

*Transformative Perspective*

# A Plea for a Paradigm Shift towards Mindful Conservation



*by Fabian Ritter - M.E.E.R. e.V.*



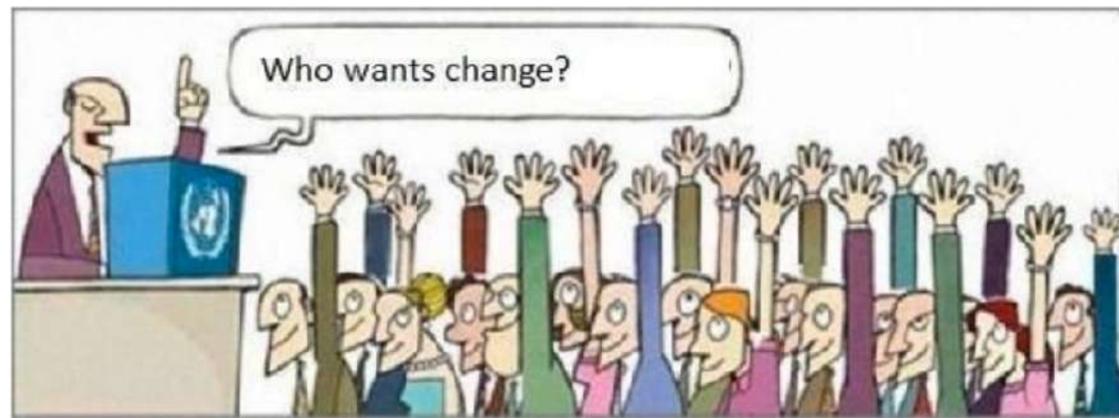


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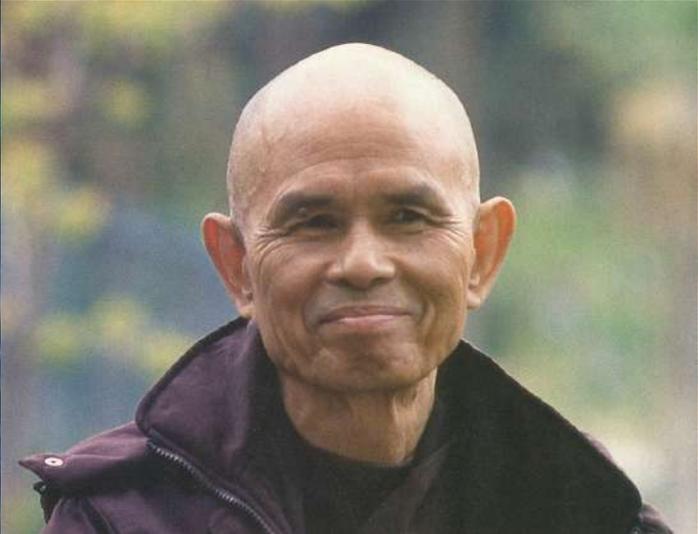
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How do we get there?

# **MINDFUL CONSERVATION**

## **Worldview**

**Humans as an integral part of nature  
Feeling and experiencing nature is key**

## **Focus**

**Interrelatedness with nature (“Interbeing”)  
Distinctiveness of habitats, individuals & communities  
‘Sacredness’ of beings and places  
Welfare & wellbeing**

## **Narrative of Connectedness (One-ness)**

**Finding the role of humans in the living world (“GAIA”)**

**Driving force: *VALUES* such as respect, compassion & love**

## More mindful conservation through...

- Integration of traditional knowledge and indigenous wisdom
- Appraisal of the uniqueness and “holiness” of natural places and beings  
– *based e.g., on indigenous cultural and spiritual ethics*
- Respecting the intrinsic value (Eigenwert) of nature (**RIGHTS FOR NATURE**)
- *Treasuring the cultural identity of distinct animal communities (e.g., in cetaceans)*
- Recognition of ecosystem functions of marine life  
– *rather than just calculating the value of ecosystem services*
- Letting nature be, i.e. letting wilderness rule (**NO-TAKE-ZONES**)  
– *relying on the self healing potential of the seas*

**MINDFUL  
CONSERVATION**

**Holistic**

**traditional knowledge - ecological  
wisdom - rights for nature**

**Ecological processes plus cultural  
communities & individuals, holiness  
and wilderness**

*Connectedness - Planetary health*

**CONTEMPORARY  
CONSERVATION**

**Ecological - utilitarian**

**Ecosystem functions & services**

**Ecosystem-based approach**

*Precaution*

**TRADITIONAL  
CONSERVATION**

**Mechanistic – rational**

**Reductionist, data-focused**

**Population size**

*Threat control*

*Cetaceans – the Indigenous People of the Seas?*



... to act.

We know enough ...



# Marine mammal conservation in the 21st century: A plea for a paradigm shift towards mindful conservation

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## Abstract

Marine mammals are regarded in high esteem by the general public, and are often recognized as flagship species for conservation, while at the same time they are affected by anthropogenic impacts on a global scale, and often in extreme ways. There is a huge discrepancy between how we humans think about our fellow creatures in the sea, and how we behave to impact and/or conserve them. Here, I discuss the purely scientific and thus intellectual approach to marine mammal conservation, and how it has had limited success over the past decades. While there are some success stories in cetacean conservation, the situation today is, for many species, more dire than it has ever been. The idea of 'we need to protect the commons' of the scientific community—often is politically misrepresented as necessary conservation decisions. To adapt our path towards marine conservation, more importantly, more effective marine conservation, as conservationists, we need to go deeper and change the narrative of separation, i.e., the concept of 'wildlife' as separate from the rest of nature. Instead, there is a need to

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*Thank You!*

*Dankeschön!*

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