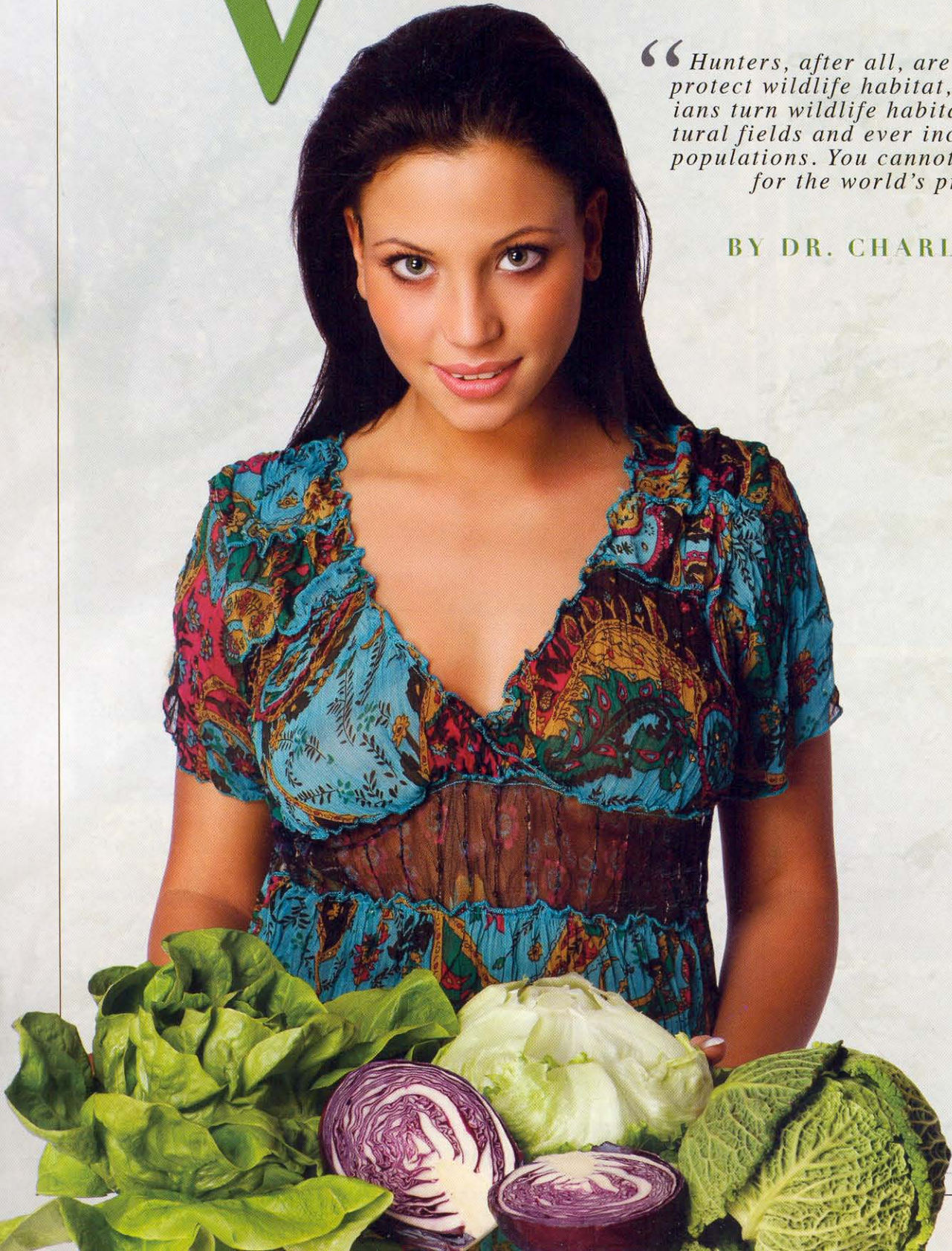


VEGETARIAN

“Hunters, after all, are the ones who protect wildlife habitat, while vegetarians turn wildlife habitat into agricultural fields and ever increasing human populations. You cannot blame hunters for the world’s problems.”

BY DR. CHARLES KAY



NS... THE SCOURGE OF THE EARTH

In debates over the future of hunting in the United States and around the world, animal-rights groups claim that they have the moral high-ground because they are vegetarians. Hunters are portrayed as a lower life-form because they kill and eat animals, while vegetarians are depicted as harmless because all they eat are plants. Unfortunately, the general public and the national media have accepted these assertions without careful study or reasoned thought. They have done so, in part, because most people have a poor understanding of basic ecology or human evolution. Hunters, it turns out, are the epitome of civilization, while vegetarians are the scourge of the earth. Virtually all the world's environmental problems, from the loss of biodiversity, to carbon dioxide emissions, can be traced to vegetarians, not hunters.

The concept of the trophic pyramid is fundamental to ecology. The simplest trophic pyramid contains three levels. On the bottom are the plants; above the plants are herbivores, which feed on the plants; and above the herbivores are carnivores which prey on the herbivores. Did you even wonder why plants are more abundant than herbivores, or why herbivores more abundant than carnivores? It is because there is a 90% to 99% loss

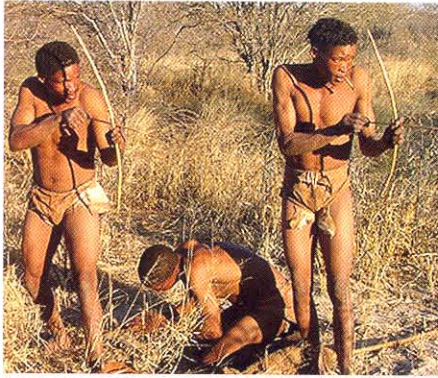
of stored energy between each trophic level.

Plants turn sunlight into stored energy that can be used by herbivores. Herbivores then convert those plant tissues into more herbivores, but in so doing, there is a major loss in stored energy because the herbivores have to expend energy on body maintenance and respiration, in addition to reproduction. The consumed energy is given-off as heat or waste products. The same, in turn, happens when carnivores eat herbivores. Ninety percent or more of that ener-

gy goes to carnivore body maintenance and respiration, not population growth. Thus, in this simplest of trophic pyramids, if you have 100 units of plant biomass, that vegetation can support only 10 units, at best, of herbivore biomass, and that animal biomass, in turn, can support only one unit, or less, of carnivore biomass. This is why carnivores are always so rare. Moreover, this is a fundamental law of thermal dynamics and of all living systems. Some trophic pyramids have more than three levels and the more trophic layers there are, the less abundant



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Aboriginal people in Africa, who still enjoy a hunter-gatherer lifestyle, have more leisure time than people living in the “most advanced” western civilizations—despite the fact that they inhabit one of the most inhospitable environments on earth, the Kalahari Desert.

are the top or apex predators, such as human hunters.

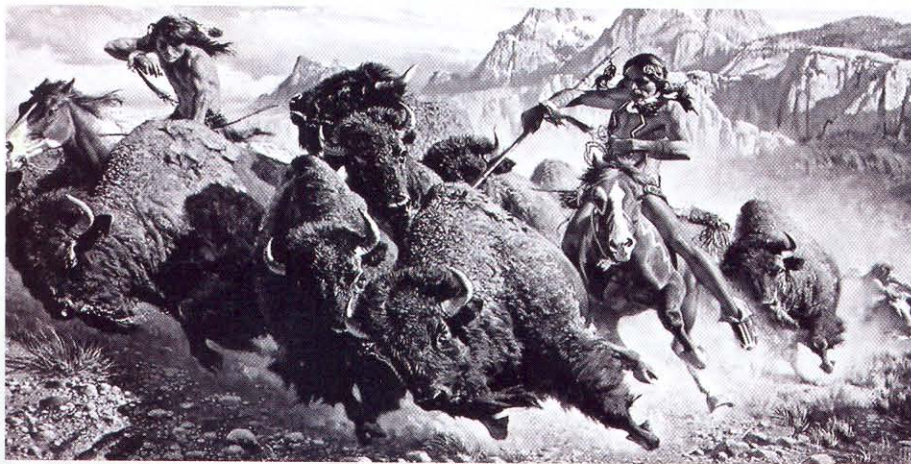
So in systems where humans are pure hunters, human population densities are generally very low, with correspondingly few environmental impacts. But if humans move down a trophic level, as only humans can, and become gatherer-hunters—where gatherers collect mainly vegetal foods, the human population increases ten-fold or more. Humans also use fire to enhance both plant and animal productivity, which allows for even greater human population growth. Switching to agriculture, fur-

ther increases plant productivity per unit area, leading to a massive increase in human numbers. The reason there are seven or eight billion people on Earth is because they are primarily vegetarians. There are few environmental problems around the globe that cannot be laid at the feet of vegetarians.

Vegetarian’s hands are also covered in blood, lots of blood. There is not much biodiversity or wildlife in a cornfield, a wheatfield, or a ricefield. More wildlife habitat has been destroyed in the name of agriculture than any other human activity. Then

too animals, termed agricultural pests, have to die to keep food on our tables. Have you ever seen what elk, or elephants, can do to a cornfield? There is a reason there are no elk or other large herbivores in our, or any other country’s, agricultural heartlands. In Africa, more elephants are shot each year to protect agricultural crops than are ever killed by safari hunters.

The general public also has a mistaken notion of what it was like to be a hunter, or a hunter-gatherer. Life was NOT short, brutish, or mean. Instead, hunter-gatherers have been called “The Original Affluent Society” because life was so carefree and easy. Working with aboriginal people in Africa, who at the time, still enjoyed a hunter-gatherer lifestyle, anthropologist Richard Lee documented that the !Kung had more leisure time than people living in the “most advanced” western civilization—despite the fact that the !Kung inhabited one of the most inhospitable environments on earth, the Kalahari Desert. Anthropologist, Marshall Sahlins, then went on to write a 1972 book on Stone Age Economics, extolling the virtues of being a hunter-gatherer.



During the 1800’s the best fed people on the planet were Plains Indians—hunters of the highest order. Imagine what it must have been like? All one had to do was hunt, steal horses, count coup, and procreate, while women did all the camp work. Talk about the epitome of civilization...at least from a man’s perspective.

Since that time anthropologists, who work with the few remaining hunter-gatherers in South America, Australia, and other parts of Africa, have repeatedly verified that the hunter-gatherer lifestyle was not as harsh as most people think, although they have toned down some of the early rhetoric, as more data on time allocation and return-rates have become available. The most telling information, though, comes from societies where national governments have tried to “civilize” hunter-gatherers by forcing indigenous people to adopt agriculture and a settled life. As soon



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as the governments' attention was diverted, the hunter-gatherers returned to hunting and gathering. Unfortunately, most hunter-gatherers have now been forced to accept western civilization

In addition, because human population densities were low and there were no domesticated animals, hunter-gatherers were relatively free of disease. Highly-contagious pathogens only evolved after agriculture-induced increases in human populations provided the needed number of susceptible hosts. Moreover, deadly

crowd diseases, such as smallpox, developed only after animals were domesticated and livestock diseases mutated, jumped the species barrier, and infected humans. Thus, in general, hunter-gatherers enjoyed relatively good health, long life, and low work effort, although child mortality was high due to infections and other causes. This was the case for at least 99.5% of hominid evolution and 90% of human evolution. Life became short, brutish, and mean only after the switch to agriculture.

In the eastern United States, archae-

ologists have unearthed the remains of hunter-gatherers, early agriculturalists, and late agriculturalists. By careful examination and measurement of those aboriginal skeletons, physical anthropologists have amassed data on early human health and lifespan. As aboriginal peoples in the eastern woodlands went from hunting and gathering, to early agriculture, to more intensive agriculture—that is as the people went from being hunters to vegetarians—both human health and longevity declined, often precipitously, while work effort, especially for males, increased dramatically. Why humans ever made the switch to agriculture is an interesting question, and all I will say here is that while it allowed human populations to increase, individuals would have been better off to have remained hunter-gatherers.

Then too, there are other data which support my contention that hunters were the epitome of civilization. Recall what I wrote about growing trophy mule deer in an earlier issue of *Muley Crazy* [Nov/Dec08:33-38]. Well, the same principle applies to humans. People, like deer, require a diet of high quality food to produce large, robust individuals. Why are Chinese and Japanese, on average, so short-statured compared to Americans? Because people from Asia are primarily vegetarians with little high-quality animal protein and fats in their diet. Animal fats and protein that are needed to fuel human growth and development. Since World War II, the average height of adult Japanese males has steadily increased, as their culture has switched to a diet with more red meat and animal fats. The same is true of Americans. We, on average, are taller than people of earlier generations, as our diets have improved over the decades. That is to say,



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height, like antler growth in mule deer, can be used to determine which humans had superior diets and lifestyles.

So during the 1800's who, on average, were the tallest people on Earth? Not Europeans, they were puny and so were the Americans of that era. No, the best fed people on the planet

were Plains Indians. Hunters of the highest order. Pawnee, Sioux, Cheyenne, and Arapaho, among others. Imagine what it must have been like? All one had to do was hunt, steal horses, count coup, and procreate, while women did all the camp work. No closed seasons, no bag limits, no restrictions on weapons or methods, and best of all, no taxes or other gov-

ernment regulations. If that is not the epitome of civilization, at least from a man's perspective, I do not know what is. This is why the U.S. government, and others, could never turn the Plains Indians into farmers. Only during the latter part of the twentieth century, as the average amount of red meat and animal fats in diets increased, did Americans grow as tall as Plains Indians 100 years earlier. In every human society that has ever been studied, the preferred food is red meat and animal fats. Veggies are way, way down on the list.

Furthermore, in all pre-agriculture and early agricultural societies, hunters had preferred status and were held in the highest regard. It is only during recent times that hunters have experienced a fall from grace, at least among certain members of our society. But then, what would you expect from vegetarians, who have overrun the planet and became the scourge of the earth. They are the real problem, not hunters. Hunters, after all, are the ones who protect wildlife habitat, while vegetarians turn wildlife habitat into agricultural fields and ever increasing human populations. You cannot blame hunters for the world's problems. If anyone has sinned, it has been vegetarians. For as historian J.R. McNeil has noted, "The most enduring ecologically sustainable societies in human history have been those that did not practice agriculture."



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