



**Destruction of
wildlife.
Destruction of
the environment.
This was a
different Harris I
was talking to.
An angry Harris**

SUPERSTAR

The incredible
story of
Rolf
Harris,
last part

BY LINTON
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ROLF HARRIS was speaking very slowly for him. "I have written a poem," he said, "about the slaughter of baby seals in Canada and I don't quite know what to do with it."

"I have thought about setting it to music, but it is a very savage, angry poem. It isn't the thing that you could play on the radio for people to listen to and enjoy. There again, it isn't meant to be. It is about something which makes me sick and angry. The slaughter of baby seals. Baby seals clubbed on the head, just a few months old, and skinned."

I had asked Harris to what degree he felt that people in the entertainment business should become involved in matters of public interest, outside their own profession.

"That's a different question and an interesting one," he answered. "I can answer for myself, and in my case I become involved in

matters which I feel very strongly about and which I believe I can do something about.

"Again, speaking for myself, there are not a great many of them, but the total, wanton destruction of wildlife is one of them. Would I become involved politically? In this case I think I would. I would do anything I could to stop it."



Harris, of course, is very much a part of Anglia TV's Survival series.

I recalled one of the programmes in which he was angry and ashamed at the attitude of many of his countrymen to kangaroos. "Yes," he said, "that is something I am angry about all right. But it is this general, terrible attitude to

all kinds of wildlife that worries me the most.

"Look, take something which effects us all over here for example. Every year an area something like the size of Greater London suddenly turns into concrete. Even the sunshine seems to be blotted out. The great bulldozers move in, and that is the end of everything. They never even think of leaving the trees, trees that have been there for 100 years disappear in a flash. Nature is buried under the slabs of concrete and the birds don't sing any more."

Harris stopped for a moment and said: "I wonder when someone is going to call a halt to it?"

His concern for the environment is easy to understand, because apart from anything else he is something of a naturalist. Two summers ago, he, his wife Alwen and seven-year-old daughter, Bindi, went on a two-and-a-

half month trip across the Northern Territory of Australia.

They set off from Darwin in Landrovers. With them went two naturalists, Harry Butler and Vin Serventy and Vin's wife and children. With them, also, went a cameraman, sound recordist and a producer — because Rolf intended to make a film of the trip.

"We camped out in tents and cooked our own food," said Harris. "We went looking for everything and anything. And we found it. We studied the animals, the plant life, the snakes — everything we could find. At night-time we set traps — not the kind of traps that would hurt creatures, because whatever we found we released after we had had a look at it."

"This was a part of Australia I had never seen before and I had always wanted to see," said Alwen. "And we are going to do it again." Harris nodded. "Yes, it was a wonderful experience."



They made the film for Australian ABC television, and it will be shown by the BBC soon. It is called, appropriately, Rolf's Walkabout.

My interview with Harris had been spread over two days, in a BBC studio and at his home. It was impossible not to like him and be impressed with his incredible versatility.

As an entertainer he is in a class of his own, but much as he enjoys entertaining people there is a lot more to it than that.

He told me: "What I would really like to do — by whatever I do — is to get over to people, in some way, the need for each person to do what he really wants to do, and not be bogged down by the safety factor."

"Security — that is what governs most people's lives. They feel that they must be governed by that factor. Everything else — all their dreams — must be set aside in favour of security. Security is like a gigantic mousetrap."

"All right, you have your security. You have your pension. You are 65 years old. The greater part of your life is over, and you find that you really haven't done anything that you wanted to do. Don't let that happen."

"Be yourself."