

## Module 20

# The Welfare of Animals Used in Entertainment



This lecture was first developed for **World Animal Protection** by Dr David Main (University of Bristol) in 2003. It was revised by **World Animal Protection** scientific advisors in 2012 using updates provided by Dr Caroline Hewson.

### Free online resources

To get free updates and additional materials, please go to [www.animalmosaic.org/education/tertiary-education/](http://www.animalmosaic.org/education/tertiary-education/)

# This module will teach you

**The most common uses of animals  
in entertainment**

**The main sources of ethical concern**

**Some of the most common causes of reduced  
animal welfare in different types of entertainment**

# Background

## Entertainment

- ❖ Something diverting or engaging
- ❖ Not essential to human life, but may increase quality of life, e.g. positive emotions, income

## Animals in entertainment

- ❖ Income-generating: gambling, taxes, admission fees, prize money

## Forms of entertainment

- ❖ Fighting / killing – may be ritualised, e.g. bullfights
- ❖ Performing, e.g. circuses, dressage, racing
- ❖ Zoos
- ❖ Use in tourism, e.g. rides, photographs



# Animals as entertainment

**Horses: racing, hunting, dressage, show-jumping, eventing, rodeos**

**Greyhounds: racing**

**Camels: racing**

**Cattle: rodeos, bullfighting**

**Dolphins: displays, swimming with humans**

**Elephants, lions, etc: circuses, parades**

**Dogs, bears, cocks: fighting**

**Primates: photographs with tourists, circuses**



# Review of ethical concerns

## (Sandøe & Christiansen, 2008)

### Animals may be harmed

### Deontological ethical frameworks – our obligations to animals

- ❖ Rights
- ❖ Dependence on us (relational)

### Consequentialist ethical frameworks – consequences for us and for them

- ❖ Contractarian (consequences for people)
- ❖ Utilitarian (consequences for people and animals)

- ❖ Respect for nature (consequences for the species / ecosystem as a whole, not for individuals)

### Countries differ as to what consequences are acceptable regarding animals used for entertainment

- ❖ E.g. certain injury or death vs. risk of injury or death

# Benefits and harm to people

## Benefits to people

- ❖ Expression of culture, e.g. rodeos; dancing bears; bullfighting
- ❖ Handlers may develop strong bonds
- ❖ Generates income
- ❖ Amuses – social, relaxing, often outside, interaction with living world, may be elite status

## Harm to people

- ❖ Gambling is addictive
- ❖ Animals seen as threat needing harsh treatment
- ❖ Do not appreciate the full range of their behaviour
- ❖ Cruelty to animals weakens the intellect (White, 2009)
- ❖ Humans may be injured



Credit: Wildlife Trust of India

# Benefits and harm to animals

## Benefits to animals

- ❖ Good husbandry and positive interactions
- ❖ Research to help the species, and enable more human entertainment in future

## Harm to animals

- ❖ Animals captured from the wild causing injury, mortality, disruption to social groups
- ❖ Inadequate husbandry
- ❖ Stress of captivity (Morgan & Tromborg, 2007)
- ❖ Punishment-based methods of training and control
- ❖ Injured / killed during entertainment – pain, fear, distress
- ❖ Does not respect their *telos*, i.e. is unnatural



# Overview of training methods

## Rewards and punishments

	Reward	Punishment
Positive	Add something pleasant, e.g. give food	Add something unpleasant, e.g. hit the animal
Negative	Remove something unpleasant, e.g. stop giving an electric shock	Remove something pleasant, e.g. stop playing



# Problems with pain-based training methods

**Correct amount**

**Timing and consistency**

**Fear prevents learning**

**Physical damage**

**Suppresses behaviour**

**Negative owner–animal relationship**

# Types of entertainment

## Fighting / killing

## Zoos

## Performance

## Use in tourism

- ❖ **Dancing bears**
- ❖ **Marine animals**
- ❖ **Circuses**
- ❖ **Fiestas / rodeos**
- ❖ **Horses: racing, jumping, dressage, etc.**
- ❖ **Dogs: racing**

# Fighting and killing

## Dog fighting

## Cock fighting

## Bear baiting

## Gambling is often the underlying reason

### Main welfare concerns

- ❖ Fear
- ❖ Pain
- ❖ Rearing – handling increases fear aggression
- ❖ Lack of veterinary attention
- ❖ Wild-caught bears



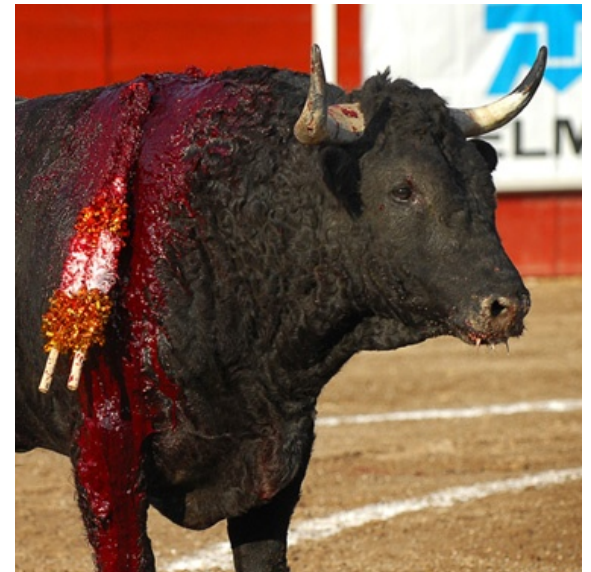
Credit: Mark Rissi

# Bullfighting (1)

## Pain and distress for bull

- ❖ Preparation – eyes irritated
- ❖ Goading and injury to maintain aggression
- ❖ The kill and subsequent ritual

## Injuries to horses used in the bullfight



# Bullfighting (2)

**Banned in Catalonia, Spain since January 2012**

**Bans under debate elsewhere, e.g. parts of Colombia and Mexico**

**Ethical arguments?** (White, 2009)

- ✦ **Tradition, income**
- ✦ **Desire for entertainment weakens appreciation for suffering; appeal of tradition is mistaken and anthropocentric**

# Performance animals

Dancing bears

Marine animals

Circuses

Fiestas / rodeos

Horses: racing, jumping, dressage, etc.

Dogs: racing



# Dancing bears in India

**Sloth bear cubs are taken from the wild;  
their mothers are usually killed**

**The muzzle is pierced (without anaesthetic)  
and a tether inserted to allow the bear to  
be controlled**



# Circus animals

(lossa et al., 2009)

## May have been wild-caught

- ❖ Even if bred in captivity, not domesticated

## 'Life on the road'

- ❖ Transport condition
- ❖ Reduced freedom to express natural behaviour
- ❖ Limited space ⇒ stereotypies, e.g. head-bobbing in picketed elephants; pacing in caged tigers (Friend & Parker, 1999; Nevill & Friend, 2006)

- ❖ Lack of space to provide enrichment
- ❖ Boredom and frustration: only 1-9 per cent of time performing or training – otherwise few behavioural opportunities

## Training methods

**Lack of resources for veterinary care, etc.**



# Performing marine animals

**Wild capture** (White, 2009)

**Mortality, and shortened lifespan of animals after capture**

**Restriction of natural behaviour in confinement**

**Training methods** (Brando, 2010)



# Fiestas and rodeos

**Unnecessary distress**

**Goaded of the animals to maintain their 'aggressive' interactions with humans**

**The bull may injure the horses used**

**Fiesta: use of hooters, explosions and fireworks to enrage and confuse the animals**



Credit: iStock.

# Horses and performance (1)

(Waran, 2007; Jones & McGreevy, 2010)

**Visible injury / death during performance**

**Inappropriate use of artificial aids, e.g. spurs and whips**

**Cosmetic alterations, e.g. tail-docking, tail-blocking** (Heleski & Anthony, 2012)

**Extreme challenges ⇒ acute or chronic injury**

❖ E.g. racing, polo, endurance riding

**Training and riding techniques that involve punishment or extreme control, e.g.**

- ❖ **Dressage – training using pressure on reins to hyperflex the neck (Rollkur position)** (von Borstel et al., 2009)
- ❖ **Riding style – English more associated with stereotypies than Western, depending on breed and access to paddock** (Normando et al., 2011)

# Horses and performance (2)

(Waran, 2007; Jones & McGreevy, 2010)

Transport (Kay & Hall, 2009)

Housing ⇒ social isolation

Stereotypies e.g. weaving, crib-biting

(Wickens & Heleski, 2010; Tadich & Oraya, 2010; Houpt, 2012)

- ❖ Methods to prevent behaviours can cause suffering + / – pain, e.g. especially crib-biting: (i) ‘modified Forsell’ s’ surgical removal of sections of neck muscle, (ii) electrifying the surfaces that the horse uses to bite on
- ❖ Inappropriate feeding ⇒ gastric ulceration ⇒ crib-biting

The lack of long-term responsibility ⇒ multiple owners and wastage

# Racing animals

(Waran, 2007)

Young animals may be subject to rigorous training when immature (horses, dogs)

Goading, use of whips and spurs, injuries during training and racing

'Failed' animals may have little or no value (horses, dogs)

- ❖ E.g. UK: every year, ~14,000 greyhounds start racing, 9,000 stop and, of these, ~6,500 (~70 per cent) are killed (Haupt et al., 2007)
- ❖ Adoption programmes (Elliott et al., 2010)

Bait animals (hares, rabbits, birds) may be used as targets for racing and coursing (dogs)



Credit: Colin Seddon

# Summary so far

**Review ethical positions, harms and benefits**

**Zoos**

**Use in tourism**

**Fighting / killing**

**Performance**

- ❖ Dancing bears
- ❖ Marine animals
- ❖ Circuses
- ❖ Fiestas / rodeos
- ❖ Horses: racing, jumping, dressage, etc.
- ❖ Dogs: racing

# Zoos and animal parks (1)

**Mortality and morbidity associated with wild capture**

**Captivity is stressful** (Morgan & Tromborg, 2007), e.g.

- ❖ **Lack of relevant sensory stimuli**
- ❖ **Restricted movement, feeding and other behavioural opportunities**
- ❖ **Lack of area to retreat to**
- ❖ **Forced proximity to humans**
- ❖ **Too much predictability**
- ❖ **Too little environmental control**

**Stressors** ❖ **abnormal or restricted behaviours and reduced reproductive success**



# Zoos and animal parks (2)

**Environmental enrichment not enough for  
welfare of some carnivores**  
(Clubb & Mason, 2003)

**Stress ❖ reduced reproductive success**



# Tourism: photographic models

Immature animals used

Life 'on the road'

Normal behaviours suppressed

Confinement



# Welfare concerns in 'tourist photography'

**Seasonality of tourist trade**

**Older, aggressive or 'unattractive' animals  
may be abandoned or neglected**

**High risk of disease due to improper care**

# Tourist entertainment: rides

**Camels, horses, donkeys, goats:**

- ❖ **Weight-bearing (donkeys)**
- ❖ **Poor condition – equids**  
(Burn et al., 2010)

**Seasonality: animals often ‘contracted’ to work**

**Confinement**

**Long hours of repetitive activity**

**Weight-bearing, saddle sores, lameness**



Credit: Minna Tallberg

# How to improve the welfare of animals used in entertainment

## Legislation

- ❖ **Licensing of premises (public and animal protection)**
- ❖ **Prohibition, e.g. Pakistan's Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act (1890) in principle prohibits bear baiting**
- ❖ **Many challenges in making it effective, e.g.**
- ❖ **Wording; enforcement; independence of enforcement body; penalties**

# **Influence of NGOs on the welfare of animals in entertainment**

**Support or start boycotts of circuses or zoos (often ineffective)**

**Campaign and lobby to raise public and political awareness of issues**

**Education: allow people to make informed judgments on issues, and relate their local experience to global standards**

**Promote the allocation of resources to maintain effective policing of existing legislation, and creation of new law**

# Summary

## Humans use animals for entertainment

- ❖ This can lead to denial of the basic needs of these animals

## The entertainment industry

- ❖ From small shows to large established operations
- ❖ The role of gambling
- ❖ Wild species not suited to circuses or, in many cases, zoos

## Research into well established uses of animals

- ❖ Competition horses

# Feedback:

## Please let us know what you think

- ❖ How have you used this module?
- ❖ What did you like about it?
- ❖ What did you not like?
- ❖ Do you have any tips to share?

Please take part in our 10 minute survey here:

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Your feedback will help other teachers like you

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