

Praise for *The Animal Manifesto*

“*The Animal Manifesto* is Marc Bekoff’s gentle challenge that we all go a little further in extending the boundaries of our compassion toward nonhuman animals. I found it hard to resist the call of a work so brimming with awe, insight, and optimism concerning the creatures who share our world. You will too.”

— Wayne Pacelle, president and CEO of
the Humane Society of the United States

“We need books like this. We need writers like Marc Bekoff to remind us of the emotional lives of animals and of our mismanagement of the wild. We need to be reminded that we share this world with other animals, that we do not own it, that we do not even run it. We ignore all of this not only at our peril, but to our great loss.”

— Martha Grimes, bestselling author of *Dakota*

“For more than thirty years, Marc Bekoff has occupied a unique niche in the social movement to advance moral concern for animals, functioning as a fearless scientist relentlessly pressing the scientific community to recognize the reality of animal thought, feeling, and emotion; as a philosopher articulating the grounds for an expanded moral vision of animals; and as a tireless advocate for justice for all creatures. In *The Animal Manifesto*, he has distilled his knowledge and efforts into a document that should inspire all of us to ‘expand our compassion footprint’ in thought and action. Bekoff is incapable of writing a boring paragraph, and his text is peppered with unforgettable anecdotes as well as fascinating scientific data. I strongly recommend this book.”

— Bernard E. Rollin, bioethicist and professor of philosophy,
animal sciences, and biomedical sciences at Colorado State University

“Marc Bekoff at his best! He enhances our respect and understanding of animals using the science of ethology and philosophical inquiry to explain their behavior, and in the process awakens our compassionate concern for all creatures great and small.”

— Dr. Michael W. Fox, veterinarian, syndicated columnist,
and author of *Dog Body, Dog Mind* and *Cat Body, Cat Mind*

“Proof that animals are wistful, altruistic, tender, jealous, and conversational. But are these interesting facts to use to enliven a cocktail party, or do human obligations ensue when we realize that the intelligent life forms we seek in space are all around us here on earth? Marc Bekoff’s challenge to humanity to relate to those on the plate — and in other places no sentient being deserves to be — is riveting reading that may occupy your thoughts long after the last page is turned and the lights are out.”

— Ingrid E. Newkirk, founder of
People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA)

“As a humane educator, I am always searching for books about pressing global issues

that teach through critical thinking and inspire us to deeply embody our values. Marc Bekoff has written a superb book, with a gentle voice, one that will make each reader a better person and will go far to creating a more compassionate world for animals. He offers us crucial knowledge about animals, ignites our curiosity, and fosters our reverence, respect, and responsibility. I've never read a more convincing and powerful call for compassion. You will be changed by this book. It will be required reading for my students."

— Zoe Weil, president of the Institute for Humane Education
and author of *Most Good, Least Harm; Above All, Be Kind*; and
The Power and Promise of Humane Education

**THE
ANIMAL
MANIFESTO**

THE
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MANIFESTO**

SIX REASONS FOR EXPANDING
OUR COMPASSION FOOTPRINT

MARC BEKOFF



New World Library
Novato, California



New World Library
14 Pamaron Way
Novato, California 94949

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In October 2008, when I was visiting the Moon Bear Rescue Centre outside of Chengdu, China, I met seven dogs to whom I dedicate this book: Henry, Matilde, Stevie, Lady Lobster, Butch, Tremor (aka Rambo), and Richter.

I also dedicate this book to the billions of anonymous animals who are in dire need of our support, and to all the wonderful people worldwide who are working hard to better the lives of animals, who dearly need our kindness, compassion, empathy, and love.

And also to Sarah for her unwavering passion.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Our Common Bonds of Compassion

REASON 1

All Animals Share the Earth and We Must Coexist

REASON 2

Animals Think and Feel

REASON 3

Animals Have and Deserve Compassion

REASON 4

Connection Breeds Caring, Alienation Breeds Disrespect

REASON 5

Our World Is Not Compassionate to Animals

REASON 6

Acting Compassionately Helps All Beings and Our World

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

ENDNOTES

REFERENCES

INDEX

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

INTRODUCTION

Our Common Bonds of Compassion

“Anyone who says that life matters less to animals than it does to us has not held in his hands an animal fighting for its life. The whole of the being of the animal is thrown into that fight, without reserve.”

— Elizabeth Costello, in *The Lives of Animals* by J. M. Coetzee

ANIMALS ARE CONSTANTLY ASKING US in their own ways to treat them better or leave them alone. This book is their manifesto. In it, I explain what they want and need from us and why they are fully justified in making these requests. We must stop ignoring their gaze and closing our hearts to their pleas. We can easily do what they ask — to stop causing them unnecessary pain, suffering, loneliness, sadness, and death, even extinction. It’s a matter of making different choices: about how we conduct research to learn about the natural world and to develop human medicine, about how we entertain ourselves, about what we buy, where we live, who we eat, who we wear, and even family planning. Please join me. The animals need us, and just as importantly, we need them. This manifesto presents a much-needed revolution — a paradigm shift in what we feel and what we do regarding animals — that has to happen now because the current paradigm doesn’t work. The status quo has wreaked havoc on animals and Earth. Denial and apathy must be replaced by urgency. If we all work to improve the lives of animals, we will improve our lives as well.

Of course, it’s hard to speak for the animals, but because they share so much with us, it’s not presumptuous to believe that what they want isn’t so different from what we want: to avoid pain, to be healthy, to feel love. Their feelings are as important to them as our feelings are to us. Even further, many living beings seem wired to do good and to make others feel good. The central theme of *The Animal Manifesto* is that animals, including humans, are basically kind, empathic, and compassionate beings. As fellow animals sharing a single world, humans can, and increasingly must, do more to act on behalf of our kindred beings. That’s a good part of why I’m an optimist. Goodness, kindness, empathy, and compassion come naturally, and they allow us to do

what needs to be done, whether healing our conflicts with other animals or among ourselves. Despite enormous problems, there are some very promising trends that show that most people really do care. Goodness, kindness, empathy, and compassion are leading people all over the globe to talk about ways to treat animals with more respect and dignity and to lighten our carbon footprint, knowing that humanity's fate — or rather, the planet's fate and that of all the species on it — hangs in the balance and depends on our acting proactively now.

When it comes to protecting animals, we must think of expanding our compassion footprint, and then do something to make this happen. We lessen our negative impact on animals when we increase our compassion for them and strive to make the planet a peaceful, sustaining place for all beings. There are always trade-offs — some things work and some don't — but if we put an animal's well-being first, we can arrive eventually at the right decision. As with the environment, some of this involves society-wide changes. But expanding our compassion footprint is also a lot about the small decisions we as individuals make every day; bit by bit, we can continually work toward making things better. Will this require doing things that take us out of our comfort zone? Probably. But this really isn't asking too much, since humans are constantly making impositions on animals and taking them out of their comfort zones.

Polls show that just as green awareness is blossoming across the planet, so too is a new understanding of our relationship with other species. The Green Movement is a concept actively supported by more than 90 percent of child-rearing families in America. To support a cause they care about, 66 percent of adults in one study said they would switch brands, and 62 percent said they would switch retailers. This shift in thinking includes animals. A 2006 study conducted by Lake Research Partners revealed that nine out of ten Americans believe “strongly” that “we have a moral obligation to protect the animals in our care.” The Best Friends Animal Society used this poll to develop its first Kindness Index, and noted that Americans are also “adamant about passing these values on to their children.” Best Friends said that most people were ready to help, but “we simply have to create the opportunities.” When those opportunities appear, people act. A 2008 Gallup Environmental Poll found that, over the previous five years, 55 percent of Americans said they had made at least “‘minor[lifestyle] changes’ to protect the environment” and 28 percent said they had made “‘major changes’ in their lifestyle.” In the same study, 65 percent of children aged six to twelve embraced the idea of linking a brand with helping to ensure the survival of endangered animals, and 78 percent of adults said they were more likely to buy a product that is associated with a cause they care about.

These polls confirm a society-wide trend that I've noticed in my own life with the strangers I meet. Often when I'm flying, or waiting in an airport, someone will strike up a conversation, and I'm always amazed and pleased at how interested they invariably are in animals and our impact on them. On one flight I happened to be sitting next to a woman who worked for a major software company. I was writing and spell-checking a manuscript, and she asked what program I used. I told her and said I was working on a book on animal emotions and that I wished that word-processing software would stop asking me to change the words “who” and “whom” to “that” or “which” when I refer to animals — because animals aren't objects but subjects. At first she didn't get it, but eventually she did, and she said she'd talk to the people at

her company about changing their software. Whether she followed through or not, I was glad that she was open to seeing animals differently and that she recognized that the language we use affects our attitudes. Perhaps the next generation of spell-checking software will reverse its presumptions, prompting writers to refer to animals as “he” or “she,” not “it.”

Indeed, most people are simply accustomed to thinking and doing things the way they always have, without considering the effects of their actions, but when you call attention to them, and explain the facts in a nice, polite way, people often listen. Quite frequently, people are astounded to learn what really happens on the way to, and at, slaughterhouses; they simply don’t know. Likewise, many people don’t know what happens behind closed doors at laboratories and at sporting events. When what is hidden is exposed, it can become headline news. In May 2008, I was flying home from the World Forum for Animals in Barcelona when the story about the racehorse Eight Belles appeared in newspapers worldwide. Eight Belles broke her front ankles while running during the 134th Kentucky Derby, and this abused filly had to be euthanized — or killed — right in front of spectators on the racetrack at Churchill Downs, not off in some private stable. In the name of money, racehorses are often mistreated and pushed beyond their limits until they are injured, sometimes to the point that they must be killed, but the mistreatment and death of Eight Belles was so disturbingly public it couldn’t be ignored. On the plane, the guy sitting next to me agreed how horrible this was, and we had a great chat about animal sentience and animal abuse of all kinds. The man didn’t know the facts about racehorses, or much about animal abuse in general, but he said he wanted to raise his children in a kind and compassionate world, and the incident and our conversation led him to feel he needed to change some of his ways. Good for him.

Perhaps because I live at high altitude in what some people call “The People’s Republic of Boulder” — twenty-five square miles in Colorado surrounded by reality — some people regard my embrace of the compassionate and caring side of human nature as merely “wishful thinking fluff.” But as we’ll see, solid science backs my belief. In *Wild Justice: The Moral Lives of Animals*, Jessica Pierce and I argue that the same is true for animals — they have the cognitive and emotional capacities to make moral decisions and show kindness, compassion, and empathy — and we can learn a lot about ourselves by studying how animals negotiate their challenging and changing social worlds. *The Animal Manifesto* is a natural descendant of my books *Wild Justice* and *The Emotional Lives of Animals*, where I also discuss the “nice” side of animals. This “manifesto” takes what we’ve learned about the amazing animals with whom we share Earth and asks: What does that mean for us? And what should we do?

This Manifesto Isn’t Radical

Like any good manifesto, *The Animal Manifesto* is a call for action. I take the facts that have been established about animal sentience and emotions and look at how they affect our society’s current value system. In other words, I freely mix science with ethics, morality, and emotion. This call to action addresses a variety of groups, ranging from the general public to policy makers to those who live in ivory towers, from