

Submission to the Enquiry RE ANIMAL WELFARE BILL 2003!

ANTJE STRUTHMANN KANGAROOS

The truth about Kangaroos
By Antje Struthmann

20 years of research led to the amazing discovery that Kangaroos are by nature intelligent, complex and leave their mothers by releasing themselves to the wild only when the individual kangaroo is ready to do so. The time varies from 18 months to 3 years plus.

Wild mobs

Kangaroos have a unique, rich hierarchial structure that is vital to the kangaroo mob as the passing on of the strongest genetic gene pool. Kangaroos like gorillas, have a King and a Queen and live in mobs.

The female kangaroo grooms only her own offspring and therefore is not socializing within the group as the female gorilla. Young male offspring will leave the mob as early as 18 months of age, while the female offspring stays with their mothers to learn how to raise and educate their young.

Kangaroos also grieve the loss of their close family members. Sometimes both parents look for their lost offspring and grieve its loss. Partners grieve for their soul mate and Sometimes die of a broken heart shortly after. If a kangaroo is very sick, injured or dies there are always very close friends around the sick animal. Even so they might not get too close except for the closest member of that animal but they will stay with her/him until he/she recovers or dies.

If an animal has died suddenly (shot or killed by car etc.) or after an illness, the closest member(s) of the dead animal might wait for him/her and return to the (grave side) for up to 10 weeks. An 20 months old joey might call and miss it`s mother for a period of at least 10 months.

Like elephants, kangaroos have a good long term memory! Kangaroos can not be farmed, herded, transported or trained like cattle and sheep and have a home range of at least 2sq.km.

They are free roaming spirits and this is what they ought to be. But there is one real big difference between gorillas and kangaroos and that is that female kangaroos can have up to 3 joeys at any given time, once they are mature; one joey in the pouch, one at heel and one joey ready to be born.

Without this genius institution the kangaroo and its subspecies would certainly be extinct by now as a female Kangaroo can raise only one joey a year, also there are rare cases of twins being raised successfully.

Many years ago, wildlife carers in NSW were able to take their more placid wild animals to school to educate the children. They were able to show their joey in public to raise awareness. But a few years back the rules and regulations regarding wildlife caring changed dramatically for the worst.

The Australian TV Series Skippy was banned, so that the audience would not fall in love with their favourite innocent Icon Skippy and develop the so called “Skippy Syndrome”.

Thanks to the commercial pressure and its anti kangaroo laws and regulations, our Icon Skippy turned overnight into a fugitive and became the most harassed, despised, hated and hunted animal in the history of mankind.

The New South Wales National Parks and Wildlife Service changed their Wildlife laws and regulations and carers are no longer allowed to visit schools or show their joeys in public. Nor are they allowed to take them on long shopping trips. This is especially hard if the joey is on 3 hourly feeds.

Victoria does not allow carers to use joeys in care for educational purposes either, unless they have a special permit.

Western Australia, Queensland and South Australia allow their wildlife carers to educate school children and the public by displaying their less stressed, more placid joeys.

A few Years ago the Australian Capital Territory Canberra declared kangaroos “Pests”

All sick and injured animals as well as the joeys of all ages have to be put down!

Today in the years 2005 after the devastating raging fires in Canberra, 95 % of all their wildlife has perished!

During the recent terrifying fires in Victoria and New South Wales, 100.0000`'s Of hectares has been destroyed. It is estimated that Australia lost about 95% of all wildlife species in these regions.

Kangaroos also have other enemies besides fire and drought; floods, teething problems, mouth infections, blindness, Tetanus and other diseases, as well as genetically inherited diseases that can wipe out an entire kangaroo family.

Kangaroos have feral predators like foxes, wild dogs and dingoes, as well as Australia’s largest bird of prey the wedge tailed eagle that kills an undisclosed number of kangaroos.

Further more, thousands of kangaroos die every year because of loss of habitat, Chemical spraying of poison, (abuse of 1080 Poison, herbicide, pesticide), and on Australian roads nation wide.

An undisclosed number of kangaroos die a cruel death caught in the double line of barbwire where they get their feet in fencing. Steel jawed traps are also cruel death trabs as they amputate feet and claws.

The list of injuries from which these animals die is endless.

Those who are in favour of the kangaroo massacre are farmers who mismanage their property through overgrazing and excessive land clearing.

They use the kangaroo as a scapegoat and the politicians who desperately want the votes of rural land holders, a few pro Kangaroo scientists and wildlife authorities who want to cling on to their useless jobs and of course the commercial killing industry.

Australia has experienced the worst ever drought in human settlement and our remaining surviving kangaroos are still hunted down and mercilessly killed by kangaroo shooters, especially the big males and females because they bring the highest economic returns of profits to the industry for their leather.

With help from the Multinational giant manufacturers, things have never been worse for the remaining healthy kangaroos, those animals are vital for the survival of the future generations.

There is enough written and verbal evidence that kangaroos are not always killed immediately and that the injured animal dies a slow cruel agonizing death. As you must know, kangaroos are gunned down with spotlights during the night.

The unfurred joeys and emerging joeys in pouch are clubbed to death or left to die. Older joeys still depending on their mother, panic, while their mother gets shot and run away just to die a slow death of starvation, stress, hypothermia, psychic deprivation or are downed by foxes and other predators.

Just imagine the daily trauma these defenceless kangaroos have to go through every night before they finally get injured or killed.

If you know or can imagine what that feels like then you can imagine what these poor kangaroos have to go through before they finally die.

Kangaroos are living, behaving, biological entities with feelings too, just like your pets. These kangaroos live in fear and terror beyond our comprehension.

Surely no one wants his /her pet to suffer a similar fate as our kangaroos.

Some injured animals die of gunshot wounds to their face, legs, or other parts of the body and succumb to a slow agonizing cruel death.

There is no body watching over the cruel kangaroo massacre.

If over 20.000 kangaroos are slaughtered every night than you have to agree that not every kangaroo can be killed humanely. Illegal kangaroo shooting in rural/outback is given tacit support rather than punished.

The barbaric slaughter of millions of defenceless kangaroos and their subspecies has not only become the biggest problem in Australia's history but it as also become an international disgrace that has to be stopped.

You must know we all are custodians of our fauna and flora, no matter where we live. Australia has also the highest and fastest extinction rate in the world.

All one has to look at the way Australians brutalize their kangaroos, to know why.

The Australian people must have a say in any decision making. 80% of the Australian submissions against the brutal massacre of kangaroos went without being heard.

We must oppose the slaughter of our beautiful kangaroos and the fight must continue.

If we can not stop the slaughter than we can at least try to make it more humane and less stressful for the animals involved. We also should start and consider establishing a continuous Wildlife corridor throughout Australia in order to eliminate small isolated pockets and to spread the mobs more evenly. Another alternative to Kangaroo slaughter is the Tourism Industry which is worth Billions of Dollars.

It's a matter of record, Minister for Environment and Heritage begged companies To keep on buying kangaroo leather, which they still do.

I object in the strongest possible terms to the shameless and unethical practice engaged by the large manufacturers, in promoting their products.

They cowardly promote their products by employing a celebrity.

(People involved in the cruel trade are Nike, Adidas, David Beckham etc.)

As there is only a few kilograms of usable meat “for human consumption” on a big Kangaroo, the rest is legally used in Woolworth/Safeway’s cruel Pet food trade, despite howls of protest from Australians who are the losers!

While we continue to protest, the last hope and lifeline for kangaroos are overseas consumers wherever they may live! “DO NOT BUY SKIPPY!

Australians are forced to fund through taxes 50% of the kangaroo industry but you have the power to make a difference for the Kangaroo’s sake!

Say no to cruelty to the kangaroos and their subspecies. DO not buy kangaroo products like meat, or leather products like shoes, purses, coats, handbags etc. Insist to know what meat they give you in heart rehabilitation Centres as they may intentionally serve you kangaroo meat!

The future of the Kangaroo lies now in your hands, the reader and the consumer. Remember if the buying stops, the cruel killing stops.