

What must be done to protect new zealand's wildlife



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There is much said about protecting native species all around the world and New Zealand is no exception. In New Zealand we are facing challenges of our own when it comes to protecting and conserving our native species. This challenges range from oil spills to climate change to over-harvesting (in particular whale hunting).

It is common reality that more needs to be done to protect our native New Zealand species. And this needs collective effort from each and every one of us to protect our native species-the government, NGOs and citizens.

in my essay I will be emphasising on what we can do as individuals to contribute to protecting and conserving the native species and these includes reducing our carbon footprint, considering our lifestyle and lastly speaking out. I will then conclude by emphasising these points.

Brief Background

Due to its long geological isolation since breaking away from the supercontinent Gondwana about 80 million years ago, New Zealand's plant and animal life has developed down a unique evolutionary path. Many of our native plants and animals are endemic - that is, found nowhere else in the world. The level of endemism among New Zealand plants and animals is one of the highest in the world. The tuatara, moa, kiwi, kokako, saddleback, huia, kakapo, native frogs and giant carnivorous land snails are just some of the species that are uniquely New Zealand. This isolation in the absence of mammalian predators for millions of years also meant that many of our native species were virtually defenceless against attack - for example, many of our native birds like the kiwi are flightless and nest on the ground.

When humans - first Maori and then European settlers - arrived in New Zealand, introduced mammals came with them: rats, possums, stoats, ferrets, weasels, deer, pigs, mice, cats, dogs and others. These introduced species quickly took a heavy toll as they preyed and browsed on New Zealand's largely defenceless native species, or competed with them. Human activities such as felling and burning vegetation and draining wetlands also destroyed much of the native species' habitats.

Native species such as the moa, huia, and the world's largest-ever eagle, the Haast's eagle, the South Island kokako and many others became extinct. Many more, such as the Takahe, the Kakapo and the long-tailed bat were radically reduced in number and remain perilously close to extinction today.

Against this backdrop, the protection of our native species becomes ever more urgent. Thus this brings me to my emphasis on what we can do as individuals to protect our native species. Protection of our native species doesn't only mean big campaigns by organization such as green peace or world wildlife fund. It also concerns us as individuals to contribute in our own small ways in protecting our native species. Unfortunately, we as individuals don't realise these. Therefore, there are three things that I believe we can do to help in protecting our native species. They are reducing our carbon footprint, considering our lifestyles and last of all speaking out.

Reduce our carbon footprint

Each and every one of us can help save the planet from runaway climate change. Carbon emissions have been scientifically proven to be one of the main contributors to global warming. And as individuals, we think that

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releasing of carbon to the atmosphere is mainly done by factories of all sorts without realising that we also contribute to that. Therefore I believe that we have a responsibility to ensure that we minimise this. So this is how it can be done.

Ever wondered how much difference your small actions really make? If every New Zealand household took these three simple actions, it could have a big impact. First of all, go car-free one day a week. Transport is a major contributor to New Zealand's emissions (20%). If everyone in New Zealand who currently drives to work were to walk, cycle or take public transport on just one day per week, it would save up to 114, 000 tonnes of CO₂ equivalent per year (Landcare Research's carboNZero Programme Dec 2008).

Secondly, we must switch our bulbs. If every household swapped their remaining old-style light bulbs for new energy efficient ones, this could save up to 0. 6 billion kWh of electricity or 106, 800 tonnes of CO₂ equivalent per year (Landcare Research's carboNZero Programme in December 2008)

Thirdly, we must turn un-needed appliances off at the wall. When not in use things like heated towels rails and appliances on standby account for almost 1 billion kWh of electricity per year or 165, 700 tonnes of CO₂ equivalent (Landcare Research's carboNZero Programme in December 2008). If every household simply turned these off, we could make a big saving.

So if all of the above actions are taken, it all adds up to us as individually contributing to reducing carbon emissions. According to Landcare research, the combined impact of these actions would be an emissions reduction of <https://assignbuster.com/what-must-be-done-to-protect-new-zealands-wildlife/>

386, 500 tonnes CO2 equivalent per year. This is equivalent to over 839, 000 car journeys from Kaitaia to Invercargill (Landcare Research's carboNZero Programme in December 2008).

Consider Our Lifestyle

Have we ever wondered how our lifestyles can contribute to carbon emissions which impact on the environment? In our pursuit of pleasure, enjoyment and expensive lifestyle we have become careless-careless in the sense that we are consuming things that we don't really need. Carbon emissions are created by stuff - the more stuff you buy, use, consume and throw away the more you're contributing to climate change. Did we ever know that? I guess no.

Take a look at what we really need. Can we cut down on anything? By eating meat and animal products our carbon footprint will be higher than on a vegetable diet. Can we eat less meat? Garbage emits methane - a greenhouse gas - as it breaks down. Can we reduce our waste? Clothes, furniture, electrical goods - everything really - takes resources to produce and contributes to greenhouse gas emissions as it is moved around the planet. Can you buy less stuff and local stuff instead? Or above all consume only stuff that we really need.

You Can Help - Speak Out

The last thing we can do is speak out. There are petitions made by organizations such as Greenpeace and World Wildlife Fund (WWF) to the government. The best we can do to help is to sign up. One such petition is the

Forest & Bird's petition. You can help by signing Forest & Bird's petition to save sea lions.

In this petition, WWF is calling on the New Zealand Government to immediately take the following action:

- Determine the relative importance of the threats facing the sea lions.
- Revise the Department of Conservation's Sea Lion Species Management Plan. - (The revised plan should provide clear, time-bound actions to address the main threats identified in the comparative assessment.)
- Develop an improved population model to guide sea lion mortality limits. - (The model should address the flaws in the current model and also consider the effect of food competition and epidemics.)
- Set a precautionary mortality limit for sea lions in the squid fishery. - (This limit should be based on the improved population model and on a conservative assessment of the effectiveness of sea lion exclusion devices.)
- Set an explicit sea lion mortality limit in the Campbell southern blue whiting fishing.
- Set precautionary allocations of squid and other southern ocean fish stocks. - (These allocations should be ecologically based and explicitly consider direct and indirect effects of fishing on sea lions.)

The numbers of sea lion pups are in freefall - estimates from the Department of Conservation show pup production has halved since 1998. So we can play our part by signing the petition.

Conclusion

To conclude, we must know that protecting native New Zealand species does not concern only the government or organizations such as WWF. It also concerns us as individuals to contribute in our own small ways. We need a collective effort to protect New Zealand's native species.