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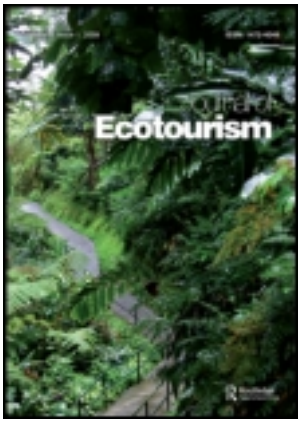

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Contesting the zoo as a setting for ecotourism, and the design of a first principle

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Contesting the zoo as a setting for ecotourism, and the design of a first principle

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This article uses animal ethics theory to address the issue of whether zoos are a morally acceptable form of ecotourism. Arguments in favour of the zoo as ecotourism have justified this stance according to education and conservation factors. However, a survey of literature on zoos points to the fact that they are not as effective in the area of conservation as they contend, nor do they educate visitors at a level that would be deemed meaningful and long-lasting. In the absence of success in these areas, it is argued that zoos should not be viewed as a morally acceptable setting for ecotourism; a contention supported through the use of animal ethics theory – in particular utilitarianism, animal welfare and animal rights. The article concludes by offering a first principle for ecotourism that may be useful in determining what constitutes the acceptable use of animals for ecotourism, and what does not.

Keywords: zoos; ecotourism; animal ethics; animal welfare; animal rights

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Introduction

The tourism industry uses animals in many different ways. Animals are made to compete against each other in racing and fighting contests (among other events). As sources of food, animals provide not only sustenance, but also value in pleasure (as in food tourism). Animal workers perform a wide range of duties that help facilitate the needs of tourists in search of novel experiences in unique settings (e.g. carriers). And nature-based tourists pursue a tremendous number and variety of species as hunters, anglers and viewers.

One of the most popular forms of animal–human engagement for tourism purposes – one that continues to generate growing interest among tourism scholars – is captive animal tourism: zoos and aquaria. Zoos, the focus of this work, 'are public parks which display animals, primarily for the purposes of recreation or education' (Jamieson, 2006, p. 132). While we normally think of zoos in the context of a city zoo, this category also includes game preserves, petting zoos, rural and roadside zoos, aquaria, animal theme parks and hundreds of specialised collections of reptiles, mammals, birds, insects or fish (Fennell, 2012a).

Globally, there are approximately 12,000 captive institutions that hold an estimated 6000 different species (Princée, 2001), with only a fraction of these recognised by WAZA (World Association of Zoos and Aquariums) for maintaining best practices according to international standards (Mullan & Marvin, 1999). The International Species

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Information System (2011) reports that in 800 zoos and aquaria, in 80 countries, there are approximately 2.6 million animals held in captivity (WAZA, 2012).

Zoos continue to have great success as attractions. Over 700 million people visit WAZA-accredited zoos each year (WAZA, 2012; see also Linhart, Adams, & Voracek, 2008), and some of the largest zoos receive upwards of 12 million visitors per year (Mexico City). In the USA, more people visit the zoo than attend all professional basketball, football and baseball games combined over the course of a given year (Miller, 2005). Zoos are also important contributors to metropolitan and regional economies. For example, Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo contributed an estimated $93.82 million to the city from 1.45 million visitors during 2010 (University of Nebraska, Bureau of Business Research, 2011). The British and Irish Association of Zoos and Aquariums reported that zoos and other captive establishments make an annual contribution of £645 million to the British economy along with the creation of 11,000 jobs (UK Parliament, 2011).

Apart from the economic and enjoyment benefits of zoos, the keeping of animals is controversial. Bad press surrounding welfare concerns and the removal of animals from the wild are persistent challenges to zoos (Turley, 1999a, 1999b). The zoo's traditional primary objective of entertainment has evolved over the years to include research, education and conservation, as driven by changing social and cultural values, and these additions have been important in mitigating concerns (Davey, 2007).

Advocates of the zoo concept like Stevens and McAlister (2003) justify their stance on ethical grounds by suggesting that zoos have a 'right' to hold animals captive if they satisfy one or both of the following two conditions: (1) Animals must be part of a managed population with the end goal to release-to-the-wild; and (2) the animals should be part of a structured conservation and education programme in raising the public's awareness of biodiversity and conservation issues. Other theorists argue that zoos are open to moral scrutiny based on the conviction that animals should be living their lives in a free, authentic state of wilderness, and because of concerns over cramped, unhealthy conditions (Tribe, 2004; see also Zamir, 2007). These concerns have been amplified by Shackley (1996) who writes that zoos are ethically indefensible because the conservation mandate used so effectively by zoos does not outweigh welfare and captivity concerns. More specifically, Shackley (1996, p. 98) questions whether animals should (1) be kept in captivity even to educate the public about conservation realities; (2) be taken from the wild to be exhibited to the public; and (3) be forced to entertain visitors. Shackley also questions if there should be universal guidelines governing the conditions under which captive animals are kept, and if it is ethically permissible to finance conservation programmes by exhibiting captive animals to the public.

A moral issue that has not been examined in detail is whether the zoo is defensible as an ecotourism setting or attraction. It presents itself as a question of moral significance in the light of Mason's (2000) contention that, 'With their focus on conservation and education, zoos, arguably, can be considered as significant ecotourism attractions' (p. 338). Conservation and education are two important cornerstones of ecotourism that, along with other factors, help to distinguish it from other forms of tourism. Ecotourists purposefully seek out natural history experiences that are educationally oriented, and these experiences should aid local or regional conservation efforts to qualify as bona fide ecotourism (Blamey, 2001; Higham & Lück, 2002; Orams, 1996).

Mason is not alone in drawing a connection between zoos and ecotourism. Shani and Pizam (2008) suggest that zoos, among other animal based attractions, are taking advantage of the connection forged between ecotourism and education (see also Marsh, 2002). Places like Sea World in the USA have placed more emphasis on environmental education as a

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manner of supplementing entertainment. Programmes like manatee rescue and backyard habitat protection are said to be important by-products of the Sea World experience.

Many zoos also sponsor ecotourism excursions. In North America alone, zoos and aquaria sponsor over 300 trips to over 70 different destinations, with 80% of these trips categorised as ecotourism (Fascione, 1995). Even beyond these sponsored trips, some zoos are being used as hubs to connect with ecotourism markets in innovative ways (Duffy, 2008). The Zurich zoo, for example, is involved in the digging of a well for impoverished people in Madagascar, along with school education programmes, sustainable agroforestry, sustainable use of forest products and the rebuilding of ecotourism infrastructure. As such, the Zurich zoo has become a rural development organisation, but with a little enlightened self-interest, as visitors can book ecotourism trips at a desk beside the Madagascar exhibit.

Clearly, zoos fulfil an important need for humans to observe wildlife. Most of the millions of people who visit a zoo each year do not have the disposable income to travel long haul for the purpose of viewing exotic species of special interest. Nor is this advisable, some argue, because of airplane emissions and the pressure tourists place on local environments (Bertram, 2004). This corresponds to work by Ryan and Saward (2004), who argue that ecotourism is not a solution to the environmental impacts of tourism, but rather an additive that is made worse by the commodification of wildlife (see also Wearing & Jobberns, 2011). Theorists also argue that the distinction between captive and non-captive wildlife tourism sites is decreasing as traditional zoo sites are modified to resemble larger wildlife parks. These quasi-ecotourism sites are attractive to the Asian market (Weaver, 2002).

While these propositions represent new ways of examining the relationship between ecotourism and zoos, they exist largely uncontested by tourism theorists on moral grounds. In an effort to address this gap, the present study responds to the call for more research on zoo tourism (Mason, 2000) by attempting to deepen the discussion on the relationship between ecotourism and zoos through the use of moral theory. The work concludes by declaring a first principle for ecotourism on what constitutes acceptable use of animals for ecotourism purposes and what does not. The stance I adopt follows three main areas of concern. These include the conservation–education concern, the welfare concern and the captivity concern.

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The conservation–education concern

In the previous section, the zoo was identified as a form of ecotourism on the basis of its education and conservation objectives. Zoos have responded effectively to the shifting political climate of the day (Marino, Bradshaw, & Malamud, 2009) and this transition has been in play since the 1960s, according to Ballantyne, Packer, Hughes, & Dierking (2007), who write that 'the focus has from one of recreation to one of conservation . . . ' (p. 368). Conservation includes captive breeding, animal welfare, environmental enrichment, reintroduction and support for in situ conservation (Catibog-Sinha, 2008; Turley, 1999a, 1999b). These conservation themes permeate every element of the site – from gift shops and bathrooms to exhibits.

Zoo advocates believe that education will increase connectivity between visitors and animals and, as a result, catalyse support for animals and their habitat (Clayton, Fraser, & Saunders, 2009). Indeed, some studies have found that education does in fact have positive outcomes for visitors. Weiler and Smith (2009) discovered that the more layers of interpretation a visitor experiences, the higher they rate this interpretation according to

10 cognitive, affective and behavioural measures (e.g. the desire to stay longer and the desire to visit again in the future). In a study of 206 zoo visitors, Clayton et al. (2009) found a strong correlation between zoo exhibits and the connection that people feel towards animals. The more effective exhibits are in generating pro-animal feelings, the more likely visitors are to support conservation initiatives.

On balance, however, the vast majority of studies conclude that conservation is largely insignificant to the overall experience of the zoo visitor. In a landmark study by Kellert (1979), the typical zoo visitor was found to be much less environmentally aware than those who actually spend time in nature, like hunters, anglers and hikers. Perhaps most unsettling is that the zoo visitor is only marginally more knowledgeable than people who have little to no interest in animals at all (see also Mason, 2007), which suggests that educational programmes are not as successful as zoos would have the public believe. More specifically, captive breeding programmes are hampered by the fact that animals captured for these purposes often die shortly after being placed in captivity (see, for example, Lück & Jiang, 2007). But how or if animals live while in captivity is only part of the picture. Domalain (1978), a wild animal dealer, estimates that only one out of every 10 animals captured in the wild actually survive the ordeal to make it to the zoo. Some theorists contend that the reason that animals are bred in zoos is not so much for the reintroduction of wild animals, but rather for the purpose of trade with other zoos and the circus (Cui & Jiang, 2011). Furthermore, reintroduction efforts are challenged by the fact that less than 20 species of 120 reintroduced have become self-sufficient in the wild (Catibog-Sinha, 2008). To this end, ZooCheck New Zealand (n.d.) argues that zoos have put the 'con' in conservation. Zoo propaganda induces the public to believe that the zoo's conservation efforts are successful. In reality, what ZooCheck has found in consideration of a range of studies is that the zoo does not equal conservation. For example:

- Of 1370 rare or endangered species, the reintroduction of captive-bred animals could assist in the conservation of only 19 or 1.4%.
- Where captive-bred breeding of wildlife was useful, this is best accomplished at purpose-built centres located adjacent to the species' natural habitat.
- Using the black rhino as an example, annual captive management per animal is US$ 16,000. Annual cost of protecting wild habitat for one rhino is US$ 1000. That is, 16 rhino can be supported in the wild as compared with one in captivity.
- It can cost over 100 times more to maintain a group of elephants in captivity for a year than to conserve a similar group in the wild, and their habitat, in situ for the same period.

Theorists also argue that zoos should be classified as a non-consumptive form of wildlife tourism (see, for example, Higginbottom, Tribe, & Booth, 2003). If *consumptive* can be defined as the use of a resource that reduces supply of a target species or resource (Fennell, 2012a; Mimi, 2011), it is not at all clear why zoos should be deemed non-consumptive if animals are removed from the wild and if captive breeding initiatives are of limited success. When animals are taken out of the wild, even though they are not killed, this act terminates the animal's role as a member of a wild population. If animals were successfully bred and released back into the wild such that the balance of supply was positive and not negative, then a contrary argument could be made. Even those animals bred successfully in zoos and sold to other zoos without the intention of releasing these animals back into the wild should be viewed as consumptive, as non-consumptive forms of tourism do not purposefully remove or affect a target organism (Duffus &

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Dearden, 1990). All of the above points to the fact that captivity is more consumptive than non-consumptive in the light of the consequences of removal.

The disconnect between ecotourism and the zoo is further accentuated in studies showing that fun and entertainment (over conservation and education) are the main reasons why people visit zoos (Lück & Jiang, 2007; Turley, 1999b). Some commentators have gone so far as to suggest that education is really just an exercise in public relations (Williams, 2001). The following few examples serve to emphasise the importance of entertainment over other motivators.

An English Tourist Board (1983) study involving 1100 people found that the primary motivations for visiting British zoos included 'To have a day out', followed by 'To treat the children', 'To watch the animals and birds', and 'For entertainment'. Learning-based motivations were far less important. Visitors to the Cleveland Metropark Zoo cited, in order of importance, 'Family togetherness', 'Enjoyment' and 'Novelty seeking', well ahead of education (Holzer, Scott, & Bixler, 1998). Similar results have been reported by Reade and Waran (1996) in their study of visitors to the Edinburgh zoo. The main motivation cited by respondents to visit the zoo was 'To go with friends and relatives' (36%), followed by 'For the fun of it' (27%) and 'Entertainment' (12%). Only 4% of respondents said they went to the zoo to learn about animals. A study of 1340 adult visitors to six zoos in the UK by Balmford et al. (2007) found no change between arriving and departing visitors in regard to knowledge scores. The authors conclude: 'We found very little evidence, in the zoos we sampled, of any measurable effect of a single informal visit on adults' conservation knowledge, concern, or ability to do something useful' (Balmford et al., 2007, p. 133; see also Linke & Winter, 2011; Smith, Broad, & Weiler, 2008). While administrators might claim that education and conservation are cornerstones to the zoo experience, evidence points more to recreation and enjoyment.

The time spent at animal enclosures also points to a focus more on entertainment than on education and conservation. Ludwig (1981) found that animals are typically viewed in rapid succession, and there is a tendency to focus more on 'babies and beggars' – the cute young and those that entertain in ways that we deem entertaining, on human terms. This observation is confirmed in other investigations. In a study of the reptile house of the National Zoo in Washington, DC, visitors stayed on average only 26 s in front of each enclosure (Mullan & Marvin, 1999). Visitors to the Australian Reptile Park spent very little time in front of smaller reptile exhibits, according to Markwell and Cushing (2009), only stopping long enough to take photographs.

The conservation–education focus of zoos can be examined at a deeper level from the perspective of two versions of utilitarianism: preference and hedonistic. I summarise Fennell's (in press) more comprehensive treatment of zoos from a utilitarian perspective. Utilitarianism is an ethical theory whereby a good choice is one that produces the most pleasure and least amount of pain for all impacted, in the balance of costs and benefits.

In the case of preference utilitarianism, Singer (2009) argues that humans and non-human animals prefer one thing to another. One preference will take precedence unless another is found to be stronger. In the case of zoos, Singer might argue that the zoo as an institution is moral if it places the interests or preferences (both terms are closely linked) of animals over the interests of tourists. By contrast, the zoo may be considered immoral if they hold animals as captives in ways that fail to respect these interests. The utilitarian calculus needed to understand the interests of both parties, humans and animals, if the latter is even a consideration at all, is complicated. If zoos are failing to educate visitors – despite claims by administrators that education is foremost – and conservation is of limited success, utilitarians would argue that the zoo is not ethical because fun and

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entertainment take precedence over conservation and education. Human interest trumps animal interest or, characteristically, the preferences of the more highly rational outweigh the preferences of those less rational.

From a hedonistic utilitarian standpoint, Fennell (in press) illustrates that if most of the 700 million people who visit a zoo annually have a pleasurable experience, the zoo can be justified as moral: more pleasure experienced in the end than pain in the calculation of costs and benefits. However, if by 'most' we consider that animals are also sentient and experiencers of pleasure and pain (Allen, 2004; Appel & Elwood, 2009; Brown, Wielebnowski, & Cheeran, 2008), any estimate of sentiency would need to take into consideration both groups. If we imagine that the approximately 700 million people who visit zoos each year have a pleasurable experience, and the number of animals in zoos as approximately 30 million (roughly estimated using the figures earlier) have a less pleasurable experience or a life marked by suffering, we could argue that the zoo is still morally justifiable. Benefits of the many outweigh costs of the few. But taken a step further, such a method of determining moral rightness or wrongness is problematic, especially in view of conservation. It is a question of some significance when we make captive animals suffer socially, physically and psychologically in zoos so that their equivalents may be saved in the wild (Marino et al., 2009). Critics of utilitarianism argue that it is not morally acceptable for the few to experience pain and suffering, in whatever form, so the many can benefit.

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The welfare concern: How animals are made to live

Animal welfare has been defined as 'a state of complete mental and physical health, where the animal is in harmony with its environment' (Hughes, 1976, p. 1006). It is difficult to define because it must combine scientific information with the ethical views of society (Barber, 2009). Animal welfare advocates argue that behaviour towards animals deemed morally right is that which adheres to certain freedoms like freedom from hunger and thirst; freedom from discomfort; freedom from pain, injury or disease; freedom to express normal behaviour; sufficient space, proper facilities and company of the animal's own kind; and freedom from fear and distress (see, for example, Farm Animal Welfare Council, 2009).

Tribe (2011) discusses many of the positive changes in animal welfare that have taken place in zoos during the last half-century, which have led to longer lives in animals in captivity. Such changes include nutrition, chemical constraint and knowledge of diseases and how these can be prevented and treated. He also discusses these in the context of continued debate over persistent problems that many species, like elephants, experience. But in reference to these positive gains in animal welfare, the bigger question rests both in where animals live, which plays heavily into how they live. In this section, I deal with how animals live in the zoo. In the following section, I deal with where they live. Although both are related, the former section deals with issues of welfare while the latter focuses on issues of rights.

Welfare conditions in some zoos are not nearly as well secured as in others, i.e. zoos are all not created equal (Tribe, 2004). And even though WAZA offers accreditation to institutions where welfare standards are met, the standards that they promote are merely recommendations on the proper treatment of animals. These standards and best practices are still under debate according to Maple (2007), because those involved are said to have quite divergent opinions about the proper management of many species, e.g. elephants (see also Agoramoorthy & Harrison, 2002).

Modern, well-funded zoos have improved the design of enclosures in a way that is said to be 'animal-friendly' (Ryan & Saward, 2004) through the creation of third-generation exhibits which are based on natural appearance and animal enrichment programmes that 'create the illusion that animals are living in their native environment' (Ballantyne et al., 2007, p. 369; see also Beardsworth & Bryman, 2001). Third-generation exhibits 'give visitors the impression that animals have the freedom to roam at will' (Ballantyne et al., 2007, p. 370, citing Woods, 1998), and that interactive activity programmes (e.g. 'Breakfast with Ah Meng') are meant to allow tourists to get up close and personal with animals. Apart from suggesting that these shows might entail unnatural behaviours, there is no questioning whether they ought to be allowed at all (see Shackley, 1996, above).

There are two main concerns with the types of enclosures described above in reference to captive and non-captive wildlife encounters. The first is that while Generation 1 and 2 enclosures have a negative impact on animal welfare, this is evidently not the case with Generation 3 enclosures. The only costs in the latter case are that animals may not be visible (as above). But what does animal-friendly mean? Are these enclosures the lesser of two evils? Elephants travel as far as 40 miles in a single day (Maple, 2007), and all the world's major zoos combined in space do not amount to the range requirements of a single jaguar (Preece & Chamberlain, 1993). How is this animal friendly?

The second issue is that the reader does not gain a sense of the significance of the difference between animals living in captivity and those living freely in the wild. This point has been addressed by Finlay, James, and Maple (1988) who found that captive and wild animals are not perceived the same. Zoo animals are generally viewed as tame, restricted and passive, while wild animals are perceived as free, wild and active. It is as though we in tourism blindly accept the fact that captivity is a reality that will never change. When we argue that non-captive wildlife tourism has costs, and these costs are that animals may not be visible and that there is some type of environmental impact, we lose a sense of the significant difference that exists between the costs of not being able to see wildlife in the wild and costs borne by wildlife held in captivity.

Theorists have also questioned whether welfare criteria go far enough in actually providing better welfare. Korte, Olivier, and Koolhaas (2007) argue that these fail to incorporate complexities of the natural world such as fear and pain, both of which have fitness, survival and adaptive value. The absence of these normal stressors encountered in the natural world leads to other abnormal problems encountered in zoo environments. If animals experience too much abnormal stimulation (high density of visitors), this leads to certain pathologies. If there is too little stimulation, this leads to depression and disease. Poor welfare is represented in these extremes, which zoos tend to exacerbate.

Wickins-Drazilová (2006) shares some of the concerns voiced by Korte et al. in acknowledging that zoos cannot avoid the fact that unnatural stressors (exposure to humans and close proximity to other stress-inducing species) lead to maladaptive behaviours such as bar licking, head swaying and marching for hours in predictable patterns. Lack of freedom comes from the inability to move normally and the impossibility of making decisions for one's self regarding food, reproduction, shelter and climate. As such, the conventional metrics of animal welfare in zoos fail to incorporate more difficult measures of welfare like natural behaviour, freedom of choice and dignity. While it is the aim of many zoos to provide naturalistic environments that are animal friendly, in the end they cannot replicate or simulate climate, migration, predator–prey relationships or other natural factors in the wild that should be the measure of animal friendly.

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The captivity concern: Where animals are made to live

Issues connected to welfare and the size of enclosures discussed above prompt still other more deeply seated questions regarding whether animals should be kept in captivity at all. If we cannot justify the keeping of animals in the main, how is it that we can justify the keeping of animals for ecotourism?

The capture and keeping of animals has roots that trace as far back as the fifteenth century BC (Stevens & McAlister, 2003). Emperors and nobles collected animals not only for purposes of novelty, but perhaps more importantly as signposts of wealth and power. During the Age of Exploration, these private collections increased in magnitude several fold and represented the spoils of imperialism; mastery of the planet along with all of its human and non-human inhabitants. Cartesian rationality provided scientific justification for the use and abuse of animals. Animals, Descartes argued, were devoid of consciousness, so they could be used instrumentally in any manner imaginable. As such, there was no moral issue surrounding the acceptability of capturing, keeping and subordinating animals because they were unthinking and unfeeling brutes (Preece, 2005). The capture and presentation of animals in menageries and later organised more formally for the viewing public in zoos is built from this legacy of subordination. What comes packaged with this is a sense of entitlement or the right to have direct and convenient access to the most charismatic species from around the world.

What is troubling, according to Anderson (1995; see also Miller, 2005), is that there is the glorification of intervention in the zoo environment through order and control. Order in how animals ought to be represented and positioned in the zoo setting, and control in how the animals are meant to behave and when they are to be fed, how, and the type of food thought to suit their needs. Intervention is also represented in not only the separation between the keeper and the kept, but also in the inability of animals to interact with one another in some sterilised, institutionalised mind set. In the end, the zoo environment is the epitome of animal marginalisation, with humans able to gaze upon animals but animals unable to 'see' or regard humans – the one-way gaze (Berger, 1980; Franklin, 1999). There is simply a passive dependence based on small cages, isolation and programmed feeding times that render the animal as more like a distorted cultural version or image of what the animal would be like in its natural form (Malamud, 1998).

These themes have been explored in detail by Acampora (2005) who adopts Foucault's concept of the carceral archipelago, i.e. zoos are much the same as prisons defined by artificial space, enforced occupancy and demonstration. For animals in the zoo, Acampora continues, their lifeworld is characterised by a violation of their free-living status. In the process, animals are rendered docile because the conditions they must endure and the inability to escape the human gaze prevent them from living the life they are supposed to live as individuals of a species. The prison analogy is stretched even further by Acampora when he observes that these animals have become institutionalised and likely incapable of living a normal life on the 'outside'. For those individuals released, their space and time movements are consistently tracked using electronic paraphernalia, not unlike released prisoners who are tracked using similar devices by their parole board. In the metaphorical sense, many captives freed into the wild never actually 'return home'. The paradox of the zoo is that the exposition of the animal other serves only to erase the natural characteristics of what made these animals wild and unique through the elimination of the ability to interact with or avoid others freely (Acampora, 1998). By keeping animals in captivity, in a manner similar to our insane asylums of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, we diminish the dignity not only of animals, but of ourselves (Wickins-Drazilová, 2006).

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The institutionalisation of animals kept in captivity, as above, has been discussed by Masson and McCarthy (1995), who use the German term *funktionslust* to make reference to those behaviours that give animals the most amount of pleasure: the freedom to fly, climb and run unencumbered. What this amounts to is a stripping of personal liberty (Jamieson, 1995) that renders the animal emasculated or denatured. So, if animals take pleasure in normal behaviours in the natural world, it is just as likely that they will miss these activities if not allowed to participate in them while in captivity.

In Section 2, above, the discussion focused on the zoo and animal welfare concerns. The issue of animal capture and presentation for human enjoyment as described in this section is even less morally justifiable based on the rights view. Regan (2004; see also Fennell, 2012b) argues that animals (mentally normal mammals of 1 year or more, and more recently even birds and fish) are said to have a type of value, inherent value, which is independent of their utility to others. Animals, Regan argues, have a moral right to be treated in a manner that respects this value. If a being has inherent value, it has a right to be treated with respect like all other beings that maintain this type of value, 'they are equal in value to all who have inherent value' (Regan, 2004, p. 360).

Using Regan's metrics, most animal species held captive in zoos possess inherent value and, as such, there should be limits on how they ought to be used, i.e., in this case as resources for human entertainment. Regan observes that although different species have lives that are unequal based on the quality of their lives or sources of satisfaction (e.g. a person has more sources of satisfaction than, say, a dog), this is still not a basis for exploitation for instrumental ends. As such, no matter how dressed up zoos and aquaria get and how they change their themes and spaces, they remain morally objectionable because they keep animals as captives (see also Garner, 2005). In doing so, zoos violate an animal's status as a free-living creature and the ability to express normal behaviour, and they also deny an animal's inherent value, which is equivalent, in Regan's terms, to equal moral status.

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Zoos ≠ Ecotourism

If animal ethics can be defined in part as the moral responsibility that we have towards animals (Håstein, Scarfe, & Lund, 2005), what is the moral stance that we should adopt in consideration of zoos as a form of ecotourism? Before addressing this question, there is a strong argument that carries over more generally to the question of whether zoos should exist at all. This is not the focus here, especially given that such a stance would not be popular to an industry that places more value on economic rather than socio-cultural or environmental factors.

Many commentators (see, for example, Butcher, 2003; Wheeller, 1994) argue that ecotourism is really just a wolf in sheep's clothing (translation: that ecotourism is really no different in practice than any other form of tourism on the basis of a business-as-usual approach). If the zoo exists in the mind of ecotourism theorists and ecotourists alike as an acceptable form of ecotourism, Wheeller's and Butcher's observations would no doubt hold to be true.

But ecotourism carries with it the possibility of a different, more ecologically sensitive type of interaction with nature according to sustainability, responsibility, ethical marketing and practice, low impact, non-consumptiveness and other related factors. Wearing and Jobberns (2011) recognise this in arguing that, '. . .classifying captive animal viewing as ecotourism negates the contribution of ecotourism to genuine sustainable tourism through the mistreatment of these captive animals' (Wearing & Jobberns, 2011, p. 54). The notion that ecotourism ought to represent different values and priorities is supported by Ryan and Saward (2004), who

conclude that 'zoos seem to be more successful at attracting a family market than an ecotourist segment that has a genuine concern about animal welfare' (p. 263). These scholars present concerns about the acceptability of ecotourism and zoos on welfare grounds. This is appropriate given the body of literature that discusses zoos from a welfare perspective.

One of the main objectives of this article was to advance the discussion beyond the welfare debate through the use of moral theory. Preference utilitarianists argue that zoos are justifiable on moral grounds if tourists were being educated and animals conserved – if tourists and animals have their interests served. If, on the other hand, zoos are unable to fulfil their education and conservation objective and animals are secondary to the needs of tourists, the zoo becomes an immoral enterprise. The prospects for a harmonious zoo–ecotourism connection become even that much more tenuous if education is the least attractive of a range of different motives, only a small percentage of animals are successfully reintroduced into the wild and in situ conservation is cheaper than ex situ conservation efforts. From the rights perspective, zoos would not be sanctioned as ecotourism because animals possessing inherent value should never be used in ways that violate this value. Zoos continue to do so even as they improve their enclosures.

The incongruous relationship between zoos and ecotourism has been touched on by Acampora (2005) who observes that, 'whatever else one may say about such ecotourism one of its cardinal virtues is that it allows the animals to engage in, or break off, any encounter with human visitors' (p. 83; see also Acampora, 1998, p. 3). The zoo does not allow for this, nor will it ever, in its present form. For theorists and practitioners who seek guidance on what might constitute the ethical use of animals in an ecotourism context, the following *first principle* is offered as a way forward:

> Reject as ecotourism all practices that are based on or support animal capture and confinement, or other forms of animal use that cause suffering, for human pleasure and entertainment.
>
> Embrace as ecotourism interactions that place the interests of animals over the interests of humans. This would include encounters with free-living animals that would have the liberty to engage or terminate interactions independent of human influence.

This principle builds off previous studies that argue for the inclusion of an ethical imperative in ecotourism (see, for example, Fennell, 2006; Fennell & Malloy, 1995; Karwacki & Boyd, 1995; Smith & Duffy, 2003), and corresponds to the deontological school of ethics, which reasons that what is morally right is that which abides by rules, guidelines, duties or principles independent of the consequences of actions or inactions (Fennell & Malloy, 2007; see also Przeclawski, 1996). In doing one's duty, such as the duty to never tell a lie, we are doing enough. Social contract ethics and codes of ethics, religion and the Golden Rule, and Kantian ethics are all forms of deontology. The first principle for ecotourism would adhere most strongly to the code of ethics arm of deontology, in the way that a code defines voluntary ethical behaviour appropriate for a profession (Fennell & Malloy, 2007; Ray, 2000). It is also the case that more specific codes of ethics could be developed from this general directive.

Conclusion

This article argues that how animals live in the zoo can never amount to how they live in the wild. There are simply too many compromising factors that animals must endure in zoos that take away from their ability to live free, normal lives. This very fact, as a start, should be a concern for those who practice ecotourism as operators or tourists.

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Correspondingly, the strength of the proposed principle lies in its ability to provide a clear line of demarcation between what is acceptable ecotourism practice and what is not. It forces us to ask important questions about why we are using animals for human enjoyment and, perhaps more importantly, how (see, for example, Fennell, 2000; Holland, Ditton, & Graefe, 1998, in the context of fishing as ecotourism, and Gunnarsdotter, 2006, in the context of hunting as ecotourism). If we place the interests of animals over the interests of humans in ecotourism – and this is not the case in zoos or any other activity that compromises the wellbeing of animals for our pleasure – we will have made a decisive step towards the realisation of a more ethical ecotourism industry.

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