

# WHERE THE WILD THINGS WERE



FIND out how the industrial farming of animals for cheap food is driving our wonderful wildlife and iconic animal species to extinction.

## WHAT'S GOING ON? WHY IS FACTORY FARMING A WILDLIFE DISASTER?

In the 50 years since factory farming was widely adopted, half the world's wildlife has disappeared, but the links between factory farming and wildlife decline are not immediately obvious. It was in my teens that I really began to learn about factory farming, but it was a while before I grasped the full extent of the impact.

I was on the Cape Peninsula in Africa where a colony of African penguins had recently set up home. What struck me was a display board listing the 'threats' to the species, which included "reduction of penguin food supply by commercial fishing". In other words, African penguins are being driven to the edge of extinction because we're hoovering up their food from the sea – and there's little left for them to eat.

That's why I decided to write *Dead Zone: Where The Wild Things Were*. I had to find out how many other cherished wildlife species were being impacted by factory farming. What I found was staggering.



African penguin

## WHAT EFFECT DOES FACTORY FARMING HAVE ON FARM ANIMALS?

Despite labels with phrases such as 'farm fresh' and '100% natural', most of our food comes from factories. The vast majority of farm animals – more than 80% in the European Union and two-thirds globally – are factory farmed; they are kept indoors, in confined, cramped spaces, where they are unable to carry out important natural behaviours.

The devastating impacts of factory farming on farm animal welfare are now well documented. From animals crowded in sheds, mother pigs kept in crates so narrow they can't turn around, to hens confined to cages for most of their lives.

It's easy to clamour for increased food production to feed the growing population in an attempt to justify factory farming. But the truth is, factory farming wastes food, not makes food. We already produce enough food for twice the human population today, but most of it is wasted.



## DEFORESTATION IS A PROBLEM

In Sumatra, deforestation to make way for large palm plantations is destroying the last of the Sumatran elephant's habitat. I discovered that large quantities of palm kernel, the edible nut from the trees, are being shipped out to feed intensively-farmed cattle back in the European



Jaguars are under threat

Union. These remarkable Sumatran elephants are down to their last 2,500 individuals.

In Brazil, it's the production of soya and the expanding industrial agriculture that is the culprit. The once rich and varied rainforests are being destroyed. Today there are only around 15,000 jaguars left in the wild, and half of them are in Brazil – the fate of the species truly lies in the palm of its hand.

The loss of such iconic species is a high price indeed to pay for supermarket shelves stocked high with cheap meat, but species closer to home are suffering at the hands of factory farming too, such as the barn owl, the skylark or the bumblebee.



## WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT IT?

I believe that all animals deserve to feel the joy of living – the fresh air, sunlight on their backs and space to roam. What I've discovered through my travels for Compassion in World Farming is that when animals are returned to the land in the right way, in mixed rotational farms, whole landscapes have the chance to spring to life.

Embracing land-based ways of keeping farm animals would not only provide better animal welfare, but it could also go a long way to feeding the world. If we cut by half the amount of cereals and meat fed to farm animals, it would free up enough food for an extra two billion people.

Helping to revive a living countryside can be as easy as choosing to eat more plants and having meat-free days, as well as choosing less and better meat, milk and eggs from pasture-fed, free-range or organic animals. Through our food choices, three times a day, we can support the best animal welfare, bring landscapes to life and protect our wonderful wildlife.

Here at Compassion in World Farming we are dedicated to bringing an end to factory farming. Why don't you join us?

