

Book review

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This book is one of a number published by Channel View under their "Aspects of Tourism" series, edited by Chris Cooper and Michael Hall. The aim of this series is to explore the "relationship between tourism and cognate subject areas such as strategy, development, retailing, sport and environmental studies". The aim of this particular book about animals and tourism is to "throw light onto the diverse ways in which humans and animals intersect through tourism spaces and places, practices and structures". The book covers 18 chapters written by 23 authors, mainly by academics based in Australia and New Zealand, along with contributions by others from Canada, USA, Finland, Iceland and Israel. The author's include PhD candidates, emeritus professor's and published researchers from a wide range of disciplines such as: tourism, sociology, environmental sciences and policy, as well as a medical doctor and even killer whale trainer! Given this wide range of disciplines and the backgrounds of the authors it is not surprising that the book also explores the relationships between tourists and a wide variety of animals such as: elephants, whales, sharks, dolphins, birds, turtles, butterflies and even insects, and covers animal-human interactions in destinations such as: Australia, Brazil, Canada, Finland, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Thailand. The book also covers a wide range of topics, such as: wildlife tourism, exploitation of animals, helicopter hunting, welfare of animals in captivity, animal touring vacations, eating animals on vacations, images of animals in marketing, the role of flagship species in protecting animals and even explores issues around taking pets on vacations.

The book itself is split into three self-explanatory sections: 1. Ethics and Animal

Welfare, which examines how humans treat animals within a tourism context and how tourists use animals to create pleasure for us, and also discusses the effects of human-animal interactions on animal welfare.

2. Conflict, Contradiction and Contestation discusses a number of issues and suggests that instabilities, inconsistencies and ambiguities seem to characterise most human-animal relationships, for example whale watching as a form of ecotourism.

3. Shifting Relationships explores our relationships with animals at the societal and well as the individual level, and stresses how such relationship are always fluid and shifting. Each of these three sections has between five and seven chapters, and many of these chapters, in the best sense of the phrase, are really case studies and can easily be read by themselves, without reference to the rest of the book.

One of the strengths of the book, unlike many edited books, is that there is every little overlap in the content of the chapters and in the listing of their references. Indeed, the references are a particular strength of the book, and are a useful starting point for those who wish to further explore the issues raised. Also of note, and again unlike other edited books, is the provision of a very useful introduction chapter, in which the editor sets out the thinking and the logic for the layout the book. The final chapter is also written by the editor, and successfully brings together the main points of discussion of each chapter. Although the initial discussion in this concluding chapter about crocodiles in Darwin is a little confusing, as it does not relate to an otherwise well written concluding chapter. This is not to suggest that it does not raise some interesting issues about crocodiles, but the discussion should probably be a stand-alone chapter in its own right. Despite this minor criticism, the editor is to be commended for an excellent concluding chapter, which brings together the main issues raised in each chapter book, to provide an overall coherent conclusion to the book.

Other criticisms of the book are all relatively minor, while some of reproductions are of

Animals and Tourism: Understanding Diverse Relationships

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poor quality, and the final chapter title is probably poorly worded, they do not detract from the overall high quality of the discussions in each of the chapters. The final minor criticism, is that the book does not discuss the impact of mythical animals and tourism, such as: Loch Ness Monster in Scotland, Big Foot in the USA or the Abominable Snowman in Tibet. However, the editor can only work with the papers submitted, but perhaps mythical animals would make an interesting topic in any second edition?

This book fits well into the aims of the Aspects of Tourism series by Channel View Publications, and as such it will make for an interesting read. It is well written by mainly academic writers, but by also incorporating studies from those who work with animals in a tourism context, gives it an additional perspective. The book also highlights the unforeseen consequences from well-meaning government tourism policies, both on the welfare of the animals and for the development of tourism. It also should prove to be useful in helping to understand the exploration of power relationships in tourism, and how through the use of innovative research techniques, researchers can tap into tourist discussions on social media sites. The thoughtful discussions of the issues faced by practitioners was very interesting, and highlighted the dilemmas they face when dealing with complex economic, environmental, social and political issues.

As with all edited books, the temptation is to read only selected chapters, but it is well worth reading the whole book, as the book as a whole presents a coherent overview of the issues facing human-animal interactions. The book should be of interest to tourism academics who are seeking a different view of tourism issues, as well as to students looking to understand tourism through a different lens.

From a tourism futures perspective, while the book suggests and does outline some future research directions, and these are sound and sensible, tourism futures insights is not one of the strengths of the book. However, to be fair, developing a tourism futures perspective was not the aim of the book. Finally, in terms of a recommendation to read, if not to buy the book, perhaps the book is best described as providing an interesting overview of the developing and changing relationships between humans and animals. As such, it will provide a useful starting point for readers who want to explore tourism futures from a different perspective, as the issues raised in the book could well be a topic that tourism futurologists may want to explore.

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