

Small

In Defense of the World's Most Despised Species

Why we love some species but hate most, and why it matters

Some animals and plants injure or kill millions of people annually, others cause trillions of dollars in property damage and loss. Such harmful species are understandably hated. However, the vast majority of the planet's millions of species are disliked simply because of how they look and act. This bias is endangering numerous species that play important roles in maintaining both the natural ecosystems and the human economies of the world. In Defense of the World's Most Despised Species examines the psychological motivations that lead people to make judgments about the attractiveness of species, noting the overwhelming importance of visual cues. It describes in considerable detail the physical and behavioral traits of species that lead us to love or hate them. Full color illustrations throughout present beautiful, charming animals and plants, species that seem loathsome, behavior of people in relation to such divergent species and their characteristics, and numerous explanatory diagrams of relevant biological and psychological phenomena. The aim of this book is to give readers insights into how we humans arrive at biased judgments and to promote the welfare of valuable, albeit sometimes unlovable animals and plants that consequently suffer from discrimination. Many of the ugliest, most disgusting, and feared species, such as vultures, toads, hyenas, sharks, spiders, and even the vast majority of cockroaches, in reality are some of our most valuable friends. Features - Theme of the book – human preferences for and against species – is novel, scarcely examined to date - Multidisciplinary analysis, especially psychology, biological conservation science, and ecology, as well as philosophy, agriculture, urban planning, human health, and law - Text is accessible, user-friendly, concise, and well-organized, making numerous complex topics comprehensible, readable not only by specialists, but also by students and the educated layperson - Includes over 2,000 high-quality, entertaining, and informative color figures

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