

**Canberra Times - Letter to Editor - Killer Cats and Muddled Humans
- 18 May 2020**

Steve Evans is mistaken when he claims that dogs are not family. There is no question in my mind that I would die to protect any animal whom I have taught to love and trust me, as surely as I would die for my human family. If that's not family, what is? I find the notion that we should somehow love our adopted kin less than our blood kin abhorrent.

From a more global perspective, the notion that humans are somehow, subjectively, more important than other animals is a fatal error which is swiftly and surely destroying all life on Earth.

On a related matter in Steve's article, as a scientist myself, I am endlessly aghast at the recurring scapegoating of cats for human crimes. It is humans, not cats who are unremittingly exterminating Australia's native wildlife. Cats are predators, that is the purpose for which nature evolved them, to regulate populations of prey animals: a horrible system, yes, but we're stuck with it. However, cat impacts on wildlife, compared to land clearing, logging, water extraction, pollution, road kill and climate change (to name a few) are negligible.

Scapegoating cats for evils perpetrated by humans, especially governments, is an ancient distraction tactic. In the 14th Century, it led, through the persecution of old women as witches and their cats as familiars, to the near extinction of cats in Europe, leaving the rat population overcrowded, weak and sick. This led to the world's worst ever pandemic: the Black Death.

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