

# Department of Philosophy Colloquium Series

Thursday,  
February 9

4p.m.

Law Building  
Room 3



## A Strategic Proposal for Legally Protecting Wild Animals

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Philosophers have long articulated theories of animal rights. However, concrete questions such as “How should the Constitution of Australia change if it recognized the right to self-determination of some wild animals?” have rarely, if ever, been studied. Inspired by Sue Donaldson and Will Kymlicka’s theory of animal rights, this talk explores a legal strategy about how wild animals’ interest in self-determination could be recognized in the Australian Constitution. I argue that conferring strong constitutional protection to wild animals regarding self-determination would require: (1) recognizing fundamental legal rights of wild animals to political representation, immunity from being objects of property rights, self-determination, and territory, and (2) defining to whom the proposed rights would apply and identifying the territories over which animals would have a right to govern themselves. I offer a strategic proposal in relation to point 2 and suggest that granting a legal status beyond the personhood–property divide, what I call “legal animalhood,” is the soundest strategy to recognize the fundamental legal rights of wild animals. Finally, I show that the proposed strategy is a better approach to confer strong legal protection to wild animals than Karen Bradshaw’s property rights strategy and ecocentric approaches.

**Everyone Welcome!**

For accessibility requirements, please contact [philosophy@queensu.ca](mailto:philosophy@queensu.ca)

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<https://www.queensu.ca/secretariat/policies/administration-and-operations/covid-19-vaccination-requirements>