

Planetary Wellbeing

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- Natural Garden & Lawn Care
- Organic & Sustainable Agriculture
- Pest Control
- Plant-Based Eating
- Zero Emissions
- Zero Toxin Parenting

Ensure Animal Wellness

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Step into Spring



Shop all step into spring



Guide to Cruelty-Free Feather Fashion

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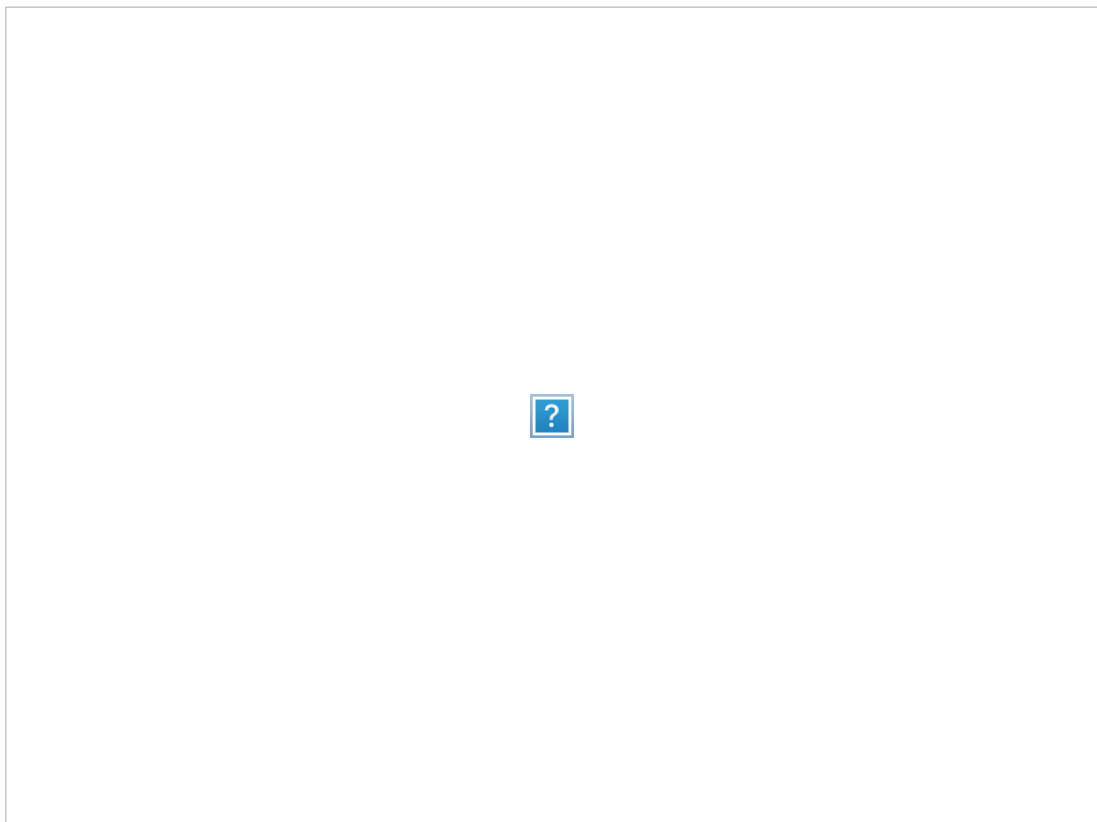
Our insatiable thirst for fast fashion has given rise to cruel practices used to raise animals such as roosters and chickens whose feathers are used to create trendy accessories. While adorning ourselves with fashion that celebrates the wild creatures of our world is a great way to express our own inner wildness, ethical consumers may not want their purchasing power to be used to support farming practices that create inhumane living conditions for animals. Animal wellness is a passion of Hearts – eco feather fashion is one of our specialties, after all! So we're here to help you arm yourself with the ethical fashion knowledge you need to recognize cruelty-free feather fashion to help roosters and chickens live free ... well, as birds!

Quick Guide: Cruelty in the Feather Trade

- **Feathers used in fashion:** Even as far back as the 1870s, bird feathers have been used on dresses and hats, feather hair extensions, and as earrings.^{[i] [ii]} You'll also find feathers from the common chicken in the form of down, which is used for insulating and filling warm jackets, comforters, pillows, boots, and other fashion accessories and home décor items.
- **Short life of feather fashion:** Most feather fashion is relatively fragile, breaking down in a few short months with wear.^[iii] While raw, biodegradable materials are a great eco fashion choice, if they come at the expense of an animal's life, you may not want to support such a plume trade.
- **Cruel plucking methods:** Roosters, bred for their tail ("saddle") plumage, are plucked clean after the feathers have grown as long as possible without anesthesia and then euthanized.^[iv]
- **Numbers of birds killed for their feathers:** Whiting Farms in Colorado is reportedly killing at least 1,500 roosters per day to supply the demand for feather hair extensions.^[v] It is estimated that 30 million chickens are killed in US slaughterhouses every day.^[vi]
- **Cruel living conditions for birds:** Birds that are kept in factory poultry farms often have weak immune systems and chronic respiratory illnesses from being kept in cramped cages.^[vii] Stressed, these birds fight each other. Farmers try to prevent this by keeping birds in dark sheds all day and removing their beaks (without anesthesia).^[viii]

Take Action! Create a Cruelty-free Feather Fashion Trade

1. **Choose humane feather fashion from happy farms:** Other than our cruelty-free feather fashion, you can use our guide to [cruelty-free labels](#) will help you start to recognize those farmers that are using cruelty-free practices to raise animals like roosters, chickens, and other birds. Though these labels are often used for food products, the feathers sourced from these farms should come from animals that lived happy, healthy lives.
2. **Look for cruelty-free down from birds who live the good life:** Use your purchasing power to support free range farms that supply down, too! In addition to the cruelty free labels you can find today, you can search the PETA [Shopping Guide to Compassionate Clothing](#) to find cruelty-free down-based fashion and home accessories.
3. **Watch out for endangered bird feather fashion:** Many of today's feather fashion items are made from the feathers of endangered birds. The US Fish & Wildlife Service has a good [database of scans of bird feathers](#) that you can use to identify bird feathers so that you can recognize endangered feathers when eco shopping.
4. **Go alternative with animal-free down:** If you need down-based fashion or home linens but want to [go vegan](#), choose down alternatives such as synthetic down. Some options include NatureWorks' [Ingeo](#) fibers made of renewable resources



like corn sugar; [Syriaca](#) fibers which are made from milkweed plants and often marked as “hypodown” because of their hypoallergenic properties; or [Kapok \(ceiba pentandra\)](#), fibers that have the loft and feel of down but are taken from tropical tree seed pods.

5. **Get active on behalf of birds – fight for cruelty-free laws:** Be a voice against cruel farming practices by asking your elected officials to push for bills that will stop roosters and other common birds from living and dying in abysmal conditions. Use the ASPCA's [State Animal Cruelty Laws](#) database to find out what's going on in your community in the fight against animal cruelty! Then check in with The Humane Society to support their campaigns against [Animal Cruelty](#), including their advocacy for a farm animal protection bill. Go further and make a statement against cruel down by wearing a [Down Hurts T-shirt](#) from PETA.

Dig Deeper: History of Feather Fashion and Feather Trade Practices

- Familiarize yourself with [the Lacey Act's provisions against feather trade](#) of threatened bird species.
- The Historical Society of Palm Beach County has an interesting feature on the [history of feather use in fashion](#).
- Feather-based fashion comes from roosters and egg layers, the Cedar Waxwing, the Northern Bobwhite, the Greater Prairie Chicken, and the Blue Jay. Find out more about these birds in this [Plume Trade](#) paper.

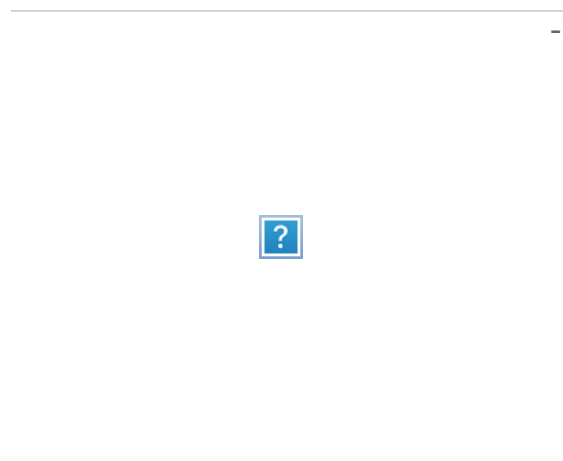
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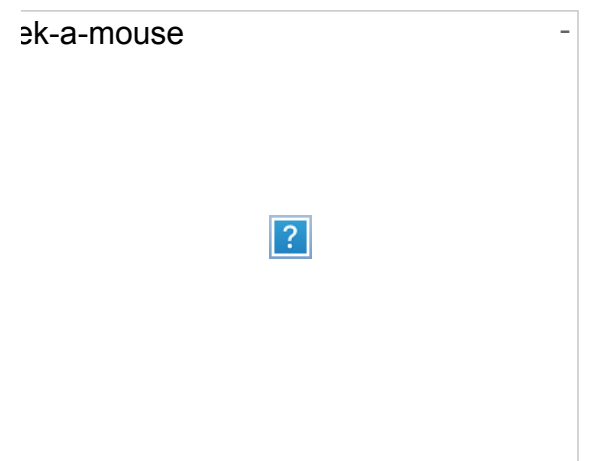
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