

EDITORIAL

"When a man wantonly destroys one of the works of man we call him Vandal. When he wantonly destroys one of the works of God we call him Sportsman."

This provocative statement was written by naturalist Joseph Wood Krutch in his book "The Great Chain of Life" (1956). It should elicit a pause for thought even in those who may not profess a religious belief in God but who do countenance some idea of the sanctity of life -- most admirably expressed by Albert Schweitzer's "reverence for life".

Let me analyse some the main reasons why people hunt and suggest alternatives that do not involve the killing or mutilation of wildlife.

(1) To enjoy the countryside and commune with nature

Using our powers of observation while in the countryside, we can enjoy, exercise in, and be a part of, nature, in a non-violent way. With a camera we can add the challenge of "hunting" for animals (or plants) and obtain visual records of them ("trophies"). These can be permanently indicative of our skills in tracking and approaching our "target" -- while not involving the premature demise or injury of an animal. The day may come when it will seem as incongruous and cruel to display an animal head trophy (in one's home) as it would a human head.

(2) To obtain food or to enjoy the taste of "game"

Considering the cost of weapons and ammunition, transportation to the hunting site, food, accommodation, and the time involved, this appears to be a very uneconomical way of obtaining food for the more populated areas of Canada where most hunters live. Cheaper food, including a wide range of vegetarian items (that can provide a balanced and tasty diet) is quite readily available in these areas. The fact that it is illegal to sell the meat of most wildlife, indicates that they are too scarce to provide a general source of food, and, that such culinary diversions are a special privilege granted to a minority of citizens. Lastly, under this heading, I do not question the special historical rights of Canada's aboriginal people, and northern pioneers, to hunt for their own subsistence needs, and I recognize that some of them live where other sources of food may be expensive, difficult to obtain, or unavailable.

(3) To control and manage wildlife populations

Certainly, hunting may "control" wildlife populations by reducing their numbers, but it may also throw the ecosystem out of balance. There are many records and observations of local populations or species that have been hunted to, or near, extinction. Much hunting, under the guise of management, is conducted in the interests of the hunting fraternity rather than the wildlife involved: witness the killing of wolves in B.C. and Alaska to increase the number of moose available for hunting by tourists. Man hunted for sustenance and survival long before the concept of "wildlife" management was introduced. Now, some wildlife biologists and hunters are projecting hunting as being necessary to control wildlife populations, arguing that, otherwise, populations may be decimated by starvation, disease, exposure, or natural predators. There is a large element of retrospective and predictive rationalization in all this that may have a poor grounding in fact. With our present vague monitoring of wildlife populations, and without much more refined direction of hunters to certain areas where wildlife populations may be out of balance with their environment, the hunting "tool" can be a very blunt and arbitrary instrument. In many instances, wildlife may face a difficult situation because of the changes or havoc that man has wrought on their environment (for example, through clear-cutting, monocultural plantings, etc.) One might feel more sanguine about current "management" if it could be accompanied by a willingness to admit past and current mistakes and a stronger desire to introduce alleviative measures that do not involve killing.

I provide one illustrative example to support my suggest for new approaches. Some sheep farmers and hunters have been calling for a bounty on coyotes. Fortunately, this has been resisted by government wildlife authorities in New Brunswick. Apart from the use of electrofied fencing, one interesting and natural solution, based on European experience, and experiments in the USA, could be to use certain breeds of guard dogs (e.g. Yugoslavian Komondon) which can be adapted to, and adopted by, sheep flocks, so that the dog lives with and protects the sheep from predation by coyotes.

(4) Must society continue to accept the following justifications for hunting (one of the "blood sports")?

"Hunting and violence are instinctive to man; hunting provides glory and status; it is manly and provides competition with one's peers; hunting provides the fascination of using firearms and the thrill and pleasure of the kill; it is exciting and fun to see a bird explode; God placed these animals on earth for man to treat as he chooses; what else are they here for, anyway?"

I end with a further quote from Joseph Wood Krutch: "killing for killing's sake is a terrifying phenomenon. . ."

By PROFESSOR BRUCE CUMMING, DEPT. OF BIOLOGY



Mugwump
Journal

By ERNEST
DUNPHY

Frank McKenna announced his cabinet the other day. In making it he has sent a message to the people of the province by naming Allan Maher Minister of Finance, an undertaker by trade. By the way did you get a summer job i.e. did your MLA get a cabinet post.

Did you hear that a number of the Red Devils got up and walked away during last weekend's games. It's about time the players realized what fans have known for awhile, some UNB teams STINK! Hey maybe, if we are lucky, the Red Raiders will take a lesson from the Devils and make the same play.

The good thing about UNB's sports teams is that they all do well in the classroom, where it counts the most, and that's more than a lot of schools can say. I have heard that some schools require a 98.7 average (°F) for an athlete to gain admission, not here.

The bleeding hearts are amongst us again. Those people who say hunting is crude, disgusting and serves no purpose, but it does. Fees from hunting licenses go to help fund the creation of game refuges. Also they go to some of the more depressed areas of our province and help to provide some badly needed jobs. All of this does more for our province than those bleeding hearts.

Halloween is this weekend a time when all good students can go out and trick or treat. The smart ones go out and trick or beer, though.

Also this weekend our sports flunkies are off to Toronto to have a wild weekend on Yonge St., courtesy of our Student Union. Actually they are going there to cover the Red Sticks at the CIAUs, but I'm sure that won't take all of their time.

Me, I'm off to Halifax as of 8:30 last night for the touch football national championships. By a wonderful coincidence there also happens to be one wild party there this weekend, eat your heart.

The Word of the Week is:

Nit - the egg of a louse or other insect, the insect itself when young: See *Brunswickan* Ad. department.