

The Meaning Of Animals

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AN ANIMAL, whether mammal and reptile, fish or insect is not merely the form that the eye looks upon. It is a fractional yet dynamic expression of the processes of nature, evolved through immeasurable eons of time, related to many other living things, as they are to it. It is a part of a theme, old, yet new and invisibly changing. It is no more the chain than is the link; it is no more the tree than is the leaf.

With such thoughts in mind, it is difficult to bring oneself to speak of animal life merely from the point of view of its utility or of its functional contributions.

Yet, while all kinds of wild living things are a joy to the eye, as well as fascinating subjects to study, animals have values other than aesthetic ones.

When the killing of other creatures is done without an understanding of their place in the life scheme, man is contributing to his own deterioration. And much of the destruction of our animal life is done without caring about after effects.

There is no risk in making the flat statement that, in a world devoid of other living creatures, man himself would die. This fact, (or theory, if you will) is far more provable than the accepted theory of relativity.

Involved in it is another principle of relativity—the relatedness of all living things.

ON MANY FRONTS, man is blindly in conflict with nature, too often overlooking the fact that the animal life of the earth, its interrelationships, its preservation, is wrapped up directly with not only his own well being, but with his peace of mind. For it is man's earth now! One wonders what obligations may accompany this infinite possession.

FROM "Our Plundered Planet"

by Fairfield Osborn

Little Brown and Coy