



the Jane Goodall Institute | Global

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This is Jane Goodall.

During a recent visit to the Netherlands I was shocked and saddened to hear about the situation in the Oostvaardersplassen nature reserve, an artificial reserve created by the Dutch government. I understand that cattle, horses and deer were introduced to help develop the landscape and that, initially, the plan was a success.

The animals were allowed to roam freely, things went well, and the herds increased. But they were fenced in and gradually the land available to them was overgrazed. Then during the past severe winter, because they could not move out of the area in search of more food, a great many starved to death. I understand that this suffering was permitted because the animals were part of a wild landscape so that human intervention was not permitted. Food offered by concerned individuals was removed. Finally as a result of public concern, rangers were told to shoot those suffering the most.

When I heard this I could hardly believe such a thing could happen in a civilized country. These animals were not indigenous to the area. They were introduced and fenced in. When they ran short of food they should have been fed.

A long term plan should aim to reduce the size of the populations by human sterilization methods. There is no excuse for the continuation of a policy of non intervention when this results in horrific suffering.

Additional reason for me to be saddened about this, is that I have many connections with the Netherlands: my great, great grandfather was Dutch, as was my first husband. My son is a Dutch citizen. I hope that this horrible and cruel situation, which casts a bad light not only on Dutch management of nature reserves, but also shows a lack of consideration of animal welfare, will not be permitted to happen again.

Yours sincerely,

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& UN Messenger of Peace.