

appreciative commitment" is the challenge facing the wildlife conservation field today. For conservationists, this will call for "patience, empathy and tolerance and a willingness to be involved with many different kinds of people".

New view of nature

Changes taking place in our understanding of nature need to be brought into schools and to wider public attention. Scientific thought has had a profound influence on how the natural world is viewed. Modern science has been shaped by the theories of such thinkers as Descartes and Darwin, but there is now compelling evidence to refute many of their fundamental ideas. Descartes saw nature as a vast machine and animals, therefore, as unconscious machines without mind, soul, feelings or language. Today, in the main, science acknowledges that animals feel pain, pleasure, fear and stress. There is also much serious research on the question of what animals know, and growing evidence that they know a great deal. Pioneering scientific work is revealing glimpses of the immense diversity and richness of sensory worlds experienced by other creatures — the animal world's "supersenses". Intelligent creatures, such as dolphins and chimpanzees, are confounding naturalists with their animal wisdom. Bonita Bergin, director of Canine Companions for Independence, is quoted in Newsweek as saying, that it's not the mastery of some 89 different and difficult commands that impresses her most in the dogs she trains, but "the sense of responsibility they develop". The anthropologist, Elizabeth Lawrence, who has specialised in the study of the interaction between human beings and horses, has come to the conclusion that in the industrialised world "the best way to describe the horse's role is as a healer. As a companion who shares our leisure, it provides exercise, devotion, beauty and grace, and a sense of communion with nature, which may return us to our roots and restore us to a sense of harmony".⁴

Darwin gave science the image of nature as a ruthless struggle between competing and opposing forces. "All nature is at war, one organism with the other", he wrote. But now a number of leading biologists are finding evidence of an "exquisite cooperation between plants and animals". Instead of Darwin's principles of competition and "survival of the fittest" the 'new science' is finding the dominant forces to be cooperation and interdependence. In this view of nature, "her attitude of simplicity, economy, beauty, purpose and harmony make her a model for ethics and politics".⁵

Justice and solicitous care

One of the most important changes that has to come about in this time of great change is that humanity's expression of justice and compassion must expand to embrace the whole living world. The new holistic perspective beginning to awaken in human consciousness is revealing to us just how disastrously out of harmony with the natural world our modern civilisation has become. Now is the time to do all we can to restore that harmony, before it is too late to do so. The success of this great work depends upon the awakening of the human heart with its transforming power. In the struggle to establish relationships of justice and "solicitous care" with the animal kingdom we will be astonished by how much we have to learn from the animals and how much we need the gifts they embody.

1. Now known as the Sioux (American Indian Peoples).
2. Animal-Human Relationships: Some Philosophers Views, an RSPCA pamphlet available as a World Goodwill Occasional Paper.
3. Andrew N. Rowan ed., Animals & People Sharing the World, University of New England Press, 1988.
4. *ibid.*
5. Robert Augros and George Stanciu, The New Biology: Discovering the Wisdom in Nature, Shamballa, 1988.

ANIMALS AND THE LAW

It is quite clear that the awakening spirit of goodwill incorporates a new respect for the integrity, dignity and intrinsic worth of animals. The burgeoning animal rights movements; the vast network of associations concerned with conservation of the environment; the extraordinary growth in recent years in the number of people in the industrialised countries (especially young people) who are vegetarian — these and other phenomena are all signs that people of goodwill are developing a new sense of responsible stewardship towards the animal kingdom.

But what effect is this having on the horrors of intensive farming; vivisection, the destruction of wildlife habitats; the extinction of numerous species of animals? To answer that question it is necessary to turn to the law. For it is through the law that humanity collectively chooses to regulate its behaviour

Since the 1970s there has been so much animal legislation enacted around the world that it has been described by one

writer as a "growth area in the production and enforcement of both national and international legislation".

Intensive farming

Many of the new laws make it an offence to cause unnecessary pain or distress to farm animals. The power of the agro-chemical lobbies in most countries is such, however, that it has been almost impossible for people of conscience to enforce the application of this general requirement of the law to prevent farmers from holding hens, pigs, turkeys, cattle and other animals in the restricted, inhumane cages so common on modern "factory farms". So, in spite of new laws and more stringent regulations, intensive farming continues to cause a shocking level of pain and distress to animals.

Two countries have, however, responded to organised popular campaigns and have effectively outlawed the worst abuses of these farm factories. In 1978 Switzerland introduced laws to ensure that by 1991 all laying-hens are to be free range. The regulations also require farmers to give pigs