

## **ANIMAL ETHICS IN TOURISM**

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### **—Abstract —**

Animals are exploited for food, scientific researches, cosmetic testings, healing, assisting, entertainment, etc. The entertainment part usually includes animal suffering and pain. Circuses, dolphinariums and zoos are some places where people have fun, while animals do not. This kind of exploitation increases day by day. Ecotourism is a form of tourism that corresponds to animal rights in theory. The tourism field should seek answers for moral questions about equity, equality, rights, justice and values for sustainable and responsible tourism. This paper aims to explore the ways in which animal rights are violated for tourism, and intends to raise awareness about this obvious but not recognised problem by drawing attention to the specific examples of forms of animal exploitation in the world as well as in Turkey.

**Key Words:** *Ethics, Tourism, Responsible Tourism, Animal Rights.*

**JEL Classification:** Z19

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

With the advances of technology, different social habits due to natural life, and the physiological advantages of spending time with animals, tourism activities today tend to focus on animal life. Overall thoughts for the wildlife within tourism

activities do not recognize the rights of innocent animals. As a matter of fact, different points of view concerning animal ethics, animal life and animal rights would have different effects if incorporated into tourism development. The priority of this paper is to explore the ethical behaviours of tourist and tourism companies with respect to animal rights. As part of this paper, first the literature has been searched, and then animal rights and the use of animals in tourism activities all around the world including Turkey have been examined.

### **1.1. Responsible Tourism**

In recent times, with people becoming more conscious and responsible tourism is more often mentioned. Ethical tourism is on the rise, however animal rights in tourism has often been overlooked. Animal performances as part of touristic entertainment are often found appealing to tourists. For example, in Spain, guests may enjoy watching a Dancing Bear, in Thailand travellers may take a snap with a drugged Sumatran Tiger, and in Indonesia people gather to see a Masked Monkey dance and perform. Such animal performances place enormous stress on animals, and can involve violent training techniques (<http://veryvoyager.wordpress.com>).

By the end of the 19th century, scientists were worried about the over-harvesting of manatees as a source of food along the general perception of the animal by the public. Manatees were regularly killed for amusement (local people and tourists), hooked by anglers to play them for sport, run over by boaters, and shot at for fun (Fennell, 2012: 242).

UNWTO estimates that 20% of global tourism today is ethical tourism and its growing three times as fast as the industry as a whole. Also Born Free foundation responds to travellers' concerns about animal exploitation in captivity or in the wild: and encourages the public to alert Born Free of any wild animal welfare problems they may see on their travels both at home and abroad (<http://veryvoyager.wordpress.com>).

### **1.2. Animal Rights and Tourism**

Animal rights mean to provide humane treatment of animals since animals have a right to be free of oppression, confinement, use and abuse by humans (<http://animalrights.about.com>).

Many branches of social sciences and humanities are currently addressing the implications of speciesism by creating the space for research which recognises animals as significant actors (Sanders & Hirschmann, 1996; Simons, 1997; Wolch, West, & Gaines, 1995).

The International Animal Rights Association and its affiliated national associations recognized The Text of the Universal Declaration of Animal Rights on 21-23 September 1977 in London, and the Universal Declaration of Animal Rights was announced in UNESCO Palace in Paris on 15 October 1978.

The position, welfare and rights of animals within tourism development are a relatively neglected area (Hall & Brown, 1996: 46). Animals have been exploited for fun and entertainment activities around the world. These activities involve animals in zoos, shows and circuses, including animals used for photography for tourists. Many circuses force animals to perform in front of a large crowd. Besides, animals are turned into objects used for begging for money or for photographic activities. Some of them are pushed to fight and kill each other, sometimes they are tortured and killed by tourists, under the guise of tourism activities. In all these cases, the use of animals in tourism activities often involves removing the animal from its natural life, and keeping it in very unnatural conditions.

Animals have been exploited for tourism activities for years. They can be sought out in the wild, captured and displayed in captivity or utilised as a form of transport. However, animals are more often objects than subjects in tourism. That is, they are more usually manipulated than recognised as purposive agents or actors in their own right. Some attempts to regulate and shape tourist encounters with animals have been implemented in, for example, the formation of codes of conduct and the establishment of accreditation schemes in wildlife tourism (Davis, 1997; Fennell, 1999; Malloy & Fennell, 1998; Orams, 1994). Recent attempts to introduce a welfare perspective into the analysis of tourist interactions

with host communities, and with the natural environment, have recognised the importance of extending our ethical considerations beyond people (Hall & Brown, 1996: 49).

The animal welfare position can be in part consistent with environmental ethics, in that it also balances the interests of animals with the interests of people. An animal's welfare is compromised when there is some threat of suffering. This suffering can be induced in captivity or in the wild. It might result from: human induced injury; spread of disease; the use of & inhumane methods of capture, trapping or killing; and through disturbance, damage or destruction of habitat (Kirkwood, 1992: 143). Today, many indigenous peoples continue to interact with wildlife for spiritual and cultural reasons as well as for food. However, although hunting animals for food and for sport has existed for thousands of years, the idea of visiting and observing wild animals for recreational purposes, as a tourist attraction, has been a more recent phenomenon. As a result of the exploration of the "new world" by Europeans in the 18th and 19th centuries, specimens (usually dead) of new, strange and exciting creatures began to arrive back in Europe. A curiosity developed in the upper class societies of Western Europe and "safaris" to view and hunt wildlife, particularly in Africa, began to grow in popularity (Adler, 1989: 18).

Many large cities throughout the world now have zoos, in fact, by the early 1980s there were almost 800 zoos worldwide (Yale, 1991: 93). In addition, many countries manage networks of natural areas where wildlife is protected by law, but that allow and promote their observation by tourists (Shackley, 1996: 68).

The range of opportunities for tourists to interact with wildlife continues to increase. A correspondent growth in the amount of literature that considers how these interactions should be managed has occurred (Vickermann, 1988; Shackley, 1992; Kerr, 1991; Albert & Bowyer, 1991; Duffus & Dearden, 1993; Orams, 1995).

Some of this literature quantifies the growth and economic importance of this wildlife-based tourism. For example, Vickermann (1988) estimated that in the late 1980s in the US, \$14 billion was spent annually on wildlife viewing, photography

and feeding wildlife. Rockel and Kealy (1991) report in an earlier study in 1980 that around 29 million people took trips specifically to interact with wildlife in the United States. Even in small remote communities wildlife-based tourism has been found to have a significant impact.

Animal circuses, bullfights, “swim with dolphin” programmes and poor welfare zoos, etc. are animal abusing exercised in the name of entertainment. Ethical tourism has become a hot topic – the public expects the travel industry to set high standards for its activities ([www.wspa-international.org](http://www.wspa-international.org)).

If a tourist sees an incident of animal cruelty, he or she should note the date, time, location, type and number of animals involved. If possible, tourists should also record what they have seen on film. Photographs and video footage are invaluable evidence, but they should not pay to take them. It is vital to lodge tourists’ protests locally in the first instance. Tourist should report the cruelty to the local tourist offices, local police, a local animal welfare society, tour operator, to the aquarium or zoo management or the zoo association for that country ([www.wspa-international.org](http://www.wspa-international.org)).

## 2. EXAMPLES FROM THE WORLD

There are various examples of animal using from all over the world. Some are given below:

**Japanese Bear Parks:** Wild black and brown bears are kept in concrete parks and forced to beg for food in the name of public entertainment in Japan. High visitor demand meant park owners continued breeding bears to turn a healthy profit.

**Bear baiting:** Up to 2,000 spectators will assemble to watch a tethered and clawless bear set upon by trained fighting dogs in Pakistan. The brutal but lucrative contests are organised by powerful local landlords. They own and train the dogs, which are also victims of this ‘sport’, encouraging ferocity in attack situations.

**Whale Watching:** Whale watching is a \$1.25 billion (USD) industry enjoyed by over 10 million people each year. Whale watching excursions give passengers the chance to appreciate whales in their natural environment, from a respectful distance. At their worst, they get too close, fight with other tour boats for viewing space and even encourage tourists to get close to or touch the animals.

**Bullfighting:** Bullfighting pits a bull against men wielding barbed spikes, spears, swords and daggers. These weapons are designed to inflict intense pain and cause blood loss to weaken the animal. At the end of the fight, the bull is slaughtered. In Catalonia this action was banned. But bullfighting still takes place in several European countries and parts of Latin America.

**Tiger Farms:** Tiger farms are places where thousands of tigers are kept in inadequate and overcrowded conditions devoid of 'furniture' and bedding in China. Known to actively breed their tigers, it is believed these facilities are stockpiling animals should the current ban on the use of tiger body parts in Traditional Chinese Medicine be relaxed ([www.bornfree.org.uk](http://www.bornfree.org.uk)).

**Animals Are Eaten By Wild Animals As a Show:** The guest children of Badaltearing Safari Park in China feed the goats, and the goats are taken by the zoo workers, and thrown into a pit full of hungry lions where the lions eat the goats alive. Families with children watch animals being torn to pieces by lions (<http://www.dailymail.co.uk>). The zoo also sells tiger meat and wine, made from the crushed bones of animals. Although it is illegal, the zoo is quite open about its activities. In fact, it boasts of having 140 dead tigers in freezers ready for the plate (<http://fractalenlightenment.com> ).

**Circuses:** Due to continuous travelling and extreme circus training regimes, animal welfare in circuses may be below the standards of zoological collections. Some countries do not inspect travelling shows and circuses when granting them a licence or permission to operate. It is suggested that travelling shows and circuses involving animals should not be supported or promoted by tour operators.

**Animals Used For Begging:** Targeting busy tourist hotspots, especially along beaches, animals are commonly used for begging. Tourists are reportedly

encouraged to buy food from the handler to feed to their animals, or pay to have a 'souvenir photograph' ([www.bornfree.org.uk](http://www.bornfree.org.uk)).

### 3. EXAMPLES FROM TURKEY

Under Turkey's Animal Protection Law No. 5199, cruelty to animals is considered a misdemeanor, punishable by a fine only, with no jail time or a black mark on one's criminal record. Animal Rights Federation in Turkey (HAYTAP) believes that the present law does not contain a strong enough punishment for animal abusers. The purpose of this law is to ensure that animals are afforded a comfortable life and receive good and proper treatment, to protect them in the best manner possible from the infliction of pain, suffering and torture, and to prevent all types of cruel treatment. This Law includes the regulations to be made in line with the purpose article, the precautions to be taken, the coordination, supervision, restrictions and obligations to be imposed and the penal provisions to be enforced ([www.haytap.org](http://www.haytap.org)).

**Dolphinarium:** Turkey receives heavy criticism for its policy on the capture of wild dolphins and poor regulation of dolphin attractions, resulting in many dolphins being kept in very poor and cruel conditions.

It is unlawful to the Bern Convention and the International Protection of Animals Act 5199 to species of dolphins and walrus facilities located in Turkey. It is confirmed that Council of Europe Convention for the Protection of Wildlife and Natural Habitats 1984. In 1983, dolphin hunts were forbidden in Turkey. This prohibition, along with the special permission, was drilled in 2006 for the first time, and dolphin hunting started. The number of the dolphins hunted at various locations in Turkey is as follows: 9 in Kusadasi, 5 in Marmaris, 9 in Antalya and Bodrum ([www.haytap.org](http://www.haytap.org)).

**Dalyan Turtles:** Dalyan turtles (*Caretta Caretta*) are living at beaches with their breeding grounds now protected by conservation organisations. Fishing and tourist boats are a danger due to propellers and fishing nets. Tourists feed them in an unnatural way, and *Caretta Carettas* bite tourists' hands.

**Working Equines:** Horses and donkeys live in harsh conditions, and they have to work for many hours especially for trekking tours in Turkey.

**Exploitation of Chimpanzees:** Hotels and photographers along Turkey's tourism-heavy southern coast are exploiting chimpanzees and other wild animals for profit. Chimps and other wild animals are usually smuggled from Africa to countries with large tourism industries, such as Spain and Turkey (<http://right-tourism.com>).

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study is to find out how to use the animals in accordance with the ethical principles of the tourism industry. Using animals in the tourism sector has just started to be investigated. This study will be a model for future studies. We are all responsible for ensuring that our actions abroad do not contribute to animal suffering.

According to World Society For The Protection of Animals (WSPA) to make changes happen there are some straightforward tips for tourists on how to make a difference to the way animals are treated; before travelling, tourists should check if their tour operator has an animal welfare policy. They shouldn't accept the culture as an excuse for cruelty. They shouldn't be tempted to try the local cuisine if it includes wild animal products. If they decide to visit a zoo, ask whether it abides by to the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums' Code of Ethics. They should never purchase souvenirs made from animals. They should never pay to have their picture taken posing with a wild animal. They should check whether the itinerary includes activities that exploit animals or not. They should avoid any horse or donkey rides that give them causes for concern about the animals' welfare. Compassionate travellers should avoid riding wild animals, such as elephants, for entertainment ([www.wspa-international.org](http://www.wspa-international.org)).

The biggest problem of The Turkish Animal Protection Act that went into force in 2004 is not only that it is not applied but also that unlawful actions are very rarely punished. Looked from this perspective, violation of animal rights to live freely



should be noted in Turkey as well as in the world. So the laws against those who are cruel to animals must be made stricter and then applied in the new form.

Tour operators and hotels should give an end to promoting the tourist activities that use animals. Responsible tourist profile is becoming more sensitive about these actions and they have already started to make reservation for eco-hotels with responsible tour operators. In the future responsible tour programmes will be more popular.

In conclusion, this paper has drawn attention to the fact that the animal rights and animal welfare lobbies do have the capacity to influence tourism provision. Animal rights and welfare organisations like People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) have a whole series of leaflets and campaigns relating to the use of animals in the entertainment, leisure and tourism industries. Tourist operators and managers need to be aware that their activities will be monitored by such organisations and tourism development studies need to recognise the significance of individual animals in tourism processes.

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