

Animal People
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The missing link

ANIMAL PEOPLE was published from Shushan, New York, and printed in Bennington, Vermont from 1992 to 1996. Noticing unusually high rates of both hunting participation and prosecuted sexual abuse of children in the region, **ANIMAL PEOPLE** investigated the possibility of a cultural relationship by comparing the rates of hunting participation and crimes against children in all 232 counties of New York, Ohio, and Michigan.

In 21 of 22 New York counties of almost identical population density, the county with the most hunters also had the most prosecuted sexual abuse of children.

Ohio counties with more than the median rate of hunting license sales had 51% more reported child abuse, including 33% for sexual abuse and 82% more neglect.

Michigan children were nearly three times as likely to be neglected and twice as likely to be physically abused or sexually assaulted if they lived in a county with above average hunting participation.

Michigan as of 1994 sold twice as many hunting licenses per capita as upstate New York, but had seven times the rate of convicted child abuse, and twice as high a rate of sexual assault on children.

ANIMAL PEOPLE concluded that the data supported a hypothesis that both hunting and child abuse reflect the degree to which a social characteristic called dominionism prevails in a particular community.

Yale University professor Stephen Kellert, in a 1980 study commissioned by the

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, defined dominionism as an attitude in which "primary satisfactions [are] derived from mastery or control over animals," a definition which other investigators later extended to include the exercise of "mastery or control" over women and children.

Kellert reported that the degree of dominionism in the American public as a whole rated just 2.0 on a scale of 18. Humane group members rated only 0.9. Recreational hunters, however, rated from 3.8 to 4.1, while trappers scored 8.5.