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Gallagher, Felicity Vanessa

2012-07-12
http://hdl.handle.net/10539/11676

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ELEPHANT OVER-POPULATION:
TOWARDS A THEORY OF A JUST CULL

Felicity Vanessa Gallagher
Student 514140

ABSTRACT

In this research report I address the question: Is it ever morally justified to cull elephants? And, if it is, what criteria need to be fulfilled for a cull to be morally justifiable?

In answering the first part of the question, 'Is it ever morally correct to cull elephants?' I defend the claim that the killing of elephants is a *pro tanto* wrong. The second part of the question, 'What criteria need to be fulfilled for a cull to be morally justifiable?', directs my attention to identifying conditions under which the *pro tanto* wrong of killing elephants could be outweighed by other moral considerations. I identify and critically discuss these criteria, developing what I call a 'Theory of a Just Cull'. Finally, I apply my Theory to the current situation in South Africa, and argue that it is not possible to ethically justify elephant culling in South Africa in the current circumstances.