Animal Suffering". *Worldviews: Environment, Culture, Religion* 10: 355-79. doi: 10.1163/156853506778942077.

In this paper, Morris and Thornhill argue that animal liberationists pay little attention to wild animal suffering. Morris and Thornhill examine a range of

different responses animal liberationists give to the issue of nonanthropogenic suffering, but find none of them entirely satisfactory. They consider that responses that lead logically to the conclusion that anthropogenic suffering should be eliminated can apply equally logically to wild animal suffering. They maintain that the solution of micro-managing habitats to prevent suffering is counter-intuitive, and on closer examination eliminates the intrinsic value of animals' lives. They support acceptance of the intrinsic value of individual animal lives, extending this from either individual human lives, or from biodiversity, species and ecosystems. They suggest that the combination of animal liberation and environmentalism only really makes sense in the context of a belief in the redeemable qualities of nature.

Nussbaum, Martha C. 2006. *Frontiers of Justice: Disability, Nationality, Species Membership*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

In this book, Nussbaum develops her capabilities approach. She points out that the interrelationships of animals is a problem for the existence of an overlapping consensus among reasonable comprehensive doctrines that support and sustain the political conception around animal rights, because those interrelationships (and relations of animals with environment) are not usually harmonious. She argues that what is morally relevant is what happens to the victim. She considers it plausible to suppose that we have less responsibility to protect prey than domesticated animals, although perhaps we should protect animals that can be predated without a massive intervention. She maintains that the non-violent method of population control of neutering is preferable; but if it is not possible, then whatever would result in the least painful death should be chosen.

Young, Stephen M. 2006. "On the Status of Vermin". *Between the Species* 13 (6). <http://digitalcommons.calpoly.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1038&context=bts>.

In this essay, Young defines "vermin" and analyzes the moral concerns surrounding vermin and the potential implications. He thinks that the homeless are perfect candidates for vermin-hood because they are a drain on our economy and pose health risks, not only to themselves but also to others who are daring enough to walk within close proximity; but we have shelters and rehabilitation programs, and we don't advocate exterminating them. He thinks that if we must extend moral consideration to animals because

the arguments for keeping them separate are unconvincing to a well-informed, well-reasoning person, then we must extend moral consideration to nonhuman animals considered to be “vermin”. He concludes that if this is not suitable, then we must extend vermin-hood to humans, specifically it ought not seem morally abhorrent to exterminate the homeless.

Simmons, Aaron. 2009. “Animals, Predators, the Right to Life and the Duty to Save Lives”. *Ethics and the Environment* 14 (1): 15-27. [http://muse.jhu.edu/login?auth=0&type=summary&url=/journals/ethics\\_and\\_the\\_environment/v014/14.1.simmons.html](http://muse.jhu.edu/login?auth=0&type=summary&url=/journals/ethics_and_the_environment/v014/14.1.simmons.html). doi: 10.1353/een.0.0018.

In this paper, Simmons points out that one challenge to the idea that animals have a moral right to life is that any such right would require us to intervene in the wild to prevent animals from being killed by predators. He argues that the belief in an animal’s right to life does not commit us to supporting a program of predator-prey intervention. He maintains that a common retort to the predator challenge is that we are not required to save animals from predators because predators are not moral agents, and that the retort fails to overcome the predator challenge. He seeks to articulate a more satisfactory argument by explaining why we are not required to save wild prey from predators and how this position is perfectly consistent with the idea that animals have a basic right to life.

Hettinger, Ned. 2010. “Animal Beauty, Ethics, and Environmental Preservation”. *Environmental Ethics* 32 (2): 115-34. [https://www.pdcnet.org/pdc/bvdb.nsf/purchase?openform&fp=enviroethics&id=enviroethics\\_2010\\_0032\\_0002\\_0115\\_0134](https://www.pdcnet.org/pdc/bvdb.nsf/purchase?openform&fp=enviroethics&id=enviroethics_2010_0032_0002_0115_0134). doi: 10.5840/enviroethics201032215.

In this essay, Hettinger claims that animal beauty provides a significant aesthetic reason for protecting nature. He argues that worries about the aesthetic discrimination and the ugliness of predation might make one think otherwise. He maintains that although it has been argued that aesthetic merit is a trivial and morally objectionable basis for action, aesthetic merit is an important value and a legitimate basis for differential treatment, especially in the case of animals. He points out that while suffering and death of animals due to predation are important disvalues that must be accepted, predation’s tragic beauty has positive aesthetic value that can be appropriately aesthetically appreciated. He concludes that the suffering and death in predation need not lead us to conclude that predation is aesthetically negative.

Horta, Oscar. 2010a. "Debunking the Idyllic View of Natural Processes: Population Dynamics and Suffering in the Wild". *Télos* 17 (1): 73-88. <http://www.usc.es/revistas/index.php/telos/article/view/284/250>.

In this essay, Horta points out that it is commonly and mistakenly believed that the moral consideration of nonhuman animals entails respect for natural processes, on the assumption that nonhuman animals are able to live relatively easy and happy lives in the wild. He maintains that this belief is mistaken, because the overwhelming majority of nonhuman animals die shortly after they come into existence due to the prevalent reproductive strategy in nature, *r*-selection. This means that their suffering vastly outweighs their happiness. He argues that concern for nonhuman animals entails that we should try to intervene in nature to reduce the enormous amount of harm they suffer. He claims that this conclusion can only be rejected from a speciesist viewpoint, even if it may seem extremely counter-intuitive at first sight.

Horta, Oscar. 2010b. "The Ethics of the Ecology of Fear against the Nonspeciesist Paradigm: a Shift in the Aims of Intervention in Nature". *Between the Species* 13 (10): 163-87. <http://digitalcommons.calpoly.edu/bts/vol13/iss10/10/>.

In this paper, Horta discusses an example of human intervention in the wild for anthropocentric or environmental reasons: the reintroduction of wolves in places where they no longer live in order to create what has been called an ecology of fear. This proposal is currently being discussed in places such as Scotland. He discusses the reasons for this measure and argues that they are not compatible with a nonspeciesist approach. Then, he claims that if we abandon a speciesist viewpoint we should change completely the way in which we should intervene in nature. He argues that rather than intervening for environmental or anthropocentric reasons, we should do it in order to reduce the harms nonhuman animals suffer. He concludes that this conflicts significantly with some fundamental environmental ideals that are not compatible with the consideration of the interests of nonhuman animals.

Palmer, Clare. 2010. *Animal Ethics in Context*. New York: Columbia University Press.

In this book, Palmer explores the issue of humanity's moral obligation to assisting animals. She notes that one intuitively believes obligations to be

dependent on whether the animal is domesticated or wild (“*laissez-faire* intuition”) or on the assumption that one should leave wild animals alone. She contends that all animals deserve moral consideration, based on their capacity for experiential well-being. She claims, though, that humans have a *prima facie* obligation not to harm wild animals but not usually the duty to assist them (i.e. if a storm followed by floods kills them), though we should intervene if we come across some animals in need. She argues that in the case of some human beings having caused the conditions that are harmful for animals, we should do something to help, though what this help would turn out to be varies with the context.

Donaldson, Sue, and Will Kymlicka. 2011. *Zoopolis: a Political Theory of Animal Rights*. New York: Oxford University Press.

In this book, Donaldson and Kymlicka develop a political theory of animal citizenship that divides animals into domesticated (companion animals and animals raised for food), wild animals, and liminal animals (adapted to life amongst humans, without being under the direct care of humans). They argue that domesticated animals should be citizens, wild animals should have sovereignty, and liminal animals should be treated as denizens. They propose that human interventions within wildlife habitats are permissible if they uphold the sovereign animals’ value of self-determination, like selective logging that increases light and air circulation in a closed forest environment, aiding individual wild animals in need, and providing them with vaccination. They consider that liminal animals have certain rights within our shared habitat, but not rights as robust as those of citizens.

Ebert, Rainer, and Tibor R. Machan. 2012. “Innocent Threats and the Moral Problem of Carnivorous Animals”. *Journal of Applied Philosophy* 29 (2): 146-59. <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1468-5930.2012.00561.x/abstract>. doi: 10.1111/j.1468-5930.2012.00561.x.

In this paper, Ebert and Machan argue that the existence of predatory animals reveals a weakness in Regan’s ([1983] 2004) theory. They show that there are cases in which Regan’s approach implies a duty not to assist the animal at risk, contrary to his own moral beliefs. They argue that a modified account of animal rights that accepts the moral patient as a kind of entity that can violate moral rights avoids this conclusion, but it makes nonhuman predation a rights issue that ought to be regulated. They claim that

Everett (2001, 54) and Gruen (2011, 182) base their treatment of predation in part on Regan's theory, running into similar problems. They suggest that if it is found less plausible to introduce morality to the wild than to keep the concept of rights out, then it is possible to reject nonhuman animal rights or to accept a libertarian-ish theory of animal rights.

Cochrane, Alasdair. 2013. "Cosmozoopolis: the Case against Group-Differentiated Animal Rights". *LEAP: Laws, Ethics and Philosophy* 1: 127-41. <http://leap-journal.com/archives/LEAP1-Alasdair-Cochrane.pdf>.

In this essay, Cochrane claims that relational position and group-based distinctions are less important in determining the rights of animals than *Zoopolis* concludes. He argues that the theory of animal rights developed in this book is vulnerable to some of the critiques that are made against theories which differentiate the rights of humans on the basis of group-based distinctions. He maintains that, in the human context, group-differentiated theories of rights have been criticized on a number of important grounds: for failing to extend to non-associates rights that ought to be so extended; for granting too much weight to the rights of associates over non-associates; for wrongly treating groups as homogenous entities; and for also assuming that these groups necessarily have value as they presently exist.

Donaldson, Sue, and Will Kymlicka. 2013. "A Defense of Animal Citizens and Sovereigns". *LEAP: Laws, Ethics and Philosophy* 1: 143-60. <http://leap-journal.com/archives/LEAP1-Donaldson-Kymlicka.pdf>.

In this paper, Donaldson and Kymlicka respond to Cochrane and Horta challenges to *Zoopolis*' arguments, including in particular those challenging the specific models of animal citizenship and animal sovereignty this book offers. Donaldson and Kymlicka focus on three issues: the need for a group-differentiated theory of animal rights with ideas of membership in bounded communities, against more "cosmopolitan" or "cosmozoopolis" alternatives that reduce the moral significance of boundaries and membership; the challenge of defining the nature and scope of wild animal sovereignty; and the problem of policing nature and humanitarian intervention to reduce suffering in the wild. They conclude that a theory of justice for wild animals is needed, so predation should be seen as the kind of tragedy we should accept as a parameter of their lives for the foreseeable future.

Horta, Oscar. 2013. "Zoopolis, Intervention, and the State of Nature". *LEAP: Laws, Ethics and Philosophy* 1: 113-25. <http://leap-journal.com/archives/LEAP1-Oscar-Horta.pdf>.

In this essay, Horta points out that according to Donaldson and Kymlicka interventions in nature to aid animals must have some limits since they could otherwise disrupt the structure of the communities that wild animals form which should be respected as sovereign ones, in accordance with a claim based on the widespread assumption that ecosystemic processes ensure that animals have good lives in nature. Horta argues that intervention in nature to aid nonhuman animals should not be limited as Donaldson and Kymlicka argue for several reasons: most animals are *r*-strategists who die in pain shortly after coming into existence, and those who make it to maturity commonly suffer terrible harms too; and most animals do not form the political communities *Zoopolis* describes. The situation of animals in the wild can be considered analogous to one of humanitarian catastrophe, or to that of irretrievably failed states.

Sözmen, Beril İdemen. 2013. "Harm in the Wild: Facing Non-Human Suffering in Nature". *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice* 16 (5): 1075-88. <http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10677-013-9416-5>. doi: 10.1007/s10677-013-9416-5.

In this paper, Sözmen examines the so-called predation reductio: humans should not alleviate the suffering of nonhuman animals because such an obligation would morally prescribe human intervention in nature for defending nonhuman animals, which is absurd. She considers it possible to avoid the reductio in this way: to intervene only in cases where this is possible and it can reasonably be estimated not to result in more harm than good. She rejects a third way of avoiding the reductio: considering human and nonhuman suffering and death as sufficiently different to allow different types of responses, because the claim that nonhuman suffering and death are not important is only compatible with an anthropocentric bias, and it fails to dismiss the obligation created by the harm of animals in the wild.

Vinding, Magnus. 2014. *A Copernican Revolution in Ethics*. Los Gatos: Smashwords. <https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/451958>.

In this book, Vinding argues that vertebrates and some invertebrates can experience a wide range of pleasant experiences. He points out that

sentient nonhumans vastly outnumber humans, and many nonhumans experience joy and suffering as intensely as humans do, so the vast majority of suffering and well-being on Earth is of nonhuman rather than human kind. He maintains that suffering is not less bad just because it happens in nature, and that wildlife suffering constitutes the vast majority of suffering in the world, so wildlife suffering is a moral problem that we should take seriously if speciesism is rejected. He argues that the vital first step we must take toward doing anything about is to accept that it is indeed an urgent problem of utmost importance.

Pearce, David. 2015. *The Hedonistic Imperative*. Los Gatos: Smashwords. <https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/514875>.

In this essay, Pearce explains how genetic engineering and nanotechnology could abolish suffering in all sentient life. He explains that the metabolic pathways of pain and malaise evolved only because they served the inclusive fitness of our genes in the ancestral environment, but they could be replaced by a motivational system based on “heritable gradients of bliss”. This project needs strategic, species-wide pharmacotherapy complemented, and synergistically allied, with genetic engineering. He considers that the feasibility of this project turns its deliberate retention into an issue of social policy and ethical choice. He attaches value in a distinctively moral sense of the term only to actions which tend to minimise or eliminate suffering. Thirty-five possible objections, both practical and moral, are raised and rebutted.

### 3. CONCLUSIONS

The article *The Rights of Wild Things* (Clark 1979) was the starting point for the consideration in the applied ethics literature of the question of the disvalue suffered by animals in nature. Note that, previously, the issue was dealt with by several authors, like Lewis Gompertz (1852, 11-9; [1824] 1992, 85-96) and John Stuart Mill ([1874] 1958, 18). However, it was after Clark’s paper that further works on this issue were published.

Several essays were published in the 1980’s and 1990’s, but a growing number of authors in the field of animal ethics began to discuss the issue starting in 2000. Of the thirty-five works included in this annotated bibliography, twenty-five have been published since that year.



Between 1972 and the early years of 1980s, those theorists addressing the issue of the moral consideration of animals had typically addressed very general questions. From 1980 on, however, they began to publish more sophisticated research (Dorado 2010, 61). There is a relation between the growing interest in the question of the disvalue that is present in nature and the growing sophistication of the works on animal ethics.

It should be noted that the first authors to address this problem considered it to be just another issue among the several ones animal ethics has to deal with. However, the situation changed with the publication of *Towards Welfare Biology* (Ng 1995), which showed the extent of the existing disvalue in nature, and the moral significance of this problem. It was not until the late 2000s, though, that this paper started to be really influential. From 2007 on, this paper has been quoted several times by the authors included in this bibliography. Since then several articles have been published that have examined the moral implications to be drawn not from the existence of predation, but from animal population dynamics and the fact that the reproductive strategy most animals follows is what has been traditionally characterized as *r*-selection.

It should be taken into account that over the years there has been a growing consensus among researchers dealing with the problem of what is the situation of animals in nature, and the conclusions that can be drawn from it. They conclude that disvalue outweighs value in nature for reasons shown by population dynamics, and that the rejection of speciesism entails that we should help animals living in the wild. They have also agreed that it is necessary to continue to do research on this subject. With this in mind, it may be possible that in the future, as it was the case in general in the field of animal ethics from the 1980s, more sophisticated research on this issue will be published. In order for this to happen, contributions by authors with other backgrounds apart from philosophy (such as biology, health sciences, sociology, political science, law ...) will be instrumental.

Moreover, it should be noted that the growing interest in such matters has influence outside academia. There are websites and discussion groups where they are discussed, and there are charities dedicated to raising awareness about the issue, such as Animal Ethics<sup>2</sup>. It is likely that this trend will continue in the future.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.animal-ethics.org>.

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