

# FOR A FAIRER WORLD FOR ANIMALS

Most of us now know that nonhuman animals can suffer and feel good, as humans can. The scientific community has also stated this unequivocally. In 2012, a prominent international group of scientists signed the Cambridge Declaration on Consciousness, which states:

*“Humans are not unique in possessing the neurological substrates that generate consciousness. Nonhuman animals, including all mammals and birds, and many other creatures, including octopuses, also possess these neurological substrates.”*

Consciousness, also known as sentience, allows us to feel suffering and pleasure. Animals with centralized nervous systems, whether vertebrates or invertebrates, are sentient.



## DO YOU KNOW WHAT SPECIESISM IS?

Have you ever heard the word speciesism? It's now used by academics, scientists and lay people around the world. It refers to the discrimination suffered by most animals. Its meaning is similar to that of racism or sexism. Many of us agree that discrimination because of sex or skin color is wrong. But what if someone is made to suffer because they are a member of one species instead of another? That's discrimination too. It's unjust to oppose the suffering of humans while accepting the suffering of nonhuman animals. You have more information at [Speciesism.io](http://Speciesism.io)

Many animals have been used traditionally as mere things. But that is changing now. Many misconceptions, such as the belief that the Earth was flat, were held for centuries. Similarly, slavery was accepted throughout history until there were people who questioned and opposed it. The same is starting to happen now with respect to animals.

## WHY SPECIESISM AND ANIMAL EXPLOITATION ARE NOT JUSTIFIED

Some people think that discriminating against and exploiting animals is OK because it's justified to discriminate against all those who are less intelligent or less powerful than we are. But there are many human beings who, due to certain injuries, disease, or congenital conditions, have very limited intellectual capacities. As a result, they are in a weak position relative to most humans. Is it justified to exploit them and to discriminate against them because of their relative powerlessness? Of course not. This shows that it can't be justified to discriminate against those who are less intelligent or less powerful than we are. When it comes to not harming or discriminating against someone, what matters is only whether that being can feel suffering and pleasure.

## THE DEFENSE OF ANIMALS AND ENVIRONMENTALISM ARE ENTIRELY DIFFERENT THINGS

The defense of animals is different from environmentalism. It involves seeing nonhuman animals as individuals. Each individual animal matters, regardless of species or where the animal lives. Environmentalism is about the preservation of ecosystems and species. In environmentalism, although the lives and wellbeing of the animals who make up an ecosystem may matter, there are always some things that matters more, such as the balance of particular ecosystems or the preservation of particular species. For instance, preservationists support killing grey squirrels to leave more room for red squirrels, which animal defenders oppose.

## BOTH DOMESTICATED AND WILD ANIMALS SUFFER DUE TO SPECIESISM

Animals are systematically exploited and made to suffer on farms because of speciesist attitudes. They are crammed together in such a way that they are usually unable to turn around and hardly able to move. Many of them have their throats slit and are bled to death while they are fully conscious. And many of them are boiled, skinned, or cut into pieces while they are still alive. Other animals are fished or hunted and painfully deprived of their lives as well.

Animals living in the wild also suffer many preventable harms. Sometimes this happens because humans harm them directly, as in the case of hunting. In other cases, they suffer from natural causes where humans could have helped them. Many people think animals in the wild live mostly good lives. But this is wrong. There are many sources of suffering in the wild, including natural disasters, hunger, thirst and malnutrition, disease, parasitism, injuries, and bad weather conditions.

Fortunately, though, there are now many examples of successful ways to help animals living in the wild. Concern for animals is increasing and we are continually learning more about how to help them. Sadly, lack of concern for animals often means we don't do anything for them even when we could.

## WHAT CAN WE DO?

Animals need people who speak up for them, raising awareness and encouraging others to take a stand too.

One way to do this is to follow us and share our website and blog posts on social networks with others who are interested in these issues.

You can also consider volunteering with Animal Ethics or other organizations that oppose speciesism. Feel free to get in touch with us at: [volunteers@animal-ethics.org](mailto:volunteers@animal-ethics.org)

Every year more and more people join others all around the world who no longer consume animal products, which are the result of exploiting animals terribly.

Visit us at:

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 [twitter.com/animalethics](https://twitter.com/animalethics)

