

## Multispecies leisure: Human-animal interactions in leisure landscapes

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### Abstract

The emerging multidisciplinary field of human-animal studies encourages researchers to move beyond human-centric practices and to recognise that human and nonhuman beings are positioned within shared ecological, social, cultural and political spaces whereby nonhumans have become key actors worthy of moral consideration and play a fundamental role in humans' lives. With some exceptions (e.g. Carr, 2014; Dashper, 2018; Danby, 2018; Danby & Finkel, 2018; Young & Carr, 2018), leisure studies has been slow to embrace this 'animal turn' and consider how leisure actions, experiences and landscapes are shaped through multispecies encounters between humans, other animals, reptiles, fish and the natural environment. This special issue begins to address this gap by considering leisure as more-than-human experiences. We consider leisure with nonhuman others, both domestic and wild, by exploring the 'contact zones' between humans and other species and, in doing so, we create an interspecies lens through which to explore these encounters. The research presented in this special issue takes into consideration the affective and ethical dimensions of human-nonhuman animal entanglements in leisure spaces and the need to strive for reciprocal, mutual welfare and wellbeing. Through the use of innovative methodological approaches, the authors explore a range of issues and perspectives to capture shared experiences of interspecies leisure pursuits. This special issue provides direction for future ways in which research on multispecies leisure, and its associated mutual benefits, can be done to advance understanding and practice in the field. The special issue seeks to 'bring the animal in' to the leisure studies domain and contribute to greater understanding of leisure as a complex, interwoven multispecies phenomenon.

**Keywords:** nonhuman animals; anthropocentrism; humans; multispecies leisure.

### Introduction

Leisure is a multispecies practice. From the excitement and close interaction of human and horse tackling a show jumping course, to the joy and playfulness of a child throwing a ball for her dog, to the peaceful comfort of a human and a cat relaxing on the sofa together, leisure practices and spaces often involve multiple species, sometimes acting together, sometimes separately and sometimes in opposition. These shared and often messy entanglements between human and nonhuman animals are integral to the experiences, practices and meanings of leisure. Dashper (2018) argues that our leisure lives are often richer because of nonhuman animals, who play, relax, compete and work with and for us, and that leisure studies needs to acknowledge these more-than-human encounters if we are to understand better some of the nuances of leisure in multispecies worlds. With some exceptions (e.g., Carr, 2014; Markwell, 2015; Dashper, 2017b), leisure studies has been slow to embrace the 'animal turn' sweeping the wider social sciences and humanities, and to consider how leisure actions, experiences and landscapes are shaped through multispecies encounters between humans, other animals, birds and insects, plants and the environment. This special issue is a contribution to the project of 'bringing animals in' to leisure studies, and recognising that leisure is part of a complex, vibrant and sometimes chaotic multispecies world.

The emerging multidisciplinary field of human-animal studies encourages researchers to move beyond a narrow focus on human-centric practices and ways of being in the world, and to recognise that human and nonhuman beings are positioned within shared ecological,

social, cultural and political spaces. Wider social debates related to ethics and welfare, environmental concerns and climate change, and human rights and responsibilities to the wider world, are not detached from the field of leisure studies which is both influenced by and can influence wider discourses. The broader field of human-animal studies has tended to focus on topics such as care, welfare and work, or specific human-animal encounters, such as those between people and companion animals or pets (Charles, 2014; Coulter, 2016; Clarke & Knights, 2018), and leisure has received much less focus to date. Our aim with this special issue was to challenge leisure researchers to think beyond our taken-for-granted humanist frameworks and to consider explicitly the ways in which leisure spaces and practices are co-produced, shaped and experienced by human and nonhuman animals, and what those multispecies encounters add to understandings of leisure as integral to our well-being and happiness in contemporary societies.

This introduction begins with a brief discussion of what we mean by the terms ‘multispecies’ and ‘more-than-human’ and some of the theoretical and methodological challenges that adopting posthumanist frameworks may pose for leisure researchers. We then go on to consider what such perspectives might add to the field of leisure studies, and discuss some of the existing research in this area. The next section introduces the papers in this special issue, which show the diversity and richness of multispecies perspectives on leisure, and the possibilities for advancing understanding in this emerging field. The final section suggests some areas for further development in research on multispecies leisure.

### **More-than-human and multispecies perspectives**

Leisure studies, and the social sciences more broadly, is strongly anthropocentric, positioning humans as the only legitimate focus for study, and concentrating on human priorities, experiences and practices (Dashper, 2018; Finkel & Danby, 2018). If nonhumans do appear in research, they are usually confined to a background role, reduced to species-level, and only considered if their actions or behaviours affect human outcomes (Catlin et al., 2013). Within this work, individual animals and their unique subjectivities disappear from view, and their ‘animalness’ is presented only in relation to their value to humans. A growing body of researchers are now recognising that this is untenable, and that nonhumans are more than just backdrops for human lives and are instead active agents, with their own inner lives and interests, priorities and rights (Sanders, 1990; Cooke, 2011). The seminal work of Donna Haraway (2003) has strongly influenced theoretical development in this field, and her claim that “[t]o be one is always to *become with many*” (2008: 4, italics in original), underpins the ‘animal turn’ that recognises the inseparability of human and nonhuman in what is undeniably a multispecies world. More-than-human approaches make this explicit and aim to explore the “contact zones where lines separating nature from culture have broken down, where encounters between *Homo sapiens* and other beings generate mutual ecologies and co-produced niches” (Kirksey & Helmreich, 2010: 546).

More-than-human approaches within leisure aim to explore new modes of being and becoming in the contemporary world. Various theoretical approaches that rethink human-centredness have focused on the complexities surrounding interactions between humans and nonhuman animals, along with places, landscapes and objects. Posthumanism, as well as Actor Network Theory (ANT) and non-representational theories, seeks to explore and develop spatialities, politics and ethical considerations associated with humans and nonhumans, whereby the singular focus surrounding the human subject is challenged and boundaries become blurred. Instone (1998) alerts us to the fact that a postmodern world blurs the boundaries between nature, society, humans and nonhuman animals. Panelli (2010) articulates that ANT rejects the distinction between the human and the nonhuman animal, indicating that the nonhuman animal is more often than not the most important actant in the human material world. DeMello (2012) argues that nonhumans should ideally enjoy a life of love and attention, as well as humans. Bowes et al. (2015) acknowledge that

trans-species social bonds are driven by multifarious factors including the desire for power, control, affection and kinship that promote wide-ranging benefits. This 'animal turn' acknowledges the embodied knowledge or indeed a 'sensorial-ontology' which arises when species meet and interact (Barad, 2008; Hayward, 2010; Hurn, 2012).

These theories and approaches are complex and diverse, and detailed discussion of them is beyond the scope of this article. However, all these positions share the posthumanist goal to decentre human authority and recognise explicitly that nonhumans can and do shape our worlds and our experiences, for good and for bad. As Peggs (2013) argues, even if we restrict our research attention to human societies and practices alone (and neither she nor we are suggesting we should do so), we still should consider relations with nonhumans in our research, as these constitute integral facets of our everyday experiences. Pacini-Ketchabaw et al. (2016: 2) acknowledge the long-standing resistance to accounting for the experiences and practices of nonhumans in social science research, arguing that "[t]he insistence that we live in not just exclusively human societies but in common worlds with other species runs counter to the human-centric impulse to divide ourselves off from the rest of the world and re-enact the self-perpetuating nature/culture divide." More-than-human perspectives, in their varying forms, represent attempts to challenge this divide and recognise the complex, interwoven 'common worlds' in which we are all embedded.

As Buller (2014: 309) argues, "animals are beginning, at last, to make their presence (or absence) felt and matter". This raises challenging theoretical, methodological and practical issues for researchers. What does it mean to 'bring animals in' to research? How can we try and decentre human perspectives, and give some kind of 'voice' to nonhuman animals? How can we try and represent the deeply embodied, usually non-verbal interactions between species that constitute multispecies encounters, when we are tied by the conventions of academia to the written word? Dowling et al. (2017: 824) suggest that this needs us to radically rethink how we do research and "to perform, to engage, to embody, to image and imagine, to witness, to sense, to analyse – across, through, with and as, more-than-humans."

The subpractice of multispecies ethnography attempts to engage with this process, to focus on "the lively connections among species (often, but not always, including humans), their collective effects and their ethical implications" (Pacini-Ketchabaw et al., 2016: 1149). This is difficult and requires attempting to shift our focus from our human perspectives alone and our preference for visual and verbal cues and, instead, to try and engage our bodies as multispecies research instruments, as "part of the ethnographic script" (Madden, 2014: 282). This may encourage more interdisciplinary research in leisure studies, drawing on ethology, ecology and other natural sciences to supplement our social science perspectives and to try and begin to bridge the nature-culture divide. It may lead to more personal, introspective accounts of interspecies relationships and encounters, drawing on (auto)ethnography and narrative techniques to try and capture some of the emotive richness of multispecies leisure (see Harmon, 2019). Multispecies research has potential to disrupt dominant narratives and theoretical perspectives in leisure studies and to open up new ways of thinking about, writing about and doing research.

The more-than-human theoretical approach to human-nonhuman relations within leisure, whilst providing a more innovative mode of enquiry within the leisure landscape, also helps us to contextualise human-nonhuman experiential encounters. One of the challenges of trying to adopt a multispecies lens concerns the lack of overt descriptive reflection that arises from interspecies encounters, in that humans may find it difficult to describe, understand and explain such relationships and emotional interactions due to the lack of 'vocal' expression from nonhumans. As a result, Game (2001) argues there is a requirement for interconnectedness between species, indicating a need to respect and understand each other's differences to communicate more effectively, often on deeply embodied, nonverbal

terms. She refers to an 'in-between' stage where the human becomes part nonhuman and the nonhuman part human, through sustained interaction. Including nonhuman animals as actors in research and opening up to cross-species communications emergent through the leisure landscape enables a sharing of mutual realities between humans and nonhumans (Danby, 2018). Social exchanges and embodied interaction between humans and nonhumans play significant roles, as through varying encounters human and nonhuman are able to anticipate and acknowledge each other's needs and behaviours by assessing a range of bodily cues. Such non-anthropocentric ontological perspectives emphasise how the the leisure landscape may be populated and co-constituted by varying humans and nonhumans, through myriad assemblages they engage with, together and separately (Lorimer, 2009).

To really take on multispecies perspectives is difficult, and poses challenges to leisure researchers more used to focusing on human-human interactions, and human activities, priorities and experiences. As Birke and Hockenhull (2012) articulate, studying interspecies bonds is not easy and methodologies tend to focus upon one actor rather than another, and additionally, we are dealing with relations of two very different kinds of beings. However, just because something is challenging does not mean we should not attempt to engage with it, and in the next section we introduce research on different leisure practices that draw on explicitly more-than-human perspectives, and in so doing, open up interesting theoretical, methodological and practical insights about leisure and leisure research.

### **Leisure as a multispecies practice**

Nonhuman animals are integral to myriad human leisure experiences and help enhance many people's physical, psychological and social well-being (Hallberg, 2008; Danby, 2018; Dashper, 2018; Finkel & Danby, 2018; Young & Carr, 2018). The papers in this special issue are not the first to consider some aspects of multispecies leisure, although the earlier research is relatively dispersed around different journals and outlets. Whilst we acknowledge that this literature is diverse and covers many different contexts and issues, we have identified three core areas in the wider literature on multispecies leisure which we discuss here: dogs and dog agility; equestrian/horse leisure; and multispecies tourism. We have chosen to focus on leisure with dogs and with horses because these are the nonhuman animals with whom humans share the most intimate, active, diverse and collaborative leisure relationships. People involve both dogs and horses in a variety of leisure practices, often involving complex and nuanced interspecies communication, in ways rarely experienced between humans and other species. Multispecies tourism is our third area for discussion as it encompasses a broader variety of interspecies interactions than either human-canine or human-equine leisure, and research highlights some of the complex issues of power and responsibility that underpin all interspecies encounters, including those experienced through leisure.

Human-dog relationships are often extremely close, and offer numerous affordances for performing multispecies leisure. Carr (2014) has considered a wide range of human-dog activities and practices in his discussion of dog-related leisure, ranging from dog holidays, to dog cuisine, and dogs as 'leisure objects'. Sanders (1999) has explored human-dog interactions through various leisure and work practices, while Fletcher and Platt (2018) consider the routine dog walk as a multispecies leisure activity. Several other researchers have focused specifically on the multispecies competitive practice of dog agility, considering how involvement in this activity requires considerable investment of time, money and emotion, often placing stress on other aspects of a human's life (Baldwin & Norris, 1999; Gillespie, Leffler & Lerner, 2002). Hultsman's (2012) research takes an interesting approach in exploring how involvement in dog agility is experienced and negotiated between human couples. Although she reported the potential for the same strains as found in previous studies, she also found that multispecies leisure provided couples with a source of close engagement and bonding, between them but also, and importantly, with their dog(s). All of

these studies illustrate what many people who live with dogs (and other companion animals) know: these multispecies leisure activities are meaningful and rich expressions of complex relationships between humans and dogs, often reflective of deeply held emotions and attachments (Nottle & Young, 2019). Human-canine leisure constitutes an important part of these interspecies relationships.

There is a growing body of work that considers human-equine leisure, and although very different to that between humans and dogs, the relationship between humans and horses is also long, close and complex. Numerous equestrian practices could usefully be considered multispecies leisure, and research in this field covers multiple activities ranging from equestrian tourism (Gilbert & Gillet, 2014; Sigurðardóttir & Helgadóttir, 2015; Buchmann, 2017; Dashper, 2019) to competitive sport (Wipper, 2000; Dashper, 2012; Gilbert & Gillet, 2012) to non-competitive interactions and relationships (Hockenhuil et al., 2010; Maurstad et al., 2013; Dashper, 2017a). Human-equine leisure practices and associated experiences can provide hedonistic activities and assist with the emergence and development of meaningful relationships. The 'equiscape' provides a leisure landscape through which various activities and relations are formed, where humans and horses interconnect within temporally-bound natural spaces, where boundaries become blurred (Danby, 2018; Finkel & Danby, 2018; Linghede, 2019). These and other studies explore some of the complex, deeply embodied encounters that occur between humans and horses during riding, routine interactions and caring activities (Game, 2001; Ford, 2019). Equestrian leisure requires high levels of commitment, in terms of time, emotion and financial input, and so often becomes an important marker of individual and collective identity (Dashper, 2017b; Dashper, Abbott & Wallace, 2019). Dominant themes emerging from the human-horse leisure literature include: the gendered nature of this form of multispecies leisure (Dashper, 2016; Finkel & Danby, 2018; Linghede, 2019); the role of equestrian leisure at different stages of the (human and equine) lifecourse (Davis et al, 2016; Sanchez, 2017; Franklin & Schuurman, 2017); and, the importance of partnership in human-horse relationships (Maurstad et al., 2013; Dashper, 2017b). This growing field of study illustrates some of the complexities of multispecies leisure, which can be simultaneously joyous and rewarding, as well as risky and potentially heartbreaking.

The therapeutic role of animals within leisure is widely acknowledged and forms a significant part of the leisure science community due to the broad ranging therapeutic, psychological and physical health benefits associated with such human-animal encounters (Nimer & Lundahl, 2007; Chandler, 2012; Fine, 2015; Krause-Parello et al., 2019) and, as a result, multifarious animal assisted therapy (AAT) interventions (particularly with the inclusion of dogs and horses) have been incorporated into diverse social practices to improve emotional and physical wellbeing. As Chandler (2012, xi) states, "Humans are designed to thrive through relationships. Our emotional, physical and spiritual essence craves connections with others, not only so that we may have our needs met out so that we may also experience purpose and meaning in the time that we dwell on this Earth." It may be argued that this raises ethical considerations and requires specific regulations to promote and perform successful leisure-led AAT for both the wellbeing of humans and nonhumans.

Relationships between humans and dogs and between humans and horses differ in important ways that reflect the different ways in which we live, communicate and interact with different species and with different individual animals. Leisure with dogs and with horses offers people many opportunities for rewarding (and indeed sometimes challenging) interspecies encounters, and for developing and maintaining close interspecies relationships, and tends to reflect deep commitment from human participants in relation to time, money and emotion (Dashper et al. 2019). However, multispecies interactions are always underpinned by complex power relations as both human and nonhuman are positioned in a human-centric world that prioritises human interests over nonhuman ones (Carter & Charles, 2013). Whether they are called 'pets', 'partners' or 'collaborators', dogs,

horses and all animals we actively involve in our leisure activities have not actively chosen to do so in the way as we as humans decide how to spend our free time. This raises complex questions about the morality of involving nonhumans in our leisure practices, and the responsibilities we owe to them if we do. A few studies have started to address these issues in relation to 'pets' and other companion species, but this has yet to be considered fully in relation to leisure studies, a point to which we return below (Irvine, 2004; Dashper, 2014).

Tourism offers another important focus for the emerging field of multispecies leisure. While there is a wide range of research exploring different aspects of wildlife and ecotourism (Reynolds & Braithwaite, 2002; Curtin & Kragh, 2014), much of this does not take what we would consider a multispecies or more-than-human perspective, and focuses very much on human interests, experiences and practices, with nonhuman animals featuring as attractions, or as part of the background to human activities and associated entertainment. In contrast, Actor Network Theory has proven popular within tourism studies, and has been used to consider more-than-human aspects of situations as diverse as the interface between science and wildlife tourism (Rodger et al., 2009), cheese as a local tourism actor (Ren, 2011) and actor-networks in gorilla tourism (van der Duim et al., 2014). Warkentin's (2010; 2011) research on swimming with dolphins argues for the importance of what she terms 'interspecies etiquette' in these multispecies tourism encounters, which form memorable and unusual leisure experiences for the human participant, but have potential to be distressing for the dolphins. Bertella (2014: 122) argues that nonhuman animals should be included as "central actors in the tourism network", and we agree that tourism offers many interesting avenues for exploring different aspects of interspecies interactions as is evident in Markwell's (2015) edited collection, and an important site of multispecies leisure.

Tourism offers many humans an opportunity to see and interact with diverse species on a global stage that we normally would not encounter, often in their own natural environments. This can be exciting for tourists and may contribute to conservation efforts through better interspecies understanding and awareness of the importance and diverse needs of other species, which could be particularly vital as we face challenges to do with human-induced climate change and other sustainability concerns. However, tourism involving other animals - whether they be captive animals (e.g. in zoos or parks) or in 'natural' environments - raises many difficult questions about animal welfare, human impacts on other species and their environments, and the ethics and responsible behaviours of animal-related tourism (Fennell, 2011; Carr & Broom, 2018). We return to some of these issues further in the final section.

These, and other studies, illustrate some of the diversity of research on multispecies leisure, in theoretical and methodological terms, as well as in relation to the focus of interspecies encounters, and the typology of nonhuman animals involved, and also suggest some areas for further development and critical reflection. This is reflected within this special issue, and in the next section we introduce the papers that form the collection.

### **Introduction to the papers in the special issue**

This special issue highlights the diverse landscape of human-nonhuman encounters in leisure. Included is work that not only focuses on pets and companion animals, such as dogs and horses, but also draws attention to less studied nonhumans, such as reptiles, fish, and coyotes. The heterogeneity of species at the centre of leisure research has led us to think in different ways about how these papers should be grouped and ordered in this special issue. In many respects, the 'type' of nonhuman animal is not the main discerning factor for the research. Instead, ontological perspectives and methodological approaches can be seen to be the innovative aspects for furthering understanding and engagement in this subject area. A range of qualitative methods have been employed by all of the authors, which is appropriate given the exploratory nature of this kind of research which is often deeply embodied and imbued with meaning (Barad, 2007), although Wilson and Rose (2019) illustrate the contribution that quantitative and mixed methods approaches can bring to

understandings of multispecies leisure. The way that researchers reflect, observe, analyse, and recount the various lived experiences of *being with* nonhuman animals (Haraway, 2003) is at the core of understanding multispecies leisure. Therefore, we have set out the articles based on methodological approaches.

The special issue begins with autoethnographic approaches to researching multispecies leisure. Although these accounts are conveyed from a human point of view, all of the authors took into consideration nonhuman perspectives to prioritise co-creation of research. In a departure from traditional human-centric leisure studies, the papers explore the personal lived experiences of interspecies encounters. Nottle and Young (2019) consider the intersection of animal leisure with human leisure in a reflective analysis of individual human-nonhuman animal preferences and personalities. Focusing on different approaches to 'fur parenting' and leisure lives, the authors observe their lives with their five dogs, framed within Stebbins' Serious Leisure Perspective categorisation (Elkington and Stebbins, 2014). Harmon (2019) also conducts research with dogs, but situated within end of life contexts. By studying meaningful multispecies relationships with regard to mortality, he considers the therapeutic qualities of human-dog interactions in nature. The auto/ethnography approach enables Harmon (2019) to express some of the affective and deeply held emotional aspects of multispecies encounters. Next, Ford (2019) presents an autoethnography of the experience of sport horse riding, with emphasis on co-embodiment between horse and human. Drawing on decades of personal experience in sport horse riding, she builds upon phenomenological and anthropological theories of embodiment. Following this, Markwell (2019) contemplates his life-long interest in amateur herpetology. His analysis of the intersections between reptiles, leisure, place and identity within his own life experience reveals how multispecies leisure can lead to increased empathy and understanding across species boundaries. All of the authors in this section recognise the relational and emotional capabilities of interspecies interactions (Gruen, 2011) and the mutual satisfaction that can be gained from leisure experiences with one another.

Moving from autoethnography to ethnography, the following papers share accounts of participant and direct observation of multispecies leisure in a range of settings. Markuksela & Valtonen (2019) provide insights into the rhythmic nature of the waterscape with their exploration of human-nonhuman encounters in the leisure activity of match fishing. Based on findings from three-year sensory ethnographic fieldwork conducted in Finnish Lapland, the paper suggests that these kinds of human-nonhuman encounters can be characterised as a dance between a fish and an angler. Moving to the streets of Wales, Sands (2019) investigates the affective spaces of charitable human-greyhound gatherings, which prompt further emotional, economic and practical exchanges. Her study reminds us of some of the ethical dimensions of multispecies leisure practices. Next, in contrast to the numerous studies on dog shows and agility discussed above, Stone (2019) examines the breeding and showing of pedigree cats, with an emphasis on cats' perspectives. She argues that there is a need for concentration on more equal, mutual wellbeing in such leisure environments, as there is currently a favouring of human experiences in cat shows. Dashper & Bymer (2019) introduce an ecological-phenomenological framework for understanding relationships between animate actors and their environment in and through leisure, by using the example of human riders and horses in the context of a pleasure ride leisure event. They underline the importance of considering all practices and interactions in relation to the environments in which they take place. All of the ethnographic accounts in this special issue can be seen to progress Haraway's (2003) idea of *naturecultures*, which suggests that nature and culture are not oppositions. By recognising the mutual benefits for human and nonhuman animals, the authors advocate new ways of thinking about and investigating the value and meaning of leisure in multispecies contexts.

The next set of papers draw upon interview and dialogue techniques. Linghede (2019) explores human-horse relations and intersectionality in boys' equestrian stories, through the

concept of intractivity and creative analytical writing. She found that engaging with horses can encourage boys to be less constrained by dominant gender discourses and that transcending the human-animal divide can help them to transcend the female-male/masculine-feminine divide. Following this, Marinova & Fox (2019) analyse ethical issues related to animal rights and welfare in planned event environments, and the uncertainty regarding animals' status as stakeholders during live events. They found that Millennials are concerned about animal welfare, although this is underpinned by ambiguity and contradiction in relation to the involvement of different animals in different types of events. Lastly, utilising a mixed methods approach, Wilson & Rose (2019) investigate the preferences of people in the United States for sharing leisure space in their local urban parks with coyotes, a nonhuman animal that often provokes more negative responses from people than many of the others that feature within this special issue. They found that coyotes are perceived as dangerous, and, thus, people are unwilling to share leisure spaces with them, which has implications for current efforts to promote human-wildlife coexistence strategies in many urban locations.

Throughout these studies, current debates and ongoing discussions about human-nonhuman animal coexistence and interactions in leisure landscapes are seen to be complex, affective, experiential and intractable. Therefore, this special issue contributes to greater understanding of leisure as an entangled multispecies phenomenon by presenting international scholarship utilising creative methodological approaches which explore a range of issues and perspectives on multispecies leisure in order to contribute to the development of critical leisure theory and human-nonhuman animal studies.

### **Future development for multispecies leisure research**

This special issue is a contribution to the development of multispecies insights on leisure. This research area remains relatively emergent and has potential for further development and sophistication in order to enhance theorising in leisure studies and also to contribute to theoretical, methodological and practical developments in the broader field of human-animal studies. In this final section, we make some suggestions for future development.

Many of the papers in this special issue, and numerous others in the wider literature, focus predominantly on the positive, beneficial aspects of multispecies encounters and leisure and reflect close bonds - even love - across species boundaries (Nottle & Young, 2019). Nickie Charles' research has posited that pets can be understood to be kin - family members in many circumstances - and that they provide emotional support, comfort and security to many people (Charles & Davies, 2008; Charles, 2014) and often serve as substitutes for human relations. Leisure researchers could usefully add to this line of enquiry, considering if and how pets (and other animals in some circumstances) are incorporated as family members into family leisure activities. Multispecies families are a reality for many and considering if and how the more-than-human aspects of family leisure help maintain familial bonds, at times contributing to overcoming tension and sometimes leading to problems and conflict, would advance understanding of multispecies families and leisure.

Whilst many multispecies interactions are positive and based on genuine affection and respect, we would caution against overly-romanticising interspecies relationships. Even pets, with whom many share their homes and everyday lives, are in a liminal position relative to the broader family; often considered full family members and valued for their 'animalness', but still subject to human whim and attempts to 'civilise' their behaviour through practices like selective breeding, training and neutering (Fox, 2006). Pets and other companion species, like horses, are still classed as human property and are liable to be sold or euphemistically 'destroyed' if they do not live up to human expectations, behave in a way deemed unacceptable to their human owners or simply become surplus to human wants and

requirements (Dashper, 2014; McCarthy, 2016). Critical examinations of power within multispecies leisure practices could usefully address some of these issues and consider what we owe to the animals we involve in our leisure practices, including the responsibilities we have to them and the potential for abusing that power.

There are also many examples where nonhuman animals are involved and in many situations exploited within human leisure in ways that are clearly to the detriment of those animals, from hunting, to fighting, to exhibition in zoos and parks with low standards of animal welfare. There is research in the tourism field that considers some of these issues (Fennell, 2013), and this can be developed further to explore what we mean by 'good welfare' in the context of global tourism. Further, attitudes to nonhuman animals are historically, culturally and socially specific, and we would like to see further examination of multispecies leisure in different spaces, cultures and societies. This may lead to serious consideration of what might be considered to be ethical or morally acceptable ways in which to engage nonhuman animals in our leisure practices in order to try to respect nonhuman subjectivity while maintaining human pleasure in these activities.

These discussions are important in terms of our relationships with and attitudes to the nonhuman world, issues which are particularly pertinent as we face the potentially catastrophic consequences of human effects on the climate and nature. As Birke (2007: 306, italics in original) argues, "nonhuman animals matter for *themselves*" and so we have a moral obligation to critically reflect on multispecies leisure and how our pleasure can affect other animals. At the same time, multispecies perspectives are useful for helping us understand the human world better as well, particularly in relation to oppression, exploitation and inequality. Birke (2007: 307) argues that:

[E]ach of the ways in which 'othering' appears in our culture is mutually reinforcing. Sexism, racism, imperialism, and our treatment of nonhuman animals are all deeply interrelated and deeply entwined.

Consequently, multispecies perspectives on leisure can help contribute to understanding of human inequalities. As Nibert (2003) argues, how we treat and think about nonhuman animals is often caught up with what happens to many humans.

Multispecies perspectives on leisure thus have potential to advance understanding of both interspecies interactions *and* human-based systems of inequality in and through leisure. The so-called 'animal turn' is beginning to be felt within leisure studies, and we believe this opens up many fruitful avenues for critical reflection on leisure and its roles and influences within our multispecies worlds.

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