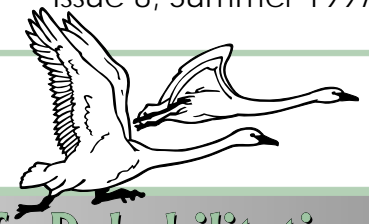


# Fellow Mortals™



## Wildlife Rehabilitation

The world, we are told, was made especially for man - a presumption not supported by all the facts. A numerous class of men are painfully astonished whenever they find anything, living or dead, in all God's universe, which they cannot eat or render in some way what they call useful to themselves."

—John Muir, *Anthropocentrism and Predation*, 1916

## TRANSCENDING THE LAND ETHIC

The land ethic, as Aldo Leopold expressed it in *Sand County Almanac*, was an important step toward conserving the natural world, but it is only a first raw approach to coexisting with wildlife and wild country—raw, because it is based on *conservation* in order to serve the desires of men and women who need to derive benefit from something for it to be considered of value.

A higher ethic than this would be based on *preservation*, a proceeding that would not depend on management of resources as an economic and recreational exercise, but which would preserve the land, the environment, for the sake of *all* sentient beings—not just humans.

Until we preserve those things which we have t in our power to obliterate *simply because they exist*, we will not transcend that which is bestial in the extreme—the association with predation as nherent in the fabric of the human soul.

A *life* ethic would more properly ascribe the reverence that should be paid to all things found to breathe and pass from birth through aging to death, for unless it is determined that



non-human animals *do not* have the capacity to acquire and apply knowledge—i.e., the ability to reason—we must presume that they do and that we are simply unable to identify the process.

Wildlife and wild country have been maintained thus far thanks mostly to “conservation” and “management of resources,” but these terms—which would never be applied to a human being—should not be applied to *any* living thing, for conservation has nothing whatsoever to do with preservation of life when its strategy includes the taking of it.

Leopold wrote: “We now know that animal populations have behavior patterns of which [I believe] the individual animal is unaware... This raises the disquieting question: do human populations have behavior patterns of which we are unaware...?”

As we approach the 21st century, it is time to examine the core issues of sentience, intelligence, compassion and truth. The future of our planet, all species, our species, demands that we question without prejudice, and answer without deceit.

—Yvonne Wallace Blane