

THE UNIVERSAL CHARTER OF THE RIGHTS OF OTHER SPECIES

Definition:

'other species' means all sentient species other than human beings

PREAMBLE

This Charter Exists:

- 1) In recognition of the existence of a multitude of other species that, by virtue of their sentience, make strong moral claims upon human beings for their consideration and protection from harm caused by humans.
- 2) As a result of the neglect and ignorance of the rights of other species that has contributed to a global culture of callous indifference to the suffering of other species.
- 3) To assert that other species by reason of their vulnerability to the acts of Homo sapiens and their inability to protect themselves or present their interests require special and comprehensive legal protection.
- 4) To affirm our faith in the fundamental right of other species to experience life free from human caused harm and in the responsibility of human beings to strive to realize this.

WE PROCLAIM:-

And duly call upon all cultures, governments, organizations and persons to recognize the validity and moral veracity of the articles that follow:

Article 1/

To live free from unnecessary harm, and the fear of harm, by human beings is the fundamental right of all sentient beings.

Article 2/

Human beings have a moral responsibility to endeavour to avoid harming other species either directly or indirectly.

Article 3/

That artificial needs industries and 'sports' that routinely harm other species be phased-out or prohibited.

Article 4/

That perpetrators of deliberate injury upon other species be brought to justice and be made to suffer penalties (proportionate to the level of the sentience of the being injured) approximating those given to human beings for similar offences against other human beings.

Article 5/

In the event of having to kill a member of another sentient species the least violent and most humane method should be employed.

Article 6/

That, in the absence of extreme justification, harmful experimentation on members of other species be prohibited. Such experiments are distinguished from therapeutic or veterinary procedures performed on individuals for their own benefit.

Article 7/

That other species have a right to the protection of their habitats. Human activities should seek to minimise the risk of habitat violation.

Article 8/

It is recognized that due to the actions of human beings many species have been misplaced and now encroach upon the indigenous species of many regions to the point of endangering their existence. Ethical means of controlling the propagation of these species need to be undertaken and is permissible.

Article 9/

That undomesticated species may be kept in captivity on compassionate grounds alone. Such grounds may include captive breeding programs for vulnerable or endangered species, veterinary care for injured individuals, rescue programs arising from environmental damage, pollution, and the like. Every effort to reproduce the captive species' natural habitat should be made.

Article 10/

Alternatives to meat for some domestic and captive carnivorous species are currently being developed. Until these alternatives are fully commercialized it is recognized that some killing of other species will be necessary to maintain the well being of the above individuals. Species to be killed should be kept into adulthood under conditions that permit the expression of a maximum range of natural behaviours and should not suffer distress or apprehension in the process of euthanasia.

Article 11/

Other species that are currently subject to commercial trading shall receive full protection of the law to ensure that the buyers and sellers of the same provide every requirement of the particular species' physical, behavioural and psychological needs. No other species shall be bought, sold or bred for the purposes of unnecessary slaughter (i.e. for non-essential human consumption), experimentation or other forms of exploitation.

Article 12/

As a species that reasons morally and values justice it is incumbent upon human beings to develop and promote the means by which to co-exist with other species. The means should include, but not be limited to, human population control and a vegetarian or vegan diet.

Article 13/

It is recognized that some indigenous groups of human beings living close to traditional lifestyles, or persons suffering severe economic hardship, may be unable to undertake a vegetarian or vegan lifestyle. These groups or persons, all else being equal, shall not be deemed to have violated the rights of other species in securing the necessities of survival.

Article 14/

That the controlling of the reproduction of companion species by way of sterilization, contraception or other means, be a condition of being the caregiver of the same.

Article 15/

That government regulations concerning the conditions of breeding, sale, and care of commercially traded other species should maximally protect the rights and wellbeing of those species over the commercial interests of breeders and traders. Commercial breeding 'factories' for companion species e.g. dogs and cats should be prohibited.

Article 16/

That the State provide adequate funding, resources, and powers to agencies responsible for investigating cases of abuse toward other species and to establish such agencies if none exist.

Article 17/

That economic incentives be provided by governments for the purpose of developing commercial alternatives to products and processes that derive from, or are otherwise associated with, the abuse of other species.

Article 18/

That all sentient beings are recognized to embody elements of person-hood having a history both biological and personal, relationships and/or group membership, in addition to the full range of sensory and cognitive experience specific to their phylum.

Article 19/

That from the date of the formal proclamation of this Charter the depiction of violence towards other species in film and other media, for the purposes of 'entertainment' be discouraged.