

Cruelty In The Wild

A summery of eye witness accounts

WHY TRAPPERS NEVER BECOME ANIMAL RIGHTIST

There is good reason why trappers never become animal rightist. People who have actual trapping experience realize that when compared to what goes on in the real world of wildlife, trapping is one of the most humane ways an animal can meet its end.

Like ranchers and others who spend a good deal of their time in the open, trappers know that when nature is left to its own, wild animals most generally die in one of two ways - they either starve to death or they are killed by predators. In either case suffering is most often sever.

In his book *Fremont-Explorer for a Restless Nation*, Feral Egan gave the following account of an observation made by Colonel John C. Fremont while encamped on the plains in 1842.

A salute to independence day roused the men who were still asleep. The cooks for the four messes already had hot coffee and freshly roasted buffalo meat waiting for breakfast. Before the men ate, John Charles drew something from the special supplies he had packed in addition to what was absolutely necessary. All the men stood around the compound as they were served cups of red wine to salute the day... At that moment of celebration, a bawling buffalo calf darted wildly between the carts and ran through the camp. Close behind the calf, the men saw two wolves pull up short, turn, and circle around the corral of carts. This gave the calf a short lead. But as the men watched this game of life and death, the fast-running wolves were joined by twenty to thirty more of their pack... A few buffalo bulls, feeding away from the main herd, attacked the wolves in a valiant attempt to save the calf. But they were driven off by the pack, and the calf was half eaten before it died.

Such suffering as was described in 1842 is not rare. When deer are killed by coyotes they are not dispatched quickly as the animal rightist and environmentalist would have us believe. Generally coyotes will attack either the flank, the hams, or both, and as soon as the animal is pulled down the coyotes begin to feed. Most often the entrails and large portions of the hind quarters are eaten long before the animal dies.

When wolves attack large animals they do things a bit differently than coyotes in that they often cripple their prey by tearing or severing the muscle just above the ham string. By doing this they render one or both back legs useless. With that accomplished they then go off only to return later after the animal has weakened or died - that is of course, unless the wolves are sufficiently hungry, then they will eat on the animal immediately. Often, when wolves leave the animal crippled but still alive they never return at all. To further illustrate such suffering we have assembled the following accounts.

Letters

Wolves are not overgrown, wild dogs

Editor:

There has been so much written about wild wolves being nothing but large, gentle dogs, I would like to give them the publicity they deserve.

I believe I can give a fair idea of what one pack of wolves can do. My grandfather, Ben Lavold, came into the Melville country in 1886, and shortly after homesteaded at the foot of the Porcupine Butte and began ranching. Here is the story of the horses and a pack of wolves as related to me by Stanley Lavold (Ben's eldest son) about 15 years ago.

When Ben and Stanley walked to the house after chores, the quavering, hoarse howl of a wolf shattered the silence. Soon other wolves joined in, adding their deep, eerie voices to the Satanic chorus. At 10:30 that night, Stanley (nine years old at the time) wakened to screams of pain and terror from the horses over in the basin. He knew the wolves had attacked the horses and no one could help them. By the time anyone could get there, it would be too late.

Early next morning they hooked a gentle team to a bobsled and headed for the horse pasture. Lavold picked up his 30-30 rifle, in case a straggler wolf had stuck

around. As they looked down from the top of the hill overlooking the basin, they noticed a large black splotch. Later they discovered it to be blood-trampled snow. They saw what they supposed to be dead horses, but as they drove closer, eight of the horses, still living, raised their heads and struggled painfully to their front feet. They neighed piteously as they recognized the team coming towards them. Their hind legs flopped helplessly. The tendons had been cut by the slashing jaws of the blood-crazed wolves. The other five horses were dead and partially devoured. Stanley held the lines controlling the team, shutting his eyes while his father mercifully put the cripples out of their misery.

Hopefully, some day people in their comfortable homes, buying all their food in a supermarket, will understand the farmer and rancher and not compound their problems. Many of these people consider the wolf an overgrown, misunderstood wild dog. They believe Old Lobo has the super intelligence to specifically and humanely control the wild game population and bypass domesticated stock.

For this reason, the wolf has been planted and protected in certain areas in order that man can be relieved of his problems.

A Pandora's Box will be opened if wolves are allowed to propagate and the rancher not allowed to shoot them on sight.

Edgar W. Smith
Salmon, ID

SAM O. WHITE
Alaska's first flying game warden

I have put in many years in Alaska and most of my time was spent in Alaska's wilderness. I was never a casual observer of the game animals, I was a most interested observer.

It isn't hard to imagine a wolf population explosion in Alaska today. Most all of the restraints have been removed. Trappers don't use poison anymore, the bounty is off, aerial hunting of wolves is outlawed and you can't dig out their dens. Why wouldn't they increase if there is any game around for them to eat?

I have watched wolves kill moose and caribou while I was flying overhead. There are often snow conditions that aid the wolf and penalized the moose, like deep snow with a crust on or near the top that holds the wolf but causes the moose to flounder. I have seen many moose brutally mauled and torn and left alive to die a horrible death.

At the coming of winter a colony of moose will congregate in a valley where winter feed is available. The wolves will move in and kill many and drive the rest out to roam and search for food in other less favorable places. Indian Mountain, near Hughes, is one big wolf den on the east side. One winter 24 moose moved into a valley just east of there; the snow was deep, the feed was plentiful but the wolves came and by January there were 18 moose left. The snow was so deep the moose could not travel. By early April there was not one moose left.

One time over on the Nation River in the upper Yukon-I was up there with a mounted policeman-Clarence Rhodes was with us too-we were watching caribou in the winter. There was a bunch of nine wolves, they weren't all pups either. There were some big ones and they were chasing a caribou. They caught up with him and we watched what happened. Well, they hit that caribou and knocked it down and they all started eating on it right then. They got their mouths full and you could see them bolting it down, right from the air.

It was a big bull. He got up and ran-took off. They let him go. They didn't pay any attention to him till they got their meat swallowed and then they took after him again. They had the caribou down five times before he stayed down and each time they got a meal, got a feed off him. Boy, was the blood flying all over the snow, squirting out on both sides! Caribou are awful tough to kill you know-tougher than moose.

GLEN GREGORY
Alaska Air-taxi operator

I have been flying in Alaska for 27 years and I have seen a lot of it, from the ground and from the air.

When I first came to Alaska in 1946 there were moose for everyone that hunted hard, but not lots of moose. Just before 1950 they started the wolf control program that drastically reduced the wolf populations-especially in caribou country. Then we started, in about 1953, seeing moose up on the Colville, the Noatak and Kivalina Rivers, and in the Selawik and Buckland country (northern and western Alaska). I prospected the winter and summer of 1949 in the Selawik River area and never saw a moose all the time I was there! By 1953 there were lots of them. (predator control work was being carried on around the reindeer herds of northwestern Alaska).

North of the Yukon the caribou limit went from one to two per year, then to five and finally to no limit and no closed season due to the increase after reducing the wolves in northern Alaska. By contrast, in the Canadian arctic, the Eskimo people were starving and on relief because they lost their caribou. (Their biologists were still trying to decide if they should have predator control).

I read the other day that there was no such thing as a 60,000 caribou herd. I estimated 120,000 in one concentrated herd myself and U.S. FWS employees confirmed my estimate later.

I have seen nature at it's cruelest. During the deep snow winters three and four years ago I had occasion to witness sights that made me sick. The route from Tanana to Ruby is over the Yukon River all the way. At that time there was a good moose population that congregated on the willow covered islands of the river in the winter. On several occasions I spotted moose standing in the deep snow with chunks eaten out of them, bleeding to death. The snow would be red all around them. There was no pattern to where the wolves bit first, although the rump seemed to be the favorite location. Probably because it is less protected.

I have contacted a number of people here in Tanana, both native and white and everyone I talked to said they were in favor of killing wolves from the air and they aren't particular who does it as long as there is a reduction in wolves.

But something that gripes us more is having people in the lower '48 not only tell us, but influence the way game is managed here in Alaska. If the people in New York City want to write our game laws then they should let some of us in the bush design their traffic laws. It would make about as much sense.

EDWIN R. "TED" RIGGS

Yes, I've seen Desert Tortoise eat cow pies. I've never seen them eat dry cow pies, but I've seen them eat a lot of fresh ones. They eat them for the moisture and their food value too.

Being a trapper, it was always my practice to stop every quarter mile or so and walk up a draw or wash to check for tracks and sign, so I had occasion to see those kinds of things.

Desert tortoise not only eat cow pies on dry years but they eat cow pies on good years too. The two best feed years I remember were 1949 and 1958. Of the two, 1949 was the best. That year the grass and filaree were clear up above your knees everywhere, on the ridges and in the draws.

Indian Wheat was the most abundant plant found on the ridges, but, in the draws and washes it was filaree. I remember stopping my pickup in a draw where the feed was so thick I couldn't get the pickup going again without first backing up to get a run at it.

The feed was just like an alfalfa field. Except for the trails they made, you couldn't even tell where the sheep had been. I had one herder tell me that he hadn't had to take his sheep to water for three weeks (there being sufficient moisture in the vegetation to meet the needs of the animals).

When I first went to work as a trapper there on the Arizona Strip in 1945, there were 32 different outfits that wintered their sheep on the strip. I covered all the country from Lake Powell to Lake Mead, and from Kanab, Utah to the Southern tip of the Kaibab, a country 150 miles long and 85 miles wide.

It's a rough and isolated country, with very few people. There were periods when I'd never see another person for six or eight days at a time. Altogether I worked there for just two mouths less then 32 years. I really enjoyed it, I liked the country and I liked the people.

I was always welcome wherever I went. I could pull into any ranch or cow camp anytime and stay as long as necessary.

I'd trap the high country, the Kaibab, Mt. Trumbull, and the Virgin Maintains in the summer, then work my way down so I would have the low country to trap during the winter. We never put poison out in the same areas every year. We only used poison when the coyotes got ahead of our trapping.

It's unfair the way the government is putting people off the range these days. They say that the cattle and sheep have overgrazed and hurt the feed in this country, but if that were true, then why is it that the feed does so well on wet years?

It's a serious thing when government policy destroys people's livelihoods, particularly when such policy may not be backed by solid evidence. Just because it's the government that is making the decisions, doesn't mean that it's right, or that things will improve. In fact, in most instances government decisions make things worse. Take predator control as an example. Since the government began to discourage trapping and began systematically cutting back on predator control, we have lost nearly all of our deer, and we're losing our Mountain Sheep too.

Up here on the Virgin Mountain, where I used to see twelve or fourteen Mountain Sheep in a bunch, now you can hardly find a track. The last year I trapped, (the winter of 1988 and 89), the lions were so thick and so hungry they were eating nearly everything I caught. They even ate two of their own kind right out of my traps.

Nature is not "all wonderful" like so many would like to believe. Nature is cruel. In the wild, if animals are not taken by hunters or trappers they either die of starvation or are killed by predators. In either case suffering is nearly always extreme.

On TV they often show lions or wolves attacking prey animals, but they never show the whole kill. If they would show how long it actually takes for the animal to die while it's hind quarters and guts are being eaten; and how the animal suffers as it's eaten alive then possibly people would understand better how cruel Nature really is.

Old deer, when their teeth get bad will get to be a rack of bones before they die. They often go through months of misery. I used to shoot them and put them out of their misery when I found them starving that way.

When I went to get my bobcats tagged in Kingman, (Arizona) in the spring of 1989, I told Clark Fuller, one of the wardens there, about my experience with the lions and how they'd gotten nearly all the deer and were now working on the mountain sheep.

That's when he told me that they were aware of the problem, that they had made three sheep plants there on the Virgin Mountains, some by helicopter. He went on to say, they had put radio collars on fourteen of the sheep, and that since the plant, all fourteen had been killed by lions.

So, the people that are responsible for our game and so forth know what's going on, but they're not speaking out. For some reason that I don't understand, decisions are being made for political purposes, and not for the benefit of wildlife or for the good of the country.

The following account was taken from the: 1996 Deer Hunters' Almanac

LONE COYOTE KILLS ADULT DOE

Several winters ago I witnessed a classic predator/prey confrontation that left a lasting impression. I was photographing deer one February afternoon along the frozen Mississippi River in central Minnesota. Because daylight was fading fast, I was preparing to leave my blind.

Suddenly, across the river, a lone doe bounded onto the ice. Behind her was what I at first thought was her fawn. Only when the two animals were in full view did I realize the trailing fawn was not a deer at all. It was a coyote. Following the deer by 10 yards, the coyote loped at the deer's pace. The doe did not appear to panic.

A week earlier, the water level in the river had dropped. The ice sagged with the lower water level, leaving cracks that forced water onto the ice in the center of the river. This water had since frozen, and without snow cover, was extremely slick.

For no apparent reason, the doe left the firm footing of the snow-covered ice and ran for the center of the river with the coyote in pursuit. The pair went into a spin as they hit the slick ice.

Although both regained their footing, the coyote now had the advantage. It jumped at the doe's hindquarters. Pulling out mouthfuls of hair. The deer fell onto the ice, although the coyote inflicted no perceptible damage. After it was knocked down, the doe seemed to give up.

The coyote circled its prey several times. Though the deer occasionally lashed out with its forelegs as the coyote approached, it made no attempt to regain its footing. Now and then, the doe emitted a pitiful bleat.

I cursed the lack of light needed for photography as the event unfolded. The camera's light meter told me a full 4 second shutter speed would be needed to properly expose the slow-speed film. Peering through the telephoto lens, I watched as the coyote began the grisly task of eating the deer alive.

It pulled mouthfuls of hair and flesh from a hindquarter - all as the doe laid on the ice with its head up. Finally, darkness and cold chased me back to my truck.

I returned to the scene before sunrise the next morning. From a distance, I could see three deer standing near what was left of the fallen doe. A bald eagle and several crows were already cashing in on the free meal.

Closer inspection of the kill site revealed an untouched fetus the doe had been carrying. Other than the doe's head, little else remained of the carcass.

-----BILL MARCHEL

In an article appearing in the April 1979 issue of National Geographic, Staff writer Cliff Tarpay described well the horrors of Ocean predation.

The morning broke clear and calm as those aboard the research vessel "Sea World" began another day of tagging swordfish for a migration study. The gentle breeze and strong sunlight set the seas off the tip of Baja California sparkling with lazy undulations. There were no clues to the raw violence that would shortly be witnessed by those on board: Milton C. Shedd, owner of the boat and chairman of the board of Hubbs-Sea World Research Institute, San Diego; Capt. Robert Vile and two crew members; photographer Robert French; and two guests.

About 1 p.m. Shedd spied a patch of water whipped white by frenzied thrashing. Suspecting killer whales, Shedd alerted a spotter plane that was aiding the swordfish study. After the pilot confirmed Shedd's hunch, the boat headed for the area and found something rarely seen and apparently never before photographed - a group of supremely efficient predators attacking one of the most massive creatures that has ever lived. About thirty killer whales were assaulting a young, sixty-foot blue whale. The relentless pack stripped away flesh and blubber, piece by piece, as the leviathan tried to flee, trailing a river of blood. Both movie and still cameras were close at hand to record the astonishing sight.

Some might think killer whales, tame and playful in captivity, unfairly named. But in their habitat, killer whales do kill. The predators exhibited distinct divisions of labor. Some flanked the blue on either side, as if herding it. Two others went ahead and two stayed behind to foil any escape attempts. One group seemed intent on keeping the blue underwater to hinder its breathing. Another phalanx swam beneath its belly to make sure it didn't dive out of reach. The big whale's dorsal fin had been chewed off and its tail flukes shredded, impairing its movement. The dominant bulls led forays to pull off huge chunks of flesh.

The attack continued until early evening, "Sea World," covering nearly twenty miles, followed the struggle for five hours. But its total duration is unknown since the spectacle was well under way when discovered. When the blue bared its back above the water, bloodied white blubber showed where its dorsal fin had been. The movie camera, peering through the clear water, caught an attacker peeling off a strip of flesh as it glided toward the prey's nose. That long, ragged wound became more distinct when the blue surfaced. One gaping cavity dug in the big whale's side was estimated at more than six feet square.

Around 6 p.m. the attack came to a halt - suddenly and mysteriously. First the killers toward the rear slowed down. Then those toward the front turned back, and they all swam away. Why? Hubbs-Sea World director William E. Evans says the killers may have been taking a break to allow the blue to weaken further before renewing the attack. Or they could have been diverted by another, less demanding feeding opportunity. Or they might have eaten their fill.

Within the 1995, Winter Addition of RANGE MAGAZINE, is an article written by Alston Chase, titled PLAYING GOD ISN'T FOR SISSIES. In this article, Mr. Chase writes:

Last week, I watched raw footage of a videotape taken by a Russian biologist, of a polar bear eating a walrus on an icecap in the Arctic Ocean. This film was not for the squeamish. The bear's meal lasted at least two hours, during which time the walrus remained alive and very unhappy. When the camera crew left, the bear, a species protected under the Marine Mammal Protection Act, was sucking blubber out of a small hole in the hide of the still-living walrus, also protected under the Marine Mammal Protection Act. But unfortunately for the walrus, the bear didn't know the law.

And neither do environmentalist care about the truth, so long as they may pursue their worship of nature.

DEATH BY STARVATION

For years I have been bothered by the attitudes and actions of environmentalist and animal rightist. They say that they care about the welfare of our rangelands and wildlife, but never have I seen their actions support their words. Sure, they like to jump on private parties, but when it comes to mismanagement by government, they chose to ignore the truth. The same is true for the destruction and suffering that is caused by nature itself. Thousands of animals can starve to death year after year, but as long as its "natures way", its all right. It's as though one kind of suffering is condoned but another is not. To illustrate my point, consider the following.

It has been found that a female coyote, after one year of age, will produce an average of six young per year. At this rate a single pair of coyotes can increase to over 100 animals in just three years. In other words if there were 50 coyotes in Ruby Valley in 1970, it is possible that population could increase to 50,000 coyotes by 1973 - that is of course, if there was food enough for them all - but of course that is not the case. Most die before they reach breeding age. Some are killed by predators, some by exposure, some by disease, but mostly they die of starvation.

A species that is even more prolific is the muskrat. It has been found that a female muskrat has three to five litters a year, with up to 12 young per litter. And quite often, before the summer is over, the females of the first litter of that season have a litter of their own. At such a rate a thousand muskrats can become 64 thousand muskrats before one summer is over.

In the 1920's and 30's my father supplemented his income by trapping muskrats. Franklin Lake lay just below our ranch meadows and after the cattle were fed each morning there was time to check a trap line. Dad made enough money one winter to buy his first car, a Model T Ford. Dad said that it always amazed him how fast muskrats could increase. He said that the lake could be completely dry for several years, with no evidence of muskrats at all, but after only three good water years there would be an abundance of muskrats in Franklin Lake.

A thing that I have found interesting, is the way muskrats leave home and scatter in all directions when they reach a certain age. I've been a witness several times - some poor muskrat headed off through the sagebrush where there is no water for miles. Dad said he once saw a muskrat at Ruby Wash, more than ten miles from water.

Few of these muskrats survive. Its just natures way of perpetuating that particular species. I remember working one summer while still in High School - taking down the boundary fence that was being replaced along the east side of Ruby Lake. It was my job to pull the staples and lay the wires out so that they could be rolled up for future use.

The fence was located about a mile from the marsh edge where there was nothing but greasewood and sagebrush. And to the east there was even less - nothing but desert clear to the Great Salt Lake, 200 miles away. There was absolutely no way that a muskrat could survive by heading off in that direction, but that's what the rats were apparently attempting because there were hundreds of muskrats carcasses along that fence line.

Beaver are of a similar nature. When the young reach a certain age, off they go. Some go east while others go west, and like muskrats, few survive. I remember Dad and I coming across the flat one time when we spotted a bunch of crows and magpies off to the side of the road. Being curious, we stopped and walked to the spot where the birds were to see what might have died. And there, miles from water, apparently headed toward some of the driest country in Northern Nevada was a dead beaver.

That's the way nature is. Animals die every day, day in and day out. They are dying right now - millions of them. And as they die they suffer every bit as much or more than when they are caught in a trap or shot by a hunter. Just because the animal rightist or environmentalist doesn't witness the dying that is caused by nature's hand doesn't mean that it is not happening nor that it is less painful to the animal. The only difference is the cause. In one instance its man that is doing the killing, and in the other, its nature. With the least suffering being on the side of the former.

I can only conclude that these people that make up the environmental/animal rights movement are not so much interested in the welfare of animals as they are in punishing man - particularly when the man involved is of an independent nature. It appears, if there is any one group of people that the animal rightist and environmentalist hate, it is those who have the audacity to go out and make it on their own.

If anyone within our society is guilty of needless suffering it's the animal rightist, the environmentalists and this nation's bureaucrats. A good example is the wild horse program that exists today. As everyone knows, the Wild Horse and Burro Protection Act was passed for the purpose of protecting wild horses from ranchers and mustangers. These people who actually understood the animals better than anyone, were accused again and again of being cruel and abusive - until finally, Congress, out of frustration, passed the Wild and Free Roaming Horse and Burro Act. But since its passage there has been more suffering and abuse than there ever was when the ranchers and mustangers were controlling and managing the wild horse herds.

Since the Wild Horse and Burro Protection Act was passed in 1971 there have been thousands upon thousands of wild horses here in Nevada that have either starved to death or perished for lack of water. Most of the problem has been lack of management on military reservations such as the Nevada Test Site or at Stead Air Force

Base. No one knows for certain just how many wild horses and burros have died for lack of feed or water on these government run areas over the last 25 years, but their numbers must be in the thousands.

Ignorance is a big part of the problem. At no time have I ever known or heard of the government taking care of a watering source. They do put in developments once in a while - but take care of them - it just doesn't happen. And as far as keeping the numbers of animals in line with the amount of feed that is available - it seldom happens - not until its too late and there are horses dying all over the place.

And as far as the handling of the horses is concerned, there are more horses killed or injured each time there is a government gathering than there ever was when the ranchers and mustangers were gathering horses. And the mistakes that have been made have been terrible. There have been several fertility studies completed here in Nevada over the last twenty years that have resulted in tragedy - from turning processed horses loose where no water was available, to putting collars on the animals that were so tight that the horses choked to death. Government managers are prone to make much worse mistakes than is the private sector.

Another problem is the expansionary policy the BLM has adopted in regards to the horses. Even though existing law requires that range abuse not occur, such mandates are repeatedly ignored. As with the riparian issue, it is obvious that the BLM has been using the wild horse program as a tool to force ranchers off the range.

The public deserves to know the truth. If animals are suffering, they should be told about it. Like most mammals, the first thing to deteriorate when a horse gets old is its teeth. When a horse's teeth get bad it simply can no longer maintain itself. A horse who's teeth have gone bad get thinner and thinner until they finally die. There are times when a horse will only suffer for a year or two before it finally dies but most times it takes longer. I have seen horses suffer for four or five years before they die.

WINTER KILL AND OVER USE

In the country to the east and south of us - in Butte Valley, and Long Valley, and on the mountains surrounding, there are now thousands of wild horses. The BLM is not running them in the numbers that were there at the time the Wild and Free Horse Act was passed, but rather, they are running them in numbers that are taking the majority of feed that is produced even before winter comes. Consequently, when a hard winter comes the horses suffer.

What is not well understood is, there may be a lot of country where horse herds are run, but that doesn't mean that there is a lot of winter range available. The winter of 1992 and 93 is a good example. We didn't get a lot of snow during November and December

that winter, but there was enough snow to force the horses to use the south slopes and wind blown ridges. Now keep in mind, the south slopes and wind blown ridges are only a small area as compared to the whole - and they were already overused going into the winter. Consequently, when we did get heavy snows in January, the horses were already weak and not in a condition to live on the tops of sagebrush for several weeks as animals must do under such circumstances. So a lot of them died.

And when the snow did begin to go off, it first went off of those same south slopes and wind blown ridges that the horses had already overused. And so, even though there was by then some bare ground, because of the absence of feed, even more horses died.

Knowing the country as I do, and having knowledge of the effects of similar situations, I figured there was a lot of horses dying on the foothills east of us late in the winter - so along toward the last of February I ask my youngest son, Charley to take his snowmobile across the valley to access the situation. What he found was what I expected. Many of the horses, that were still living, were so thin and weak, they could not even trot without stumbling or falling.

During the months that followed I talked to several people who I knew were familiar with the country - some from our part of Elko County, some from White Pine County, and some from Eureka County - they all said the same thing - in their estimation, approximately 50 percent of the wild horses had died that winter. Even the Area Manager for the Wells Resource Area, Bill Baker, admitted at a PLUAC meeting in Elko that following Fall, that by their count, 47% of the wild horses had "disappeared".

Not long after Charley had made his trip across the flat to assess the condition of the wild horses, I decided I would phone some of the animal rights people in Elko to see if they would be interested in doing something about the situation.

I called a person in Elko who was, I understood, the Chairmen of the Humane Society for Elko County and explained what was happening to the wild horses in our area - and suggested that I be allowed to make a presentation to her group so that an effort could be made to see that such a thing never happened again.

As I suspected, as soon as she found out that it was the government that was responsible for the suffering and not a private party, she lost interest. She did give me the name of another person though, that I understood was then serving as the executive secretary of their organization, and so I called her. And again, this second lady also expressed concern until she learned that it was the government that was responsible. From then on she showed little interest.

Next I called the Nevada Commission for the Preservation of Wild Horses in Carson City and talked with Kathy Barkum, and again I

explained my concern for the mismanagement of the wild horses in our area. But this time I met with even more resistance.

When I told her of how the range had been overused by wild horses, she quickly informed me that it was not the wild horses that were overgrazing the range but the ranchers that were running in the area. When I informed her that the Medicine Range was no longer being grazed since the Sorensen family had been forced out of the sheep business, and that the 7H ranch had been taking non use in the Ruby Wash and the Mavericks for several years because of overgrazing by wild horses, she became quite upset with me. And that ended our conversation.

To some, this might not seem significant - that several thousand horses died of starvation one winter, but if that's true, why is it then that we have animal rightist in every community across this nation continually seeking out anyone and everyone who may be starving just one animal? Is it that these people sympathize with animals as they profess, or is it more a vendetta they have against man and his activities. I'm serious. Everything I have seen or experienced indicates that these people, both of the environmental movement and the animal rights movement lack any real concern for animals - for as far as they are concerned great numbers of animals can suffer year after year just so long it is the government that is responsible. But if its someone from the private sector that may have been responsible, watch out, because they're going to come after that individual with a vengeance.

In his book, Time to Cry Wolf, Dr. Lester McCann suggests that such behavior is "a product of man's avaricious nature". Dr. McCann wrote, "It reveals a kind of self-spanking, derogatory, nothing's worse than people attitude - a kind of masochism."

I'm afraid that I'm a good deal more critical than is Dr. McCann. I believe that the environmental movement is made up of people who are basically dishonest. They are selfish and irresponsible, and they don't give a hoot about who they hurt or what they hurt, just as long as they can pursue their own brand of ideology.

The fact that these people are never held responsible for the destruction they cause, calls up the fact that there is something fundamentally wrong with our justice system. People who are as destructive as they are should be held accountable.

RESOURCES NATIONALIZATION

Even though it is seldom thought of in such a manner, when analyzed correctly, the wild horse program was nothing more than the nationalizing of a resource. First came the false propaganda that destroyed the public's confidence in the existing situation, and then came the legislation. Perhaps it was not the intent of many who were involved that the animals become nationalized, but that was the end result.

In that context, think of what is now occurring in relation to our water rights and grazing rights as they exist here in the West. Again, if this nation's agency people and environmentalist can convince the general public, via their constant propaganda, that the riparian areas and the rangelands are being destroyed by uncaring and greedy ranchers, will that not result in the removal of livestock from our public lands? And once the cattle are gone, will it not be the BLM and Forest Service people who will have complete ownership and control of our grazing and water rights?