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New book finds intensive farming is major driver of wildlife loss

The result of a two-year investigation has exposed how intensive farming is not only cruel to farm animals, but is having a devastating impact on the world's most iconic wildlife.

Dead Zone: Where the Wild Things Were reveals that in the 50 years since factory farming was widely adopted, half of the world's wildlife has disappeared, with species loss now happening 1000 times faster than what scientists consider 'normal'.

Wildlife expert Chris Packham called the book *"an honest, compelling and important account and a critical plea for a fusion of farming, food and nature to provide global ecological security."*

Philip Lybery, author of the book and CEO of Compassion in World Farming, said: *"In writing this book, I've discovered the two destructive sides to factory farming: the cruelty inflicted on farm animals on a massive scale, and the impact it has on the environment and our much-loved wildlife."*

Over the last decades farm animals have disappeared from the countryside. Cramming animals into cages and crowded sheds may look like a space-saving idea, but this ignores the fact that vast amounts of land is required elsewhere to grow food for them – often in vast crop prairies doused in chemical pesticides and fertilisers – squeezing wildlife out as industrial farming methods sweep the planet."

The book reveals how jaguars and elephants are losing their rainforest homes as land is razed to make way for intensive crop plantations destined to feed animals on factory farms, many of which are in Europe. It shows how the mixed farmland habitats of barn owls, skylarks and storks are being stripped away to produce cheap animal feed – leading to massive declines in numbers.

It also discovers how large quantities of fish on which penguins, puffins, dolphins and whales depend for survival are being removed from the sea and ground down into fishmeal – to be shipped across the globe and fed back to farmed fish, chickens, and pigs.

Agriculture covers nearly half of the world's useable land surface. What happens on this land therefore has a significant bearing on biodiversity.

The book proposes a solution which must be adopted before it's too late: restoring animals to the land on mixed, rotational farming systems such as pasture-raised or organic. A key finding of the book is that these systems are not only commercially viable, but provide better animal welfare and enable wildlife to thrive too.

Compassion in World Farming is calling on the post-Brexit UK government to encourage sustainable food and farming through legislation and subsidy support for a move away from industrial methods and towards pasture-raised farming methods - which take advantage of the rich grasslands covering much of the country.

Philip concluded: "Consumers are urged to help promote higher animal welfare and save iconic wildlife by choosing free-range, pasture-fed or organic animal products."

ENDS

Notes to editors:

A series of films relating to the book can be made available on request.

Dead Zone: Where the Wild Things Were is published by Bloomsbury on 09/03/2017. A full list of retailers is available here: www.ciwf.org.uk/deadzone

Compassion in World Farming was founded in 1967 by a British dairy farmer who became horrified at the development of intensive factory farming. Today Compassion is the leading

farm animal welfare organisation dedicated to ending factory farming and achieving humane and sustainable food. With headquarters in the UK, we have offices across Europe in the US, China and South Africa.

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