

ANIMAL PASSIONS AND BEASTLY VIRTUES: REFLECTIONS ON REDECORATING NATURE

Marc Bekoff, University of Colorado, Boulder, Colorado

(marc.bekoff@colorado.edu)

Homepage: <http://literati.net/Bekoff>

Marc Bekoff and Jane Goodall (EETA): www.ethologicaethics.org

Many non-human animal beings (hereafter animals) have rich and deep emotional lives. This is the premise from which I begin, asking not if some animals experience emotions but rather asking why they have evolved what are emotions good for and why do they matter. There are hard scientific "facts" that I call "science sense" - and good anecdotes and common sense - that lead to the reasonable conclusion that individuals of many species experience emotions including joy, grief, anger, resentment, jealousy, and, love. In the spirit of Charles Darwin's emphasis on evolutionary continuity, it is not only right, but also good science, to draw this conclusion. It also is consistent with the precautionary principle, namely, that we really do know enough right now to accept that some animals experience rich and deep emotions - that they may indeed exclaim "Wow!" or "My goodness" as they go through their days enjoying some activities and also experiencing enduring pain and suffering at the hands of humans. Dogs and other animals also are empathic and moral beings.

In my presentation I conclude not only that individual animals matter but so does what they feel. Surely, a whimpering dog, a playing wolf having fun on the run, and a grieving chimpanzee or elephant feel something. They're not unfeeling objects. And what animals feel matters very much as they try to negotiate their lives in a human-dominated and often abusive world in which they are mere pawns in our incessant and obsessive attempts to manage their lives for our and not their benefit. We must remember that "this land is their land too" as we "redecorate nature," moving animals from here to there and intruding on their lives as we build homes, parking lots, and shopping malls.

We owe it to all individual animals to make every attempt to come to a greater understanding and appreciation for who they are in their own worlds. And, when we're not sure about what they're feeling, we should leave them alone. Quite often good welfare isn't good enough - offering animals food, a bed, and health insurance just isn't sufficient. They deserve more and we can always do better. This sort of respect will go a long way toward ending, once and for all, the unnecessarily cruel treatment to which far too many non-consenting individuals are subjected each and every second of each and every day.

Some references:

- Bekoff, M. 2004. Wild justice and fair play: cooperation, forgiveness, and morality in animals. *Biology & Philosophy* 19: 489-520.
- Bekoff, M. 2006. *Animals Passions and Bestly Virtues: Reflections on Redecorating Nature*. Temple University Press, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
- Bekoff, M. 2007. *The Emotional Lives of Animals: A Leading Scientist Explores Animal Joy, Sorrow, and Empathy - and why They Matter*. New World Library, Novato, California.
- Bekoff, M. 2007. *Animals Matter: A Biologist Explains Why We Should Treat Animals with Compassion and Respect*. Shambhala Publications, Boston, Massachusetts.
- Bekoff, M. 2007. (editor) *Encyclopedia of Human-Animal Relationships: A Global Exploration of Our Connections with Animals* (four volumes). Greenwood Publishing Group, Westport, Connecticut.
- Bekoff, M. and C. Blessley Lowe. (editors) 2007. *Listening to Cougar*. University Press of Colorado, Boulder.
-

Marc Bekoff is a former Professor of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at the University of Colorado, Boulder, and co-founder with Jane Goodall of Ethologists for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (www.ethologicaethics.org). He has won many awards for his scientific research including the Exemplar Award from the Animal Behavior Society and a Guggenheim Fellowship. Marc is a prolific writer with more than 200 articles as well three encyclopedias to his credit. The author or editor of numerous books, including the *Encyclopedia of Animal Rights and Animal Welfare*, *The Ten Trusts: What We Must Do to Care for the Animals We Love* (with Jane Goodall), the *Encyclopedia of Animal Behavior*, and the *Encyclopedia of Human-Animal Relationships*, other books include *The Smile of a Dolphin*, *Minding Animals*, *The Cognitive Animal*, *Animal Passions and Bestly Virtues: Reflections on Redecorating Nature*, *The Emotional Lives of Animals*, *Listening to Cougar*, and *Animals Matter*. In 2005 Marc was presented with The Bank One Faculty Community Service Award for the work he has done with children, senior citizens, and prisoners.

Marc's work has been featured on 48 Hours, in Time Magazine, Life Magazine, U.S. News and World Report, The New York Times, New Scientist, BBC Wildlife, Orion, Scientific American, Ranger Rick, National Geographic Kids, on NPR, BBC, Fox, Natur GEO, in a National Geographic Society television special ("Play: The Nature of the Game"), in Discovery TV's "Why Dogs Smile and Chimpanzees Cry," and in Animal Planet's "The Power of Play" and National Geographic Society's "Hunting in America". Marc has also appeared on CNN, 20/20, and Good Morning America. His homepage <http://literati.net/Bekoff>.