Animals and Tourism: Extending Moral Obligations of Care

Susanna Curtin
Bournemouth University

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.library.tru.ca/tefi

http://digitalcommons.library.tru.ca/tefi/tefi9/day3/11

This Presentation is brought to you for free and open access by Digital Commons @ TRU Library. It has been accepted for inclusion in Tourism Education Futures Initiative (TEFI) Conference by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ TRU Library. For more information, please contact kgaynor@tru.ca.
Animals and Tourism: Extending Moral Obligations of Care

Susanna Curtin, Bournemouth University, United Kingdom

As educators, it is our job to instil, awaken and encourage notions of care in our students. We can do this by highlighting areas of study which may otherwise be overlooked in a business-orientated, tourism-centric degree programme; one of these is the way animals are misused in the tourist experience. According to Fennell (2013) there are over 100 million animals working for the purpose of entertainment and an additional one million animals in zoos. The purpose of this paper is to urge tourism educators and scholars to include animal welfare in their tourism education and research in order to raise awareness. This is a notion supported by Fennell (2013) who highlights the importance of animal welfare in tourism studies.

Animals feature in a number of settings, both captive and non-captive. Current research suggests that 70% of tourist excursions either directly or indirectly involve animals (Turner, 2015). Animals are used as transport, as photographic props and as entertainment. Many activities which were once deemed acceptable are now questionable as they are known to cause suffering and pain. The shooting of Cecil the Lion in Zimbabwe and the Blackfish film – which prompted outrage at the truth behind SeaWorld’s killer whale performances – are provocative stories that have caught public attention. These examples have put animal welfare and tourism firmly on the agenda. There is some evidence to suggest that public support for the use of animals for entertainment is beginning to shift (YouGovUK, 2012). Broom (2010) argues that more people think that poor animal welfare is morally unsustainable and that people who keep animals have a duty of care towards them. Generally, tourists do not enjoy seeing unhappy animals. The Born Free Foundation in the UK is working with Global Spirits to persuade the tourism industry to only promote tourist attractions that adopt appropriate animal welfare guidelines and the WSPA (World Society for the Protection of Animals) also have guidelines for tourists.

International tourism graduates are similarly at the forefront of these important tasks: a) to expose and challenge the mistreatment of animals in tourism, and b) to change public (tourist) opinions as to what is an appropriate tourist experience. Using extensionist environmental principles which extend moral obligations of care to other species, this interactive presentation will ask delegates to draw upon their own emotional responses to examples of animal uses in tourism; thus highlighting the issues scholars, students, NGOs in tourism need to address. The presentation will include photographs which depict a variety of animals in questionable settings and performances.