

## WHAT SAFCEI BELIEVES

SAFCEI is guided by the Golden Rule, that is found in one form or another in all the world's religions: *'Treat others as you would like to be treated yourself'* or as it is sometimes put in the negative, *'Don't do to others what you would not like them to do to you'*.

SAFCEI believes that a different world is possible. We are committed to re-establishing a human community that recognises itself as part of the Earth's web of life. A world in which humans build benign and compassionate relationships with all other beings. One in which no animal is subjected to cruel or inhumane conditions or treatment. A world in which all animals are free to engage in natural behaviours and to flourish according to their natures.

SAFCEI believes that people of faith and faith communities have a vital role to play in righting humankind's relationships with our fellow living beings. We long to usher in a new era of justice, compassion and peace.

## WHAT DO YOU THINK?

## WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE?

## WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Pray for all living beings on Earth, for all of us who cause suffering to others and for all who suffer. Pray for understanding, wisdom and compassion;
- Start conversations about these matters amongst your family and friends, within your faith community, at work and wherever you can;
- Request your faith leaders to open up the question of

our relationship with animals in sermons and other appropriate fora;

- Make sure that compassion for the web of life is included in faith teaching and learning programmes for young people;
- Host appropriate animal-related talks or movie screenings at your place of worship;
- Take a stand and participate in public demonstrations in support of animal rights, welfare, protection and conservation;
- Support with your time, talents or money OWL or any other organisation that works for animals' wellbeing;
- Be a conscious consumer and a mindful eater.

## FIND OUT MORE

Visit OWL on the SAFCEI website at

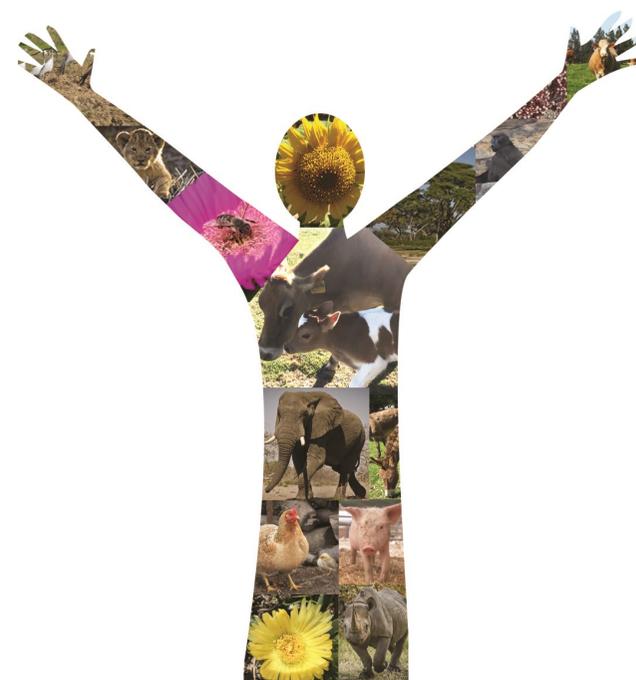
<http://safcei.org/what-we-do/one-web-of-life-project/>

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*Photo credit - cover images by Sonia Mountford and Nic Proust*



# Animals & Us

*Living faithfully*



## THE ISSUE

Around the world, billions of animals suffer grievously. For some, their species face extinction. This is all because of what we humans have done, and continue, to do to them and to their habitats.

## SOME QUESTIONS

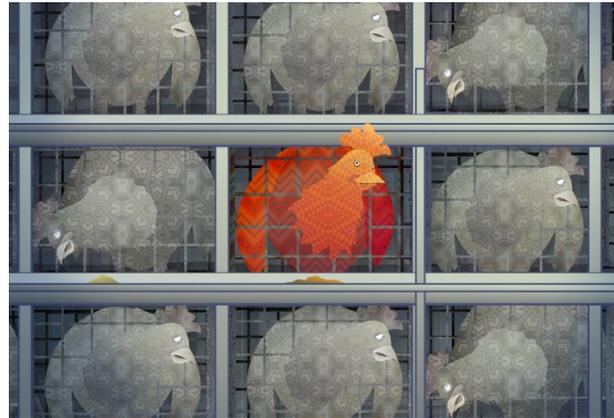
As people of faith, is this situation acceptable? Is it acceptable for us to cause such terrible suffering to other beings because they are not human and because it is in our interests to use, abuse and exploit them? Am I personally complicit in causing this suffering because of how I treat animals or because of what I buy, eat and wear, or because I do and say nothing? How should I behave towards animals with whom we share the Earth? What guidance does my faith (my religion, my form of spirituality) give me in answering these questions?

## SOME FACTS

**FOOD:** Huge numbers of animals suffer cruel and unhealthy conditions in 'factory farms'. In South Africa roughly 2.6 million pigs, 2.9 million dairy cows and their calves, 24 million egg-laying hens and 1 billion chickens are raised for eating each year. There has been a growing tendency through human history to treat animals as 'inanimate things', as commodities to satisfy our 'needs' and greed. Factory farming



of animals takes this to an extreme. We have come to use and abuse God's creatures without thought or compassion for the community of living beings.



**ENTERTAINMENT:** Animals are subjected to unspeakable cruelty in order to 'entertain' us. In circuses animals are removed from the wild, imprisoned for life, and forced to perform, their spirits broken. Dogs are starved and tortured and forced to fight to the death. Humans call dogfighting 'sport'.

**HUNTING:** Wild animals, bred to be 'hunted' as 'trophies', die staring down the barrel of a gun from which they have no chance to escape.

**PETS:** Companion animals like dogs and cats are frequently abused and neglected - dogs lonely, malnourished, left unprotected or chained up; kept as guard dogs, often without food or water, deliberately abused, abandoned.

**'PESTS' AND 'VERMIN':** Daily wild animals are killed because humans consider them a nuisance.

**RESEARCH:** Animals of all sorts are subjected to disease, pain, stress, fear and death for medical research and to test pharmaceutical, cosmetic and other products for humans.

**HABITAT DESTRUCTION:** Wild animals' habitats are being diminished as a result of unrestrained human demand for more land and 'resources'.

**OVERFISHING:** Fish species are being harvested to the point where their populations cannot recover and are thus threatened with extinction. 50% of South Africa's 'marine resources' are considered by the WWF to be 'fully exploited' and a further 15% are 'overexploited'. Species classified as 'collapsed' include menu favourites such as kabeljou and geelbek.

## MAKING SENSE OF THE FACTS

We have allowed ourselves to forget that all life on Earth is part of one wonderful web. In doing so, we have become disconnected from this community of which we are an integral part, so we no longer care. Through concern for our own well-being, fulfilment and pleasure, we come to view other beings only in terms of how they serve our human interests and how they are of value to us.

