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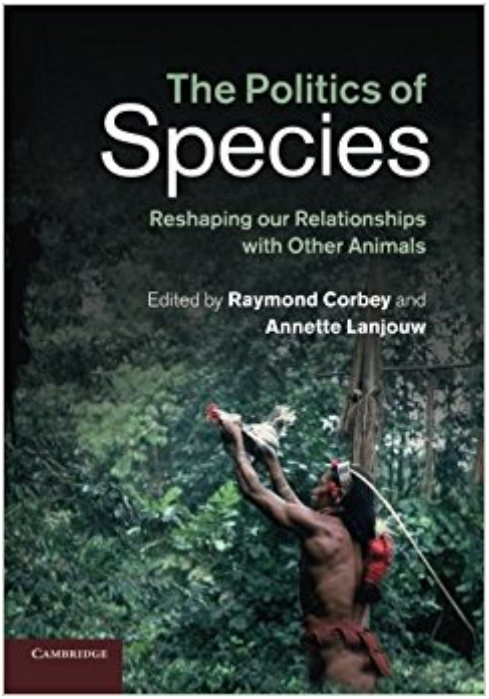
The Politics Of Species: Reshaping Our Relationships With Other Animals



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Synopsis

The assumption that humans are cognitively and morally superior to other animals is fundamental to social democracies and legal systems worldwide. It legitimises treating members of other animal species as inferior to humans. The last few decades have seen a growing awareness of this issue, as evidence continues to show that individuals of many other species have rich mental, emotional and social lives. Bringing together leading experts from a range of disciplines, this volume identifies the key barriers to a definition of moral respect that includes nonhuman animals. It sets out to increase concern, empathy and inclusiveness by developing strategies that can be used to protect other animals from exploitation in the wild and from suffering in captivity. The chapters link scientific data with normative and philosophical reflections, offering unique insight into controversial issues around the ethical, political and legal status of other species.

Book Information

Paperback: 310 pages

Publisher: Cambridge University Press; Reprint edition (September 11, 2014)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1107434874

ISBN-13: 978-1107434875

Product Dimensions: 6.7 x 0.6 x 9.6 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.4 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

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Customer Reviews

"Whereas everybody agrees that making the world a better place is a worthwhile endeavour, an open question remains: better for whom? The Politics of Species brilliantly highlights the scientific, moral and political importance of this topical question. Having done penance for their wrongs of racism, xenophobia, class hatred and sexism, Western societies need to engage in ethical reflexion about the merciless domination and exploitation they inflict on animals. In a series of fascinating case studies, leading experts from a broad range of disciplines supply such a reflexion with a rich factual and conceptual basis, linking scientific data with normative and philosophical ideas in a plea

for a renewed moral vision of relationships between humans and nonhuman beings." Wiktor Stoczkowski, L'Ã‰cole des Hautes Ã‰tudes en Sciences Sociales"The speciesist postulate of a fundamental difference between Man and the animals, at least in some major religious and cultural traditions, may well find its chief raison d'Ãªtre in that it comfortably soothes possible emotional concerns about our dealings with animals. Seeing others as different makes it easier to deny them rights and to exploit and enslave them. The editors of this book have to be complimented for bringing together a great collection of chapters by experts from a diversity of disciplines, dealing in depth with the various issues involved. There are more idealistic and more pragmatic stances in the book, but these all converge on the conclusion that our recent insights in animal behaviour and cognition force us to rethink and reshape our relations with animals to guarantee a sustainable and acceptable community of life forms on this planet in respectful co-existence." J. A. R. A. M. van Hooff, Utrecht University"... offer[s] up a thought-provoking range of ideas and approaches for considering the status of non-humans in contemporary societies." S. C. Baker, Choice"The Politics of Species takes a hard look at our cultural assumptions of humanity's profound separation from and superiority to other animal species, and the many abuses of non-humans that follow from those assumptions ... overall, the book provides an excellent introduction to the focused issue of human domination of non-human animals, and contains new arguments which will engage people already familiar with the discourse." Ian Werkheiser, Biological Conservation

Bringing together experts from a range of disciplines, this volume identifies the key barriers to a definition of moral respect that includes nonhuman animals. The chapters link scientific data with normative and philosophical reflections, offering unique insight into controversial issues around the ethical, political and legal status of other species.

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