

WellBeing International

WBI Studies Repository

2013

Explaining China's Wildlife Crisis: Cultural Tradition or Politics of Development

Peter J. Li
University of Houston

Follow this and additional works at: <https://www.wellbeingintludiesrepository.org/threapop>



Part of the [Animal Studies Commons](#), [Nature and Society Relations Commons](#), and the [Population Biology Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Li, P. J. (2013). Explaining China's Wildlife Crisis Cultural Tradition or Politics of Development. *Ignoring Nature No More: The Case for Compassionate Conservation*, 317.

This material is brought to you for free and open access by WellBeing International. It has been accepted for inclusion by an authorized administrator of the WBI Studies Repository. For more information, please contact wbisr-info@wellbeingintl.org.



22

Explaining China's Wildlife Crisis

Cultural Tradition or Politics of Development

Peter J. Li

WILDLIFE PROTECTION is a global challenge. Climate change is threatening, for example, the very survival of polar bears and Canadian harp seals, species depending on ice for survival (Stirling and Parkinson 2006; Palmer 2006). On top of the natural disaster, human greed adds to their misery. Trophy hunters and the sealing industry are the most imminent threats. Arctic habitat protection is certainly the direct responsibility of the range countries. Yet countries like China have an unshakable responsibility as well (Aldworth 2010; CCTV-9 2010).¹ Their markets, or more precisely, the closure of them, could spell the end of human-made tragedy currently still befalling the polar bears and harp seals. China today occupies a decisive position in worldwide wildlife protection. Chinese actions or inactions in this regard have global impacts.

This chapter is about China's wildlife crisis. As the following sections attempt to demonstrate, abuse of and assault on wildlife in captivity and in the wild have reached an unprecedented level on the Chinese mainland in the reform era (1978–present). Shocking brutality against wildlife animals has been frequently exposed by Chinese and international media. To readers outside East Asia, they ask if the Chinese are culturally indifferent to animal suffering. Indeed, does the Chinese culture sanction cruelty to animals? Or is it the contemporary politics of economic development that is more directly responsible for the crisis?

Ignoring Nature and Wildlife Devastation

Like the rest of the world, China has witnessed a serious deterioration of the natural environment. In terms of wildlife devastation, China's

contemporary history can be divided into two phases, that is the pre-reform years (1949–78) and the reform era (1978–present). The two distinct eras share a strikingly similar modernist attitude towards nature despite their opposing development models. While the pre-reform era, politically totalitarian and economically autarkic, saw nature as object of conquest and wildlife resources for human benefit, the Stalinist command economy with a low level of productivity had by and large limited the Leninist Party–state’s ability to wreak havoc on nature in ways that the modern capitalist system is better equipped to. China’s reform era saw the rise of an authoritarian and developmentalist regime obsessed with growth and modern production technology. The end of the command economy in the mid-1980s opened the Pandora’s box. Wildlife animals, as resources for economic development, have been thrown into the biggest survival and welfare crisis.

The State’s War against Nature: 1949–78

China adopted the Soviet development model in the 1950s. Agriculture was placed under a collective farming system called “the People’s Commune,” the Chinese equivalent of the Soviet state farms. To Eurasian communist leaders, collective farming served to eradicate bourgeois petty producers and place rural production under strict state command. Under state control, the rural sector was to serve the state’s industrialization objective. Agricultural production, resource allocation, and labor input were strictly planned by the state. Farmers were therefore tied to collective farm work. No rural households were capable of engaging in wildlife farming. Wildlife domestication, started in 1954, was a state monopolized production. The malfunctioning Stalinist economic system ensured a loss-making wildlife farming operation. In the pre-reform era, wildlife animals impacted by the state farming operation were significantly smaller in number.

Assault on nature and wildlife was largely a state action. This included the massive land reclamation campaign in the border and mountainous regions in the early 1950s, frenzied deforestation during the Great Leap Forward campaign of 1958, and the nationwide mass campaign to exterminate sparrows as a result of the “great leader’s” appeal (Shapiro 2001). Land reclamation destroyed the natural habitat of a large number of wildlife species such as Siberian tigers, South China tigers, Chinese river dolphins, and Chinese alligators to name some of the most impacted. Deforestation caused by the “Mass Steel Production Campaign” led to the disappearance of some of the nation’s pristine forests. The nationwide sparrow killing spree instilled in the minds of the young that small animals like sparrows did not deserve human compassion. Sparrow killing

resulted in insects growing out of control. Labor diversion to nonproductive political campaigns led to humanity's biggest man-made famine of 1960–62 killing over thirty million Chinese peasants. To tide over during the nationwide hunger, people began to take to the mountains. Government officials joined the hunting expedition. Sichuan alone reportedly decimated more than 62,000 deer in the wild in 1960 (State Council 1962). Mongolian gazelle was hunted near extinction (Geng 1998, 162–67).

In China's pre-reform era, there were only a few reactive national decisions related to wildlife protection. These included the 1950 Measures on Protecting Rare Wildlife Animals placing wildlife under state control, the 1956 People's Congress decision to create China's first nature reserve, the 1957 regulations on hunting, the 1961 Forestry Ministry notice on strengthening wildlife management, and the 1962 State Council Instructions on Wildlife Conservation (Jin 2002, 314; Cai 2000, 121). These policies had some effect on limiting assault on wildlife. The Chinese government had however contradicted its own policies by sanctioning a host of shortsighted wildlife use operations. The State Council Instructions on Wildlife Conservation also included tigers in the protection list. Yet the state trade companies had continued to purchase tiger pelts until 1974 (Zheng 2001, 232–33).

In the pre-reform era, wildlife conservation, like environmental protection in general, was not a concern to the Chinese government. What occupied their efforts were ideological campaigns indoctrinating the masses with the Maoist version of a socialist society. Viewing animals as objects of compassion was bourgeois and therefore ideologically questionable. Private production was outlawed. Prohibited were also productive activities utilizing wildlife animals as resources. In human-nature relations, the Party extolled the concept of human conquest of nature (Shapiro 2001, 67–94). Wildlife devastation was by and large state behavior in the pre-reform era.

An All-Out War on Nature in the Reform Era

With only 6.5 percent of the world's territory, China is home to more than 6,347 species of vertebrates, 14 percent of the world's total. Among these vertebrates, there are 711 mammals, 3,862 fish, 1,294 birds, 412 reptiles, and 295 species of amphibians (Ma, Zou, and Zheng 2003). The entire world knows that giant pandas are native to China and are endangered. Not known to the outside world are other even more critically endangered animals such as South China tigers, ibis, Chinese river dolphins, and Chinese alligators to name the most famous. China's vast territory is temporary home to a vast number of migratory species. In 1980 China joined CITES (Convention on International Trade

in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) as a way to attract foreign know-how and capital for wildlife conservation, ignored and mismanaged in the past. In 1989 the Chinese government adopted the Wildlife Protection Law (WPL), the nation's first national law for animal protection.

China since 1989 has ironically witnessed a greater wildlife crisis. Globally, more than 593 species of birds, 400 mammals, and 209 amphibians are believed to be in endangered status. In China, rapid industrialization and increased human activities have threatened the survival of 398 species of vertebrates (Zheng 2001, 236). More than 130 of the world's 400 endangered mammals are in China. Inside China, there are fewer than fifty Siberian tigers in the wild. The Yangtze River dolphin, a species that had lived in the waters of central China for more than twenty million years and was referred to as a living fossil, is reportedly extinct (Lovgren 2006). South China tigers are all in captivity. Animals whose extinction has been confirmed include Przewalski's horse, stubby-nosed antelope, Donc langur, hog deer, Taiwan cloud leopard, sarus crane, Hebei rhesus macaque, and white-headed gibbon. Countless other species are being relentlessly exploited, poached, and farmed to the brink of extinction (Yang and Yi 2004).

Chinese wildlife traders have engaged in a worldwide sourcing expedition. According to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), some 30 percent of the sixty-four species of shark and ray are threatened with extinction while 24 percent of them are near extinction. Shark finning to supply Chinese catering businesses is a major contributing factor (Gill 2009; Foreign Policy Journal 2008). A so-called tiger trail linking India and Nepal with China allowed traffickers to smuggle tiger body parts over to the Chinese side (WWF 2009). Since the early 1990s Chinese traders have left no stones untouched in the pristine forests of Southeast Asia and Siberia. Along the Sino-Indochinese borders, live and dead wild animals are shipped in great quantities into China on a daily basis (Li et al. 1995, 112–58). In the Russian Far East region, those involved in wildlife trafficking uncovered by Russian customs between 1999 and 2006 were mostly Chinese (Lyapustin, Vaisman, and Fomenko 2007). In 2002, 512 bear paws and four tiger pelts bound for China were intercepted by Russian customs (BBC 2002; Wildlife Alliance, 2007). Live North American freshwater turtles and African elephant tusks have found buyers in Mainland China (Voice of America 2002; Xinhua News Network 2009).

Cruelty to wild animals has reached an unprecedented level on the Chinese mainland. Shark finning is another act of humans' gross inhumanity to nonhuman animals. Fishermen cut fins off and then toss the traumatized body back into the salty sea. Bear farming, tiger farming and fur animal farming are per-

haps the most brutal farming operations. Bear farming victimizes more than 10,000 Asiatic black bears in cruel bile extraction from an open wound cut in their stomachs. Incarcerated bears suffer from intentional food deprivation, endure physical abuse, and languish physically and mentally in extreme boredom and discomfort. Tiger farming, raising some 5,000 tigers, has also been condemned for its ulterior motives and shocking welfare conditions. The entire world has been shocked to learn the brutal farming and slaughter conditions of Chinese fur animals when the *Fur Fur* investigative report was published (Hsieh et al. 2005). Outdated housing, poor management, cruel practices such as animal performance, photo ops (tiger de-toothed, de-clawed, drugged, and tied to a podium for young visitors to take pictures with), live feeding, and visitor abuse illustrate severe welfare problems in China's zoological gardens.

What explains China's wildlife crisis? Are the Chinese culturally incapable of compassion for nonhuman animals?

Human-Animal Relations in Chinese Culture

Cultural perspective is no stranger in China studies. It was first used to explain China's failure in modernization in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. To scholars of this approach, China's "static unchanging civilization" is to blame for the nation's backwardness. With the burden of a stagnant culture, China could never modernize (Cohen 1984, 57–96). Relevant to our study of animal cruelty is the perceived Chinese culture of cruelty (Nathan 1990). For example, Jonathan Spence, a renowned historian, sees Chinese history in the last four hundred years as one of political repression, territorial conquest, brutal violence, and intramural brutality (Spence 1990). The cultural assumption has led many to ask "why does a culture that condemns violence, that plays down the glory of military exploits, awards its highest prestige to literary, rather than martial figures, and seeks harmony over all other values, in fact display such frequency and variety of violent behavior?" (Nathan 1990, 30).

Cultural study of Chinese contemporary politics has continued. In his study of political violence in contemporary China, Barend J. ter Haar argues that violence during the Cultural Revolution (1966–76) "was by no means an innovation of the Maoist era but had important roots in traditional Chinese religious culture" (ter Haar 2002, 27–68). To him, China has never truly moved away from the tradition of "martial violence" despite the claim made by other scholars. The cultural evolution from "martial violence" to "refinement," in his opinion, is an ongoing process never yet completed (ter Haar 2000, 131). China is still in the grips of a violent ideology since its past predetermines Chinese attitudes and behaviors.

Are the Chinese culturally predestined to act cruelly to one another and to animals?

Daoism, Buddhism, and Confucianism

Daoism, Buddhism and Confucianism are three ancient thought systems that are still shaping Chinese world outlook. They have in the past 2,000 years promoted attitudes, values and mores that condemn violence. They offer insights into what constitutes socially acceptable behavior in China and other East Asian nations.

Daoism is a native Chinese philosophical concept of the right “way” for dealing with the cosmos, with one another, and with fate. Daoism stands for the unity between humanity and nature. Daoists do not see humans as being superior to or more intelligent than nonhuman individuals. Humans therefore do not have the right, still less the privilege, to treat other members of the universe as subordinates. To reduce the harm humans can do to nature, Daoists advocate frugality in consumption and restraint in behavior. Daoists propagate the much-hailed “three treasures”: compassion, frugality, and modesty.

Daoism stands firmly against killing and cruelty to animals. It calls for rescuing animals from danger and exploitation (Sun, He, and Huang 2009, 182). In many texts on Daoist prohibitions, acts such as kicking and whipping farm animals, capturing animals in hibernation, destroying nests, harvesting eggs, and terrorizing animals are prohibited cruel acts (Sun et al., 183–84). Daoism has had great impact on people’s attitude and behavior through the popularization of folk Daoism, a more pragmatic and earthly form of Daoist teachings easier for the commoners to understand. Through the belief in karma, folk Daoism has succeeded in guiding people to act in ethical ways that can benefit them in return. The Daoist concept of species equality perhaps puts China as one of the first animal rights advocating countries in the world.

Buddhism was introduced into China between the first and fourth centuries. It advocates harmony and a peaceful mind. Personal spiritual cultivation is therefore the means to that end. More than Daoism, its impact on Chinese society has been tremendous. Like Daoism, Buddhism is against the human-centered perspectives regarding nonhuman lives as inferior to humans. The spread of Buddhism in China can be attributed to many factors. Yet its idea of karma has certainly played a unique role in attracting Chinese followers. The belief that killing, including brutality against animals, would invite misfortune resonates well with the Chinese (Lin 1988, 126–27). For more than one thousand years, Buddhist practice of mercy release, the setting free of captured animals out of compassion, was a gesture exercised by the general public and endorsed by Chinese emperors. Some Chinese emperors even called on

the nation to practice vegetarianism (Sun, He, and Huang 2009, 187). During parts of the Ming Dynasty (AD 1368–1644), there was a societal movement for prohibiting killing. Mercy release and suspension of slaughter were practiced at important celebrations such as the Chinese New Year, birthdays, weddings, business openings, and national and family events. According to a Beijing college professor, prohibition of killing and mercy release were not simply religious acts, they were also state policies (Mang 2009, chaps. 4 and 5).

Confucianism is a native thought system created more than 2,000 years ago. It contains a complex set of social, political and moral values. Of the three ancient thought systems, the impact of Confucianism on China has been most fundamental. Many Chinese may profess to be Taoists, Buddhists, or Christians, but in the final analysis, they are Confucianist. Confucianism is pragmatic and anthropocentric. Not only does Confucianism believe that humans are the most precious, it also sees that animals exist for human purposes (Zhang 2009). As a state orthodox system, Confucianism was concerned more with the interest of a benevolent government, a harmonious society and cordial relations among the humans.

Confucianist anthropocentric outlook, however, was no obstacle to the development of ideas of compassion for nonhuman animals (Sun, He, and Huang 2009, 177–78). In the Confucian text *Analects*, the word *ren* (benevolence) was mentioned more than two hundred times (Mang 2009, 96–105). Not only did Confucius argue for benevolence of governance, he also called for the rulers to extend benevolence over every aspect of the society. He placed importance on protecting life and opposing violence. Mencius, arguably the most famous Confucian next to Confucius, saw a sense of pity as one important addition to the “four virtues” (benevolence, righteousness, rites, and intelligence) of Confucianism (Sun, He, and Huang 2009, 177–78).

The Confucian idea of “reasonable use” and the “Doctrine of the Golden Mean” served to neutralize Confucian pragmatism and anthropocentrism. Confucianists do not oppose use of wildlife. Yet, they call for measured use with a reason. The Doctrine of the Golden Mean stresses moderation and restraint in attitude and behavior. It cautions against extremism, excesses, and indulgence. The doctrine is therefore inadvertently conducive to ecological protection. The doctrine stresses the virtue of “nothing too much.” Use of wildlife should therefore be limited and not excessive. Confucian scholars in later dynasties even proposed that benevolence or love should be extended beyond the human race (Sun, He, and Huang 2009, 179).

The preceding discussion is far from a complete coverage of China's past tradition related to human-nature relations. Yet it has tried to demonstrate that China has a more complex legacy that includes ideas and practices for

compassion and protection of nonhuman animals. Blaming China's past for the contemporary flaws is misleading and misses the real target.

The Politics of Reform and Economic Modernization

China is one member of the anthropocentric world community. Admittedly, the enormity of wildlife-related industry and the magnitude of cruelty befalling wild animals in China overshadow those in the rest of the world. If culture is no explanation for China's runaway wildlife crisis, we need to examine China's contemporary politics for an answer.

Reform, Poverty Reduction, and Local Growth

When the Chinese government initiated the reform program in 1978, the Chinese economy was on the verge of collapse. A majority of the 900 million Chinese eked out a living on starvation rations determined by the Leninist Party-state. A Stalinist command economy had made Mainland China one of the poorest nations on earth. In the final days of Mao's rule, societal discontent was such that even the staunchest Maoist supporters in the party acknowledged that the communist regime was facing a legitimacy crisis. The reform was to salvage the established Leninist order by jump-starting economic growth to end the food crisis that had gripped the nation for more than two decades. Liberalization of the rural sector by de-collectivizing rural production and lifting the ban on private rural production were the first reform measures. These measures were expected to generate quick results in poverty reduction.

Poverty reduction was a greater challenge in the vast inland and mountainous areas. Tapping into local resources and converting local conditions into comparative advantages were first recommended as a way out for the underdeveloped regions. In the 1980s, two catch phrases reflected the government's eagerness for a quick fix of the Chinese economy. "Those living on a mountain live off the mountain while those living near the water live off the water." The other slogan was that "it is a good cat, be it white or black, as long as it catches mice." Color, ideological persuasion, or political correctness is to be secondary to productivity or economic results. Achieving fast growth has since been the national consensus. To the reformist leaders, a good economic performance that can end poverty was the only way to restore people's trust in the party. This official obsession with growth has allowed local authorities and private individuals to delve into all kinds of business activities including those that are increasingly challenged by society because of their adverse ethical implications.

In the reform era, China has seen an expanding wildlife-related industry. This industry has also undergone noticeable production realignments. First, the formerly state monopolized production became private enterprise. In the

early 1980s millions of peasant households began to engage in wildlife-related business activities. In southeast provinces such as Jiangxi, Zhejiang, and Anhui, peasant households began to farm wild animals or to conduct interprovincial wildlife transport. Second, the erstwhile small-scale sideline production in wildlife products, by the end of the 1990s, had become increasingly industrialized. A bear farmer in Heilongjiang's Mudanjiang started his bear farm with only three bear cubs. By 2009, his farming operation had become a conglomerate type business raising more than 1,000 bears for bile extraction. Third, regional specialization has emerged for greater production coordination, better use of raw materials, proximity to processing centers, and access to markets. Wildlife farming for the catering business has concentrated in south, southwest, and southeast parts of the country, areas closer to Guangdong, the world's capital of wildlife eating. Bear farming has shrunk to some fourteen provinces in the northeast, southwest, and northwest regions. Fur animal farming concentrates in north and northeast China.²

Wildlife-Related Industry and Productivity Increase

In the reform era, Chinese officials are evaluated by their record in facilitating local growth. Production growth is evaluated by both quantity increase and the value of the output. By the mid-1980s, Chinese farmers had moved to the production of value-added products. Growing cash crops or converting the limited farmland into wildlife farming can generate greater production value. Converting fishing ponds into turtle farms brings a higher profit margin. There is little doubt that farming or dealing in bears, tigers, foxes, quails, snakes, peacocks, and other wild animals is significantly more productive in terms of sales revenue and profit than growing food grain or other agricultural produce. Wildlife farming suggests greater income for the producers and greater revenue potential for the local state coffer.

Profit awareness underlies decisions for profit-maximizing production models. Maximal use of production space is one result of the efficiency consideration. The smaller the space allowance to caged wildlife animals, for example, the greater the profit margin a farm can obtain. This explains the prevalent space deprivation on Chinese wildlife farms. Similarly, denial of proper food to farm bears, practiced by many bear farm owners, is more an act based on a crude efficiency calculation than sheer cruelty imposed on the bears. The bear farming community believes that good food for the bears reduces bile production. To extract more bile, the so-called liquid gold, bears cannot be fed too well. This practice is similar to forced molting of laying hens through feed deprivation to induce a new laying cycle. Therefore, a reduced food ration cuts the input cost and maximizes bile extraction.

Maximization of profits has also driven the reckless to target wild animals in the wild. Wildlife farming requires starting capital and operating input. Yet, poaching wild animals is a zero-investment gain. Despite the Wildlife Protection Law, enforcement failures have allowed assault on the nation's wild animals to continue unabated. The currently abundant supply of farmed wildlife products has reinforced the belief that wild animal parts have greater values in nutrition or medicinal effect. Wild-caught turtles are sold at a significantly higher price than domesticated turtles. This mind-set of the consumers suggests that the claim that wildlife farming is conducive to conservation is dubious.

Wildlife and Local Tax Income

The attraction of wildlife-related production to local authorities can never be underestimated. In 2004, the value of China's wildlife farming was estimated at 100 billion yuan (Zhang, Zhou, and Wang 2004, 27). The bear farming industry contributed some ¥8 billion to that total. Heibao in Heilongjiang Province, the world's biggest bear farm, alone produced 5,100 kilograms of bile powder in 2008 (Zhang 2009). Its CEO, a deputy to the local Provincial People's Congress, came up with a statistic of the value of China's farm bears. According to his calculation, the value of one farm bear in a ten-year-period amounts to 10 million yuan in economic results (Heilongjiang People's Congress 2005). Using his estimate, China's bear farming industry of 10,000 bears can generate 100 billion yuan within ten years. Its revenue potential is attractive to local governments. Revenue potentials have often overshadowed any other considerations such as animal welfare.

Fur animal farming is perhaps the only wildlife production that holds a hegemonic position in the local economy of the farming regions. Suning, Hebei Province, has seen a rising economic power due to fur production. In 2004, fur farming generated sales revenues of 2.8 billion yuan, the biggest gain of all fur-producing counties in the country. In Suning, fur animal farming made up 80 percent of the local GDP. Its revenue contribution to the local state coffer reached 65 million yuan, 32 percent of the local tax revenue (China Fur Information Net 2009). It is therefore not a surprise that the 2005 *Fur Fur* report condemning live skinning elicited a knee-jerk reaction from the local government. One year after the report was released, Suning's farming industry handed a staggering 90 million yuan in tax to the local government. The same year's sales revenue hit \$3 billion (Suning County People's Government 2009).

Other fur animal farming regions also zealously protect this industry. Liaoyang, Liaoning Province, produces 300,000 fox pelts and over 70 million yuan of sales revenue a year. In 2008, the city produced sales revenue of 1.45 billion yuan, accounting for 26 percent of the total rural output and 37 percent

of the peasants' total income (Liaoyang Animal Inspection Bureau 2009). In China, three biggest fur animal farming provinces hold some 70 percent of the country's 100 million fur animals. Fur animal farming is an important part of their rural economy. Fur processing and product manufacturing are important productions of Zhejiang, Fujian, Guangdong, Hebei, and Liaoning (China Special Farming Information Net 2008). These provinces extract enormous value from the postfarming productions of the raw materials.

The contribution of fur animal farming to local economies is most vividly demonstrated by Suning's rapid ascendancy in the economic ranking of Hebei Province. With a population of 330,000 and a predominantly agricultural economy, Suning in 2002 was one of the poorest counties (ranked eighty-sixth). By the end of 2004 and with the rapid take-off of its fur animal farming productions, it jumped to the fortieth position (Suning County People's Government 2009). This change in economic standing can reflect very positively on the performance of the local leaders whose career mobility hinges on their ability to generate local growth.

Conclusions

There is no denial that China poses a major threat to wildlife within its own borders and in the world at large. Never in its 5,000-year history did China ever raise and keep hundreds of millions of wildlife species in captivity as it does today. Are the Chinese culturally predestined to be indifferent to animal suffering? Or is the contemporary politics of economic reform more directly responsible for wildlife devastation and animal suffering? The preceding sections have attempted to answer these two questions. Yes, China has a wildlife eating culinary subculture in parts of the country. Yet the mainstream diet in the country has never been dominated by wildlife, not even by domesticated farm animal products. China was and still is influenced by the ancient thought systems of Daoism, Buddhism, and Confucianism. While the first two philosophical ideas reject killing and animal abuse, Confucianism, given its anthropocentric outlook, calls for moderation and measured use of natural resources. None of these three thought systems stands for human exploitation of the natural world in ways that have taken place in the last three decades.

China's postsocialist developmental state has pursued a market-oriented reform program. Catch-up and GDP growth are the obsessions of the Chinese reformist authorities. The aim is to restore the legitimacy claim of the ruling Chinese Communist Party and ensure stability of the established ruling order. For this purpose, the government sees poverty reduction through fast economic growth a top priority. The performance of local officials has therefore been linked to local economic performance. And local growth determines their

upward career mobility. Economic liberalization has sanctioned a host of productive activities at the expense of the wildlife species and also profit-seeking measures in nonprofit organizations. To subsidize daily operation, zoos have engaged in for-profit activities such as animal performance, live feeding, and other welfare compromising programs. Government officials, particularly local leaders, have paid scant, if any, attention to the animal welfare or ecological consequences of fast economic growth.

It is therefore not Chinese culture but the current “development first” mindset that is behind the nation’s wildlife crisis. Encouragingly, Chinese national authorities have realized that the current mode of development is not sustainable. A consensus among the national leaders has been reached: China’s development should in the long run be eco-friendly. We expect this new acknowledgment to have a positive impact on China’s efforts in wildlife protection.

Notes

1. Rebecca Aldworth (executive director of Humane Society–Canada) has led campaigns against Canadian sealing industry in the last twelve years.
2. Interview with a ranking official of China Association of Wildlife Conservation, Beijing, China. March 24, 2008.

References

- Aldworth, Rebecca. 2010. Interview with China national TV, CCTV-9, Beijing, November 30.
- BBC. 2002. “Bear Paw Poachers Caught Red-Handed.” BBC News, May 8. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/1975844.stm>. Accessed May 8, 2009.
- Cai, Shouqiu. 2000. *Huanjing ziyuan faxue jiaocheng* (Textbook on environmental and resource laws). Wuhan: Wuhan University Press.
- CCTV-9. 2010. “Say No to Seal Products.” CCTV-9 special report. <http://english.cntv.cn/program/culturexpress/20101206/103281.shtml>. Accessed December 18, 2010.
- China Biodiversity Office. 2004. “First State Report on China’s Execution of the ‘Convention on Biological Diversity.’” <http://www.biodiv.gov.cn/swdyx/145241087982698496/20040301/1046429.shtml>. Accessed July 2, 2006.
- China Fur Information Net. 2009. “Suning Holds a Press Forum on the Development of Fur Industry.” <http://www.fur.com.cn/jiaoyishichang/scdt/scdt/sc/1934.html>. Accessed October 1, 2009.
- China Special Farming Information Net. 2008. “The Current State and Future Prospects of China’s Fur Animal Farming Industry.” <http://www.zt868.com/newshtml/2008-11-10/20081110220626.htm>. Accessed November 30, 2008.
- Cohen, P. A. 1984. *Discovering History in China: American Historical Writing on the Recent Chinese Past*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Foreign Policy. 2008. “Shark Near Extinction as China Gets Richer.” *Foreign Policy* (February 20). http://blog.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2008/02/20/shark_nears_extinction_as_china_gets_richer. Accessed May 1, 2008.
- Geng, Biao. 1998. *Geng Biao Huiyi Lu* (Geng Biao remembers: 1949–1992). Nanjing: Jiangsu People’s Press.
- Gill, Victoria. 2009. “Many Sharks “Facing Extinction.” BBC News report. June 25. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8117378.stm>. Accessed May 1, 2010.
- Heilongjiang People’s Congress. 2005. “Deputies Proposed Economic Development Plans by Referring to the Value of Farm Bears, a Heilongjiang People’s Congress Report” (January 28). <http://www.hljrd.gov.cn/rdyw/200507260044.htm>. Accessed September 15, 2006.

- Hsieh-Yi, Yi-Chiao, Y. Fu, M. Rissi, and Barbara Mass. 2005. *Fun Fur? A Report on the Chinese Fur Industry*. A Swiss Animal Protection, Care for the Wild and East International investigative report.
- Jin, Ruilin. 2002. *Huanjin faxue* (The study of environmental laws). Beijing: Beijing University Press.
- Li, Yimin, and D. M. Li. 1995. *An Investigation of the Wildlife Trade in Guangxi and at the Sino-Vietnamese Border Areas*. Beijing: China Science and Technology Press.
- Liaoyang Animal Inspection Bureau. 2009. "Liaoyang's Fox and Deer Dominated Wildlife Farming Industry." An information brochure of Liaoning Provincial Animal Husbandry and Veterinarian Bureau. <http://www.lnah.gov.cn>. Accessed September 30, 2009.
- Lin, Yutang. 1988. *My Country and My People*. Taipei: Mei Ya Publications, 126–27.
- Lovgren, Stefan. 2006. "China's Rare River Dolphin Now Extinct, Experts Announce." *National Geographic News*, December 14. <http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2006/12/061214-dolphin-extinct.html>. Accessed October 24, 2007.
- Lyapustin, Sergey N., A. L. Vaisman, and P. V. Fomenko. 2007. *Wildlife Trade in the Russian Far East: An Overview*. A TRAFFIC (wildlife trade monitoring network) report.
- Ma, Jianzhong, H. F. Zou, and G. G. Zheng. 2003. "The Current State and Future Directions of China's Wildlife Animals and Habitat Protection." *Journal of China Agriculture Science* (zhong guo nong ye ke ji dao bao) 5 (4).
- Mang, Ping. 2009. *The World of The Interrelated Self and Other: Chinese Belief, Lives, and Views of Animals*. Beijing: China University of Politics and Laws.
- Nathan, Andrew J. 1990. "Why Does China Eat Its Own? A Culture of Cruelty." *New Republic* (July 30 and August 6).
- Palmer, Nick. 2006. "The Killing Has to Stop." *New Scientist* 189 (2544).
- Shapiro, Judith. 2001. *Mao's War against Nature: Politics and the Environment in Revolutionary China*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Spence, Jonathan. 1990. *The Search for Modern China*. New York: W. W. Norton.
- State Council of the People's Republic of China, 1962. "Guowuyuan guanyu jiji baohu he heli liyong yesheng dongwu zhiyuan de zhishi" (State Council instructions on actively protecting and reasonably using animal resources). <http://www.people.com.cn/GB/33831/33836/34143/34234/2551386.html>. Accessed April 20, 2006.
- Stirling, Ian, and C. L. Parkinson. 2006. "Possible Effects of Climate Warming on Selected Populations of Polar Bears (*Ursus maritimus*) in the Canadian Arctic." *Arctic* 59 (3): 261–75.
- Suning County People's Government. 2009. "The Basic Information about Suning County." <http://www.clii.com.cn/web/xiaoning/02.htm>. Accessed March 1, 2009.
- Sun, Jiang, L. He, and H. Zheng. 2009. *An Introduction to the Theory of Animal Protection Legislation*. Beijing: Law Press.
- ter Haar, Barend J. 2000. "Rethinking 'Violence' in Chinese Culture." In *Meanings of Violence: A Cross-Cultural Perspective*, edited by Goran Aijmer and Jon Abbink. Oxford and New York: Berg.
- . 2002. "China's Inner Demons: The Political Impact of the Demonological Paradigm." In *China's Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution: Master Narratives and Post-Mao Counternarratives*, edited by Lien Chong. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Voice of America. 2002. "Hong Kong Sent Back to the US Smuggled Turtles." <http://www.voanews.com/chinese/archive/2002-01/a-2002-01-11-22-1.cfm>. Accessed February 2, 2009.
- Wildlife Alliance, 2007. "Smugglers Apprehended in Russia with Bear Paws, Tiger Pelt." Wildlife Alliance website, <http://wildlifealliance.org/news/press-releases/smugglers-apprehended-in-russia.html>. Accessed March 3, 2009.
- WWF. 2009. "Curbing the Wildlife Trade: Nepal." A WWF report. http://www.panda.org/who_we_are/wwf_offices/nepal/our_solutions/projects/index.cfm?uProjectID=NP0902. Accessed March 28, 2009.
- Xinhua News Network, 2009. "Fang Cheng Gang Police Checkpoint in Guangxi Uncovered Suspected Elephant Trunks." Xinhua News Network, January 7.
- Yang, Xiaohong, and L. Yi. 2004. "China's State Forestry Bureau Released the Results of a Nationwide Wildlife Animal and Plant Resource Survey." *Xinhua News Network*, June 10. <http://news.beelink.com.cn/20040610/1599518.shtml>. Accessed September 18, 2005.

- Zhang, Ming. 2009. "Report on the Development of Mudanjiang's Pharmaceutical Productions." A speech made by the director of Mudanjiang Food and Drug Inspection Bureau. <http://www.mdj.hljda.gov.cn/news.aspx?id=672>. Accessed July 5, 2009.
- Zhang, Songhui. 2009. "On the Daoist Idea of All Lives Being Equal and the Confucian Anthropocentric Ideology." *Hunan Daojiao*, 2006. <http://www.hunandj.com/tjld/36/2006227104524.htm>. Accessed March 28, 2009.
- Zhang, Wei, X. H. Zhou., and W. Li. 2004. "On the Standardized Management and Industry Construction of China's Wildlife Farming Operation." *Chinese Wildlife* 25 (3): 27.
- Zheng, Yi. 2001. *Zhongguo zi huimie: Zhongguo shengtai bengkui jingji baogao* (China's ecological winter). Hong Kong: The Mirror Books.
- Zhou, Shifen. 2006. *Chuang shi ji di 20 zhang: Chong du 20 shi ji* (The 20th chapter after the birth of Jesus Christ: Revisiting the 20th century), particularly chap. 11. Shanghai: East China Normal University.