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Julian Langer
Against The Grey Squirrel Cull
4/12/2022

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Last night I was horrified to learn that the government is funding a conservation charity called Red Squirrel South West¹, so that they may cull grey squirrels across the 35 mile area of the North Devon and Somerset coastline that constitutes the northern edges of Exmoor². Red Squirrel South West lists among its aims to lower grey squirrel populations and work on controls for whatever greys remain³. The cull is planned in lieu of “contraceptives” – methods of sterilisation aimed towards bringing greys to the “brink of extinction”⁴ – being available now.

This news has rendered me feeling horrified, saddened and revolted. So I am writing this now, as an act of anti-cull rebellion.

Red Squirrel South West is revealing conservationist praxis to, yet again, be nothing more than “wildlife management” and an extension of the industrial death machinery of totalitarian-

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/funding-boost-for-countrys-woodlands-and-timber-industry>

² <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-devon-63823788?fbclid=IwAR29PviYbKh3YBjvxi0Lbb64LdguAb3cQQyjJEGzt9VSk5PAANxLnjYDTBQ>

³ <https://redsquirrelsouthwest.org.uk/about/>

⁴ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-62096272>

agriculture. Rather than challenge the productive-narratives of dehabitation, car-culture and the colonial-expansion of urbanisation under the ideology of “development” and other actual threats to wild living beings, including red squirrels, on this archipelago; Red Squirrel South West is seeking to annihilate grey squirrels, under the moralistic justification of seeking to return the area to a romantic image of an idealised “nature” – an image that is anti-wildlife. Rather than challenge colonialism and the trafficking of living beings through productive narratives, which bring “non-natives” (a speciesist category based within an anthropocentric image of what-should-live-here); Red Squirrel South West spread the nonsense rhetoric of grey squirrels as “invasive”⁵, as if grey squirrels are not living beings seeking to survive amidst the totalitarian machinery of this culture.

This cull is being planned amidst a mass extinction event, that is the waste product of 10,000 years of totalitarian agriculture, industrialism and the unquestionable law of progress; while the culture assimilates more and more wildlife and wild spaces into the body of production, annihilating all that cannot be assimilated – in this case, grey squirrels. My instinct is that this cull is not an effort to bring greys to “the brink of extinction” along the Exmoor coastline (and likely further), but an effort to actually render greys extinct in the area (and likely further), rendering this cull an effort in extinctionism – anti-life politics, perpetuating narratives of systemic-slaughter to their logical conclusion. Under the politics of grey squirrel extinctionism, greys are criminal simply for the species-being that is imposed upon them under zoological classification – their very being is punishable due to how their being is classified by authorities. This revolting speciesism is easily comparable to efforts in ethnic cleansing and just as abusive, if we don’t buy into the speciesist nonsense of great-chain-of-being ideology.

⁵ <https://redsqirrelsouthwest.org.uk/red-squirrel-conservation/>

The listed methods of grey squirrel culling are shooting and traps. The best way I can see to resist squirrel shooting is to go for walks and hikes in woods across the Exmoor coastline and if any shooters are there create a lot of noise, to disrupt the process. Similarly, the best way I can see to resist squirrel trapping is to go for walks and hikes in the cull zone and trigger the traps, using sticks and rocks, and release any greys (or other living beings) found trapped. After these methods of direct rebellion, anti-cull propaganda and discourse strike me as entirely desirable.

My desire to affirm preservationist praxis, as anti-conservationist environmentalism, is intense right now. I want to affirm the anarchy of rewilding as more beautiful, desirable and healthy (in that its not mass-extinction-culture), than the totalitarianism of wildlife management and the death-camp machinery that goes with these efforts in systemic-slaughtering. As I mean it, preservationism is not an ideology or system of politics, but an ethic of affirming the life of all individual living beings and a refusal to conform to this culture's speciesism – I have written more on this in my long form essay *My Anti-Cull Philosophy*⁶ and my essay *An Eco-Egoist Destruction of Species-Being and Speciesism*⁷ (links in notes).

In his fantastic piece of writing *Walking*, Henry David Thoreau wrote "... in wildness is the preservation of the world"⁸. This statement is one that I find deeply moving and beautiful. It is an affirmation that fuels my desire to care for wild living beings, as caring for them is caring for the world, that I experience as an extension of my-being and paradoxically I am an extension of as well. This renders caring for grey squirrels an act of self-care that I

⁶ <https://forged.noblogs.org/files/2022/09/julian-langer-my-anti-cull-philosophy-i-ii.pdf>

⁷ <https://www.nightforestpress.com/post/an-eco-egoist-destruction-of-speciesism-and-species-being>

⁸ <https://faculty.washington.edu/timbillo/Readings%20and%20documents/Wilderness/Thoreau%20Walking.pdf>

can egoistically affirm, without any need to appeal to morality or instrumental-value – the type of argument and rhetoric often used by mainstream environmentalists and conservationists. As I end this piece of writing I notice within me an intense desire to affirm every grey squirrel I meet after this as a friend, a fellow rebel and as part of my tribe, more intensely than I had done before. I will look on them with love and kindness.

Against the grey squirrel cull

Rebellion against cull culture

For the end of cages

Notes