

# Compassionate Conservation



Camilla Fox with Virginia McKenna

Between 1st and 3rd September 2010 the Wildlife Conservation Research Unit (WildCRU) and the Born Free Foundation hosted the Compassionate Conservation Symposium at Lady Margaret Hall, a college closely associated with WildCRU at the University of Oxford. One of the speakers was Camilla Fox.

Camilla is the founder and executive director of Project Coyote in the USA. For over 15 years she has worked to protect wildlife and wild lands in the U.S. and internationally. Camilla has served in leadership positions with the Animal Protection Institute, Fur-Bearer Defenders and Rainforest Action Network, and has spearheaded campaigns aimed at protecting native carnivores, and fostering humane and ecologically-sound solutions to human-wildlife conflicts. She holds a Master's degree in Environmental Studies, with a focus on Wildlife Conservation, Policy, and Ecology, from Prescott College, and a Bachelor's degree from Boston University. In 2006, Camilla received the Humanitarian of the Year Award from the Marin Humane Society and the Christine Stevens Wildlife Award from the Animal Welfare Institute.

Camilla wrote the following blog during her trip to the UK to attend the Symposium.

**B**logging from Oxford, England, from the Compassionate Conservation Conference - a ground-breaking International Symposium on animal welfare in conservation practice. The Symposium, sponsored by the Wildlife Conservation Research Unit (WildCRU) and the Born Free Foundation, has brought together scientists and practitioners from a range of disciplines to debate animal welfare issues in conservation, to look for practical outcomes and promote a dialogue between the two disciplines that are often perceived as mutually exclusive.

The Symposium is organized around the following themes:

- Animal welfare in field conservation
- Captive animal welfare and conservation
- Conservation consequences of wildlife rescue, rehabilitation and release
- International trade in live wild animals

Here with me is my colleague, good friend, and Project Coyote Advisory Board member, Dr. Marc Bekoff, who addressed some challenging ethical questions around reintroduction and conservation projects in his keynote address including:

- Should we kill for conservation?
- What trade-offs must be made between ethics and conservation goals?
- Can conservation biologists do good science - save individuals, species, and ecosystems - and also be compassionate?
- What role does sentience play in our decisions?

Representing both Project Coyote and the Animal Welfare Institute, I spoke about predator management in the United States and why we need to move away from indiscriminate killing methods like poisons, snaring, aerial gunning, body-count bounties and contest hunts, and recognize the important role that native carnivores play in healthy ecosystems.

I also discussed an alternative model that was adopted in my home county in Marin Co, California - known as the



Coyote, by Camilla Fox

Marin County Livestock and Wildlife Protection Program - after controversy erupted when local citizens learned that Marin was going to be one of three northern California counties to test the deadly poison Compound 1080 on coyotes by the federal government. The local Marin initiative - unique in its kind - assists ranchers with implementing non-lethal animal husbandry techniques instead of killing native carnivores with federal trappers through the U.S. Department of Agriculture's 'Wildlife Services' program.

It is refreshing to see these challenging issues of how we balance conservation with the needs and lives of individual animals debated in an international forum, with some of the brightest thinkers and visionaries of our time. It is my hope that out of this symposium there will be more collaboration between conservationists and animal welfare advocates where common ground and goals can be identified.

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