

Regular readers of this column will, by now, have guessed that I see certain personality quirks about the animal Homo Sapiens that don't exactly harmonize with his environment. Those same readers will also have noted that I place considerable importance on the matter of environmental harmonization. So taking the one with the other it can be no secret that I'm not a real strong supporter of the concept "Man - the inheriter of the Earth". In fact, as the years go by, I'm becoming more and more convinced that man isn't going to leave much of Earth for anyone to inherit - unless - but that's another story.

For now let me give you a few figures to juggle. In 1850 the world population was one billion. A bit short of a century later it had doubled to two billion. By 1975 or 45 years later it has again doubled - 4 billion. Continue the projection and by 2050, or within the lifetime of my youngest child, the figure is 28 billion. That's almost eight times more people than there are right now.

Man is the ONLY creature whose population growth rate is greater than zero. That's significant.

So what does all this mean, in the end? Naturally, man being the creature he is, there is a certain amount of disagreement on the subject, to put it mildly. Nonetheless, there is a large and growing body of learned men who state categorically that Homo Sapiens - Us - You - and I - are decidedly one of the "Endangered Species".

This side of the argument had been debated by such people as our old friend of ukulele fame, Arthur Godfrey. In a speech given at a conference of New York State Conservation Commissions a few years ago he gave one of the most compelling, most thought-provoking, most plain-spoken assessments of the situation I've ever read. It was published in the November '71 issue of New York State's justly famous magazine "The Conservationist" which is available at your local library. Others, since, have written and spoken eloquently on the subject.

They have set me to thinking. Maybe we are worrying too much about Grizzly Bears and Perigrene Falcons. Maybe the problem is much more personal, much more pressing, that that. Maybe it's you and I that needs "enlightened management techniques" and other such modern weapons to enhance our chances of survival. There's a growing list of books which seem to leave the matter no longer in doubt, no longer debatable. I think I'll read a couple.