

Watched. Photographed. Tortured.
 Petted. Feared. Eaten. Hunted. Fed.
 Trained. Admired.

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Kevin Markwell (ed.): *Animals and Tourism. Understanding Diverse Relationships*. Channel view publications 2015.

This book is very topical in the light of recent news. The dolphinarium in my hometown of Tampere, Finland is closing, Sea World in USA is in economic and ethical trouble, the campaign against trophy hunting is gaining force, and sustainable or ecotourism is put forward as a solution to problems stemming from “traditional” tourism.

I have mixed feelings about both zoos and tourism, but no direct research experience on these themes yet, so I read this new edited book with curiosity.

As I understand the editor’s introduction, the purpose of the book is to foreground animals used in tourism, and the authors want us to consider critically our relations with animals in tourism. The context of the book is anthrozoology and human-animal studies, and most of the writers are researchers from different parts

of the world and different disciplines. The book is quite heterogeneous. Some chapters are basically (well documented and written) reports of animal abuse in tourism. This is clearly information needed in the tourism industry and hopefully it will reach those involved and changes will be made. Other chapters are more academic with sections on material and methods.

The book focuses on contemporary tourism and ranges from wildlife tourism (Ratamäki & Peltola) to theme parks (Ventre & Jett) and trophy hunting (Lovelock). I was especially pleased to see that even entomotourism is represented (Lemelin), since invertebrates are too often forgotten in human-animal studies. The figure 1.2. depicting a model of tourism-animal related relationships is very useful as it shows the whole range of phases, places and modes of interacting with animals in tourism. Since the writers have different ethical starting points, the first chapter introducing the different animal ethics theories (table 2.1.) is especially useful for a reader



less familiar with the wide range of ethical theories on this issue.

The book provides a painful overview of animals used in tourism. Animals have become victims of our desire to be entertained and gain new experiences. Elephants are tortured (Bone & Bone; Cohen), killer whales suffer (Ventre & Jett), even dolphin swimming is problematic (Wiener).

A tourist always makes an impact, no matter the type of animal tourism. Whale watching is dependent on oil and the aviation industry (Higham & Neves) and tourism in general contributes to climate change and habitat degradation.

Many writers mention that the use of animals in tourism is usually justified by the expectation that tourists become more conservation-minded after the tourism experience. This question is fundamental to the ethical use of animals in tourism. And if the tourists do become more conservation-minded, are these benefits still bigger than the deteriorating habitats and individual suffering caused by tourism? Could these benefits be produced in some other way, which does not use animal bodies directly, such as films or books? Some authors of the book back up the assumption that animal tourism or ecotourism can be beneficial (e.g. Burns; Lemelin), others contest this justification (e.g. Wearing & Jobberns; Higham & Neves; Ventre & Jett; Wiener). The chapters and the literature cited do not seem to offer a coherent answer. The last chapter (by editor Markwell) attempts to recapitulate the answers. Some cases seem to be more sustainable than others, but the answer is not clear.



An info poster urging visitors to donate to a conservation project for Amur tigers and leopards at Korkeasaari zoo, Helsinki, Finland. September 2015.

There is also a methodological weakness linked to this ethical discussion. I was surprised how the beneficial effects of animal tourism often seem to be measured (in research in general, not only in this book) by willingness to donate more to nature conservation. As a researcher focused on nature conservation I am particularly aware that “conservation” and being “conservation-minded” can be many things. For example cutting airline traveling, stopping eating meat, enhancing biodiversity in one’s own garden, engaging with politics or a conservation NGO, talking about conservation with family and friends or even doing more animal tourism that can be seen as conservation, for example volunteer holidays. There are also many different kinds of conservation programs to donate to, and probably not all of them are working well. Willingness to pay is obviously an easy way to measure by surveys, but this issue should be however studied also by qualitative and ethnographic methods. Markwell himself proposes internet ethnography to study the issue of how animals are discussed before and after tourism experiences.

For someone already aware of the myriad ways we use animals unethically in tourism and elsewhere, this book does not necessarily provide many new insights. But for readers who need an introduction to the ethical dilemmas related to using animals in tourism, the book is valuable and interesting.