

■ Tekst 7

Upsetting the natural balance

MARK COCKER says that it is unfair to blame the British for the release of the European starling into the United States ('Starlings in the ascendancy', February 22). The only really unfair thing was his knee-jerk dumping on starlings for their successful colonisation. The parochial woodpeckers-kicked-out-of-the-cactus and eating-all-the-chicken-feed anecdotes are typical of local incidents blown up out of proportion by statist naturalists. They seem to yearn for US wildlife to revert to some unspecified Garden of Eden where all original species are eternally native.

The introduction of non-native species is insignificant compared with man's gargantuan butchery of animal habitats. Increasingly, scientific evidence strongly suggests this to be the real problem. When man does his mindless thing, native species often have a tough time adapting; indeed, some become extinct. Other species that *can* adapt – non-natives among them – move in.

Clearly, the cause of native species would be much better served if people like your correspondent worked to mitigate the impact of man.
*(Dr) Christopher Panton,
Danville, California, USA*

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- 1p 21 ■ Which sentence from Dr Panton's letter sums up his argument?
- A 'The only ... colonisation.'
 - B 'They seem ... eternally native.'
 - C 'The introduction ... animal habitats.'
 - D 'Other species ... move in.'