



The EASE Anthrozoology Postgraduate Conference 2026

Friday 27 March – Sunday 29 March 2026

**“The Future of Anthrozoology: Exploring the potential of Symbiotic Ethics to
advance multispecies connectedness”**

Organised by the MA Anthrozoology teaching Team, University of Exeter, UK

Book of Abstracts and Speaker Bios

**Professor Katja M. Guenther will present the Anthrozoology Postgraduate
Conference Keynote Address:
“Multispecies Hope and Resistance during Endless Crises”
on Saturday 28 March at 4.30pm (UK time).**



Programme

Friday 27 March 2026

10.30-11.00 Professor Samantha Hurn

Welcome Address and Introduction to 'The Future of Anthrozoology' conference theme

11.00-11.30 Dr Helena Howe

More than biodiversity 'tools': Rewilding as collaboration with other-than-human-animals

11.45-12.30 Dr Jamie Lewis

From hunter to gatherer: Bigfooters and bringing back the body (parts)

12.30-13.00 Dr Angi Lacinak

Training a wild white rhinoceros to participate in medical treatment

14.00-15.00 Dr Claire Guest OBE

Optimising dog-human symbiosis in the future of medical detection

15.00-15.30 Sindhoor Pangal

How international discourse on the symbiotic value of free-living dogs is shaping proceedings in the Indian Supreme Court

15.30-16.00 Dr Bruce Moore

'If you name me': Do the names we give companion dogs frame our relationships with them?

16.15-17.15 Dr Molly Sumridge

Observing 'wild' dogs in domestic settings



Saturday 28 March 2026

10.00-10.30 Harriet Alexander

Care at the edge: Dogs, snakes, and the contradictions of protection in multispecies practice

10.30-11.00 Charlotte Blackmore

Does sentience matter? How zoo visitors think about reptiles and their conservation

11.00-11.30 Kylie Eichberg-Levitt

A new leash on conservation: How rescue dogs are advancing wildlife conservation

11.30-12.00 Dr Kris Hill

What's in it for the cats?

12.15-13.15 Prof Samantha Hurn

Poor health = poor welfare: Assessing the impact of veterinary training and provision on the welfare of animals classified as 'exotic pets', and its implications for legislative reform

14.00-16.00 Prof Samantha Hurn, with panellists Evangeline Button (RSPCA), Kirsty Jenkins (OneKind), Chris Lewis (Born Free Foundation), Dr Molly Sumridge (ASPCA), and Dr Anna Wilkinson (PETA).

Panel Discussion: What does it mean to advocate for animals?

16.30-17.30 Professor Katja M. Guenther

Keynote Address: Multispecies Hope and Resistance during Endless Crises



Sunday 29 March 2026

10.00-11.00 Dr Jessica Groling

Plausible deniability as practice: How 'feel for the game' sustains and challenges illegal foxhunting

11.00-11.30 Claire Musser

'Bears in Hot Tubs – co-thriving begins with us'

11.45-12.15 Camilla Parry

Death at work: Discussing veterinary staff experiences with companion animal euthanasia in a veterinary hospital

12.15-13.00 Prof Adam Reed

Discussion of the research challenges and methods underpinning Adam's book, *'Animal People'*

14.00-14.30 Dr Fiona Handyside and Dr Benedict Morrison

Scrublands, Sanctuaries, and Screens: Co-creating knowledges alongside donkeys

14.30-15.30 Dr Alexander Badman-King

How can Anthrozoology help us understand AI?

15.30-16.15 Professor Samantha Hurn

The future of Anthrozoology

16.15-16.30 Professor Samantha Hurn and Dr Fenella Eason

Closing of the EASE Anthrozoology Postgraduate Conference 2026



Abstracts and Speaker Bios:

Helena Howe

More than biodiversity ‘tools’: Rewilding as collaboration with other-than-human-animals

Abstract

Rewilding highlights some of the longstanding tensions between conservation law and animal law: the prioritisation of the ecosystem over the individual and of biodiversity-significant species over others. The ‘livestock’ OTHAs involved in rewilding are often treated as nothing more than expendable ‘tools’ for achieving biodiversity objectives, whose even basic welfare protections are at risk from anthropocentric narratives in conservation. At the same time, rewilding can be seen as an exciting conceptual space for experiments in moving beyond welfare, which offers opportunities for advancing justice for OTHAs alongside positive biodiversity outcomes. Focusing on the law, policy and practice of rewilding in England, the paper considers how the law can respond effectively to this combination of threat and opportunity and how we can better accommodate OTHAs’ interests and preferences within legal frameworks for conservation land management.

Bio:



Dr Helena Howe is a Senior Lecturer in Law at the University of Exeter. Her research lies at the intersection of Animal Law, Environmental Law and the law relating to farming and agriculture. She is interested in the ways the law shapes and is shaped by human-animal-land relationships. Helena’s current work focuses on the role of law in recognising and protecting the interests of farmed animals and companion animals, particularly legal measures for reducing the number of dogs with extreme conformations.

Suggested readings:

Irus Braverman, ‘Law's Underdog: A call for more-than-human legalities’ (2018) 14 *Annual Review of Law and Social Science* 127-144

Sue Donaldson, ‘Animal Agora: Animal Citizens and the Democratic Challenge’ (2020) 46 *Social Theory and Practice* 709–35

Jamie Lewis

From Hunter to Gatherer: Bigfooters and Bringing Back the Body (Parts)

Abstract:

If Bigfoot is a biological creature, then it must possess a material body - a physical presence that can be examined, measured and verified. Circumstantial evidence may create intrigue but for the sceptic, only a body constitutes definitive proof. This presentation examines the long-standing search for biological evidence in Bigfoot research, tracing a progressive reduction in scale over time: from the hoped-for capture of a complete specimen (dead or alive) to skeletal remains, to isolated hairs and ultimately to microscopic traces of DNA, and now eDNA. In the continued absence of a body, these fragments are mobilised as proxies for the whole, asked to stand in for the creature itself. The Bigfoot once encountered through eyewitness testimony as a hulking, looming presence is increasingly pursued through Bigfooters sifting through dried up creeks and shallow ponds. This shift reflects an attempt by Bigfooters to appropriate the methods, language and epistemic authority of twenty-first-century bioscience, even as the object of study remains conspicuously elusive.

Bio:



Dr Jamie Lewis is a Reader in Sociology in the School of Social Sciences at Cardiff University. Among Jamie's recent research works are:

Lewis, J. and Bartlett, A. 2024. The shape of Bigfoot: Transmuting absences into credible knowledge claims. *Cultural Sociology*

(<https://doi.org/10.1177/17499755241264879>),

and

Lewis, J. and Bartlett A. 2025 (*forthcoming*). *Bigfooters and Scientific Inquiry: on the borderlands of legitimate science*. London: Routledge.

Jamie has also generously offered accredited and auditing ANTM107 students the opportunity to read the Introduction and Chapter 7 of his latest volume, anticipated to be published later this year.

He therefore requests that these chapters are not cited nor discussed beyond this conference's boundaries. (These chapters will be sent under separate cover to ANTM107 students).

Angi Lacinak

Training a Wild White Rhinoceros to Participate in Medical Treatment

Recent news article published on the work:

<https://apnews.com/article/rhinoeye-treatment-florida-zimbabwe-dcf53d149e13cc077c2739999d2d6d9e>.

*Note: this was not a scientific study and was not a component of my PhD work, but was a unique project involving rhino-human interactions in a wild setting in Zimbabwe and therefore may be of interest to the conference attendees.

Abstract:

Modern zoos are widely recognized for their conservation efforts, often contributing to the protection and health of in-situ and ex-situ animals. Furthermore, the resident animals for whom zoos are responsible benefit from science-based application of behaviour modification where caregivers teach (a.k.a. train) animals to participate in their own care such as medical procedures (e.g., ultrasounds for reproductive assessments and dental work to treat cracked/compromised teeth) or preventative treatments (e.g., flu vaccinations and biannual blood collection for health monitoring). It is exceedingly rare, however, to train wild animals for medical treatment. This presentation reviews one such treatment trial for a white rhino who suffered from a parasitic eye infection. This involved a cooperative effort of an American zoo, behaviour consultants, a Zimbabwean safari company, a conservation centre responsible for the rhinos, and the scouts protecting the rhinos. The challenges and ethical implications of this novel effort are discussed such as safety concerns for humans and the potential to change the rhinoceros' future behaviour because of the training. Ultimately, this experiment proved successful with a recovery of the infected eye and the cessation of self-injurious behaviour, suggesting this may be a viable option for other critical-care needs for animals in wild settings.

Suggested readings:

Fernandez, E.J. and Martin, A.L. (2021) Animal training, environmental enrichment, and animal welfare: a history of behavior analysis in zoos, *Journal of Zoological and Botanical Gardens*, 2(4), pp. 531-543. DOI: 10.3390/jzbg2040038.

Lacinak, A.M. (2024) Zoo visitors' most-liked aspects of elephant encounters and related perceptions of animals' emotions and welfare states: a pragmatic approach, *Animals*, 14, 923. DOI: 10.3390/ani4060923.

Bio:

Dr Angi Lacinak has worked in zoos and aquariums for 30 years. In 2009 she co-founded Precision Behavior, where she consults on issues of animal behavior and welfare in zoos, aquariums, and service animal facilities globally. Previously, Angi served as Manager of Marine Mammals at the Atlantis Resort, The Palm, in Dubai, as the Animal Training Coordinator at the Fort Worth Zoo and was a member of Disney's Animal Kingdom's opening team, among other roles.

Angi has presented numerous workshops and papers nationally and internationally at conferences, for zoo staff, college students and business professionals as well as serving as an instructor for AZA professional courses. In 2005 she received the Animal Welfare Advancement Award from the Animal Behavior Management Alliance. She participated in a television special, Great White Shark: Beyond the Cage of Fear, released in 2013 and was featured in a 2019 documentary, Elephant Trainer in the Room. She holds a BA in Drama and English, an MA in Anthrozoology and is currently pursuing a PhD in Anthrozoology. Her research interests include animal-human relationships, animal training, and perceptions of anthrozoological interactions.

AMillwood@PrecisionBehavior.Com; am932@Exeter.ac.uk

Claire Guest

Optimising Dog-Human Symbiosis in the Future of Medical Detection

Abstract:

Throughout history, dogs have fulfilled different functions and are more recently trained for a range of medical support tasks through detection of 'signature' volatile organic compounds (VOCs) associated with disease and changes in health status. Medical Detection Dogs charity pioneers both medical assistance and disease detection. Our assistance dogs use olfactory alerting for day-to-day support for people living with chronic conditions and bio detection work improves understanding and informs future medical technologies. To maximise canine olfactory ability and the benefits to both humans and dogs it is essential that we understand and appreciate how dogs detect disease, the impact that this has on them, and the ways in which we can enhance detection and communication, ensuring that it's not stress provoking but builds harmony and understanding in the human-dog partnership. In collaboration with The Open University, we have developed technology that allows dogs to communicate their degree of certainty when presented with samples, improving interpretation of subtle or equivocal behaviours. To develop and achieve the full potential of medical detection we need to better understand our dogs, the world in which they live and their challenges to communication. This will enable the relationship to flourish further and reach full potential.

Bio:



Dr Claire Guest OBE is a globally recognised leader in the field of canine bio- detection. In 2008 she co-founded Medical Detection Dogs (MDD), a pioneering charity that trains both cancer & bio detection dogs and medical alert assistance dogs to assist individuals with complex medical conditions.

Claire directed one of the first studies in the world to train dogs to identify bladder cancer by odour, publishing a proof of principle in the *BMJ* in 2004.

Since then, she has authored and co-authored a substantial body of peer-reviewed research, becoming a prominent figure in the field of canine olfaction research.

For the last decade MDD have been collaborating with quantum physicist, Dr Andreas Mershin, to develop a pioneering electronic nose designed to detect prostate cancer, modelled on the extraordinary scent-detection ability of dogs.

Suggested readings:

1 June 2019 - Guest, C., et al, [Trained dogs identify people with malaria parasites by their odour](#) The Lancet Infectious Diseases. 19,6, p - 578-580.

27 March 2019 - Wilson, S., Morant, S., Kane, S., Pesterfield, C., Guest, C., & Rooney, N. J., [An Owner-Independent Investigation of Diabetes Alert Dog Performance](#) Frontiers in Veterinary Science. 6, Mar, 11p., 91.

1 September 2024 - Parr-Cortes, Z., Rooney, N. J., Wheatstone, M., Stock, T., Pesterfield, C., Guest, C. & Muller, C., 1 Sep 2024 [Evaluating and contextualizing volatile organic compounds in dog training breath samples from a patient with type 1 diabetes](#) Journal of Veterinary Behaviour: Clinical Applications and Research. 75, p. 62-75 14 p.

Sindhoor Pangal

How international discourse on the symbiotic value of free-living dogs is shaping proceedings in the Indian Supreme Court

Abstract:

Free-living dogs have formed part of India's urban ecosystems for millennia, embedded in mythology, neighbourhood life, and informal care networks. During the British Raj, however, colonial administrations framed these dogs as public-health threats and pursued sustained mass culling. By the 1960s, scientific evaluations in cities such as Madras demonstrated that culling neither reduced dog populations nor controlled rabies, leading to the adoption of catch–neuter–vaccinate–release (CNVR) as a more effective strategy. Today, renewed pressures to “modernize” Indian cities—often modelled on perceived Western standards—have coincided with *suo moto* hearings in the Indian Supreme Court that signal openness to large-scale removal of street dogs. This occurs despite evidence that stable, vaccinated dog populations contribute to rabies control, buffer rodent populations, and mediate aspects of human–wildlife interaction.

The coexistence that has historically characterized Indian urban life is gradually being displaced by aspirational development models that offer few viable examples of human–animal cohabitation. It explores the tension between local histories of coexistence and globalized models of urban development, arguing that the erosion of human–dog symbiosis carries ecological, social, and public-health consequences. This talk examines how international discourse—particularly Western narratives around free-living dogs, animal cruelty, zoonotic risk, and epidemic prevention is shaping judicial reasoning.

Bio:



Sindhoor Pangal is a canine behaviour consultant, a canine myotherapist, an anthrozoologist and an engineer by qualification. She researches free living dogs in Bangalore, India. She is a TEDx speaker and the author of the book, *Dog Knows*.

Sindhoor quit her corporate life to pursue a career in working with dogs, after her dog Nishi met with an accident and needed special physical and emotional care. She worked as a behaviour and myotherapy consultant for companion dogs but soon discovered her passion for studying free living dogs in India.

Sindhoor has presented her findings at several major international conferences in the US, UK and has conducted seminars in Europe, UK and South America, and has been invited as an expert on several podcasts, including a few on NPR radio. She maintained a weekly column on dog behaviour, in The Bangalore Mirror for two years.

National Geographic calls her a 'Great Mind' in the bookazine, Genius of Dogs. She is currently the principal and director of BHARCS. BHARCS offers a unique UK-accredited level 4 diploma on canine biosociopsychology and applied ethology.

While she wears many hats, Sindhoor's favourite role has been being a mommy to two amazing dogs - Nishi (who recently passed away) and Cheeru - who she considers her inspiration and her greatest teachers.

Suggested Readings:

<https://www.bharcs.com/removal-of-free-living-dogs>

Bruce Moore

If You Name Me*: Do the names we give companion dogs frame our relationships with them?

Abstract:

Does the type of name that we select and apply to companion dogs reflect our attitudes and expectations for the nature of the relationship we intend to have with them? An exploration of perspectives on the naming of companion animals, a review of past assessments and published data plus the findings from a small-scale survey suggest an array of potential considerations that determine the approach people adopt to the naming of companion dogs. The evidence did not support a conclusion that the names chosen were indicative of a particular typology of human–canine relationships. It appears that giving a companion animal a personal name and identity is a process that can evoke multiple and potentially contradictory perspectives.

Bio:



Dr Bruce Moore's PhD research is seeking to explore attitudes towards dogs as companion animals in the post Covid workplace. Although he has completed two previous PhDs, he is new to the study of anthrozoology. Initially qualified as a solicitor (having obtained a law degree from Exeter University back in 1987), Bruce has spent most of his career in leadership roles in organisations concerned with housing and care for older people. When not working and studying he enjoys walking with Millie, a lovely black labrador, acquired in October 2020 in the midst of Covid lockdown restrictions.

Suggested Readings:

Borkfelt, S., 2011, What's in a Name? – Consequences of Naming non-Human Animals, *Animals*, 1, pp.116-125 (*a comprehensive and considered review of the power and consequences of naming of non-human animals*)

Blouin, D.D., 2013, Are Dogs Children, Companions or Just Animals? Understanding Variations in People's Orientations toward Animals, *Anthrozoös*, 26(2), pp.279-294 (*a typology of human-dog relationships (dominionistic, protectionist and humanistic perspectives)*)

* This is a play on the title of the book 'If You Tame Me: Understanding Our Connection with Animal' by Leslie Irvine (Irvine, 2004), which recognised that respecting the selfhood of companion animals could both challenge and change the way we interact and relate to them. Hence reason to ask if the names we give companion dogs might be framing the relationships we intend to have with them.

Molly Sumridge

Observing "Wild" Dogs in Domestic Settings

Abstract:

There has been a longstanding debate of whether the New Guinea Singing Dog (NGSD) is a wild or domestic dog. In 2021 I sought to observe what the lives of NGSDs and their owners looked like, as evidence of domestic living, but also to understand what life with a liminal dog looked like. To safely observe the lives of NGSDs and their owners, while also living through a global pandemic, I applied the use of diary videos and in the process uncovered a method that generates rich data while also supporting the welfare of human and non-human animal participants.

This presentation introduces diary videos as a methodological tool for conducting multispecies ethnography of human-dog relationships while addressing persistent challenges in observing intimate interspecies relationships. A drawback of traditional ethnographic observation of human-animal relationships is that it often alters the very behaviours we are seeking to observe, as the presence of unfamiliar researchers can trigger stress responses in animals and modify human interactions. Diary videos in the form of participant-recorded footage of everyday life with their dogs, offer a solution that is both methodologically rigorous and ethically sound.

Drawing on examples from my PhD research on New Guinea Singing Dogs, I will discuss how diary videos empower owners to document their lived experiences from their own perspectives, capturing spontaneous moments that external observation would likely disrupt. This approach privileges participant expertise while creating more naturalistic data, as dogs remain in familiar environments with their trusted human families. Beyond reducing animal stress, diary videos reveal dimensions of multispecies relationships that emerge only in private, unobserved spaces such as the quiet routines, subtle communications, and mundane intimacies that constitute daily human-dog life.

Bio:



Dr Molly Sumridge is an anthrozoologist, animal welfare researcher, and scholar deeply immersed in the study of human-animal relationships, particularly in the consequences of how we see them. Their work explores how we shape, construct, and mythologize animals through language, policy, and care, focusing especially on how dog breeds like the New Guinea Singing Dog are constructed and the consequences of beliefs about animal welfare.

Molly currently serves as a Director of Research at the ASPCA, where they help lead research to understand and expand access to veterinary care, and improve shelter outcomes for animals.

Molly will also be a panellist in the discussion, 'What does it mean to advocate for animals?' which is taking place on Saturday 28 March from 2-4pm (UK).

Suggested readings:

Wieser, C. (2024). Using video diaries in educational ethnography: what being alone with a camera does for self-representation, trust, and affording a participant perspective.

Ethnography and Education, 19(4), 333–352.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/17457823.2024.2401965>

Stephens, Ottrey, & Matthews (2025). A practical guide to using diary methods in qualitative research. Anatomical Sciences Education, <https://di.org/10.1002/ase.70102>

Harriet Alexander

Care at the edge: dogs, snakes, and the contradictions of protection in multispecies practice

Abstract:

In regional Australia, encounters between dogs and venomous snakes are shaped as much by fear and responsibility as by behaviour or training techniques. Guardians often seek certainty and protection for their dogs, while snakes are framed primarily as threats. Drawing on my work as a positive-reinforcement dog trainer specialising in snake safety, this presentation uses everyday practice as a starting point for examining how care is distributed unevenly across species. I compare dominant shock-based snake avoidance training with alternative approaches that rely on scent, replicas, and relational learning. Rather than asking which method is “right”, I explore how decisions around risk are shaped by local culture, emotion, and lived experience, and how snakes are frequently left outside the circle of ethical concern despite sharing the same landscapes. Following the practical realities of dog–snake encounters, this talk asks what multispecies care looks like when safety feels urgent and outcomes are uncertain. It offers a grounded, practitioner-led reflection on how people navigate responsibility, and invites discussion about how anthrozoology might better account for the messy, contradictory nature of caring across species.

Bio:



Harriet Alexander is a dog trainer, behaviour consultant, and MA Anthrozoology student based in regional Victoria, Australia. Her work explores behaviour, welfare, and the everyday negotiations that shape shared multispecies lives. Alongside working directly with dog guardians, she collaborates with organisations, rescues, and industry groups on education, events, and communication projects that translate complex ideas into practical contexts. She writes and speaks about the messy realities of living well with dogs and other species in shared landscapes.

Harriet lives in a small country town and enjoys life with dogs amid an abundance of wildlife, some fluffy, some feathered, some scaled – all part of the everyday choreography of getting out the front gate.

Suggested readings:

Bawaka, C., Wright, S., Suchet-Pearson Sandie, Lloyd, K., Laklak, B., Ritjilili, G., Ganambarr-Stubbs Merrkiyawuy, Banbapuy, G., Djawundil, M., & Sweeney, J. (2016) 'Co-becoming Bawaka', *Progress in human geography*, 40(4), pp. 455–475.
Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132515589437>.

Warwick, C. et al. (2013) 'Assessing reptile welfare using behavioural criteria', *In practice (London 1979)*, 35(3), pp. 123–131. A
vailable at: <https://doi.org/10.1136/inp.f1197>.

Charlotte Blackmore

Does Sentience Matter?

How Zoo Visitors Think About Reptiles and Their Conservation

Abstract:

Reptiles make up a significant proportion of global biodiversity, yet they remain chronically under-represented in both conservation planning and sentience research. Although evidence increasingly demonstrates complex capacities for pain, emotion, learning, and awareness in many reptile species, public attitudes often lag behind, with reptiles still widely perceived as unfeeling, dangerous, or “less worthy” of protection.

This talk draws on the foundations of my dissertation research, which examines how the UK public perceive reptile sentience and how these perceptions might shape attitudes toward reptile conservation. As part of this work, respondents are also asked whether they have visited a zoo within the past year, allowing zoo visitation to be explored as a potential factor in these attitudes. Studies consistently show that similarity to humans, aesthetic appeal, and perceived usefulness influence which species the public believes deserve protection, while animals seen as threatening or unattractive are more often dismissed.

As the biodiversity crisis becomes increasingly recognised as a social issue, understanding these attitudes is essential for advancing multispecies connectedness. I argue that anthrozoology and conservation need not be opposing forces; they can work together. Anthrozoology reveals the human drivers behind conservation challenges, while conservation is where those insights can — and must — be put into practice.

Bio:



Charlotte Blackmore is a second-year Anthrozoology MA student with a First Class BSc in International Wildlife Biology. She has spent over a decade working with animals across three continents, working in rescue centres, zoos, conservation projects, and education outreach. She has also spoken at TEDx on public perceptions of misunderstood animals which is a long-standing soft spot of hers. A qualified IUCN Red List Assessor, she shares her home with a small multispecies community of rescue animals, including snakes, a tortoise, cats, a dog, ferrets, and tarantulas.

Charlotte's current research explores how people perceive reptile sentience and how these beliefs shape conservation attitudes, alongside a broader interest in the persistent marginalisation of reptiles within both anthrozoological and conservation spaces

Suggested readings:

Lan, T., Sinhababu, N. and Carrasco, L.R. (2022) Recognition of intrinsic values of sentient beings explains the sense of moral duty towards global nature conservation. *PLOS ONE*, 17(10), e0276614.

<https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0276614>

Godinez, A.M. and Fernandez, E.J. (2019) 'What Is the Zoo Experience? How Zoos Impact a Visitor's Behaviors, Perceptions, and Conservation Efforts', *Frontiers in psychology*, 10, p. 1746. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.01746>

Kylie Eichberg-Levitt

A New Leash on Conservation: How Rescue Dogs are Advancing Wildlife Conservation

Abstract:

Rescue dogs trained as conservation detection dogs offer a unique lens through which to explore symbiotic ethics and multispecies connectedness. These dogs not only contribute to wildlife conservation by locating endangered, invasive, and cryptic species, but they also experience transformative benefits themselves—finding purpose, engagement, and a renewed sense of life after being rescued from challenging circumstances. This talk will examine the reciprocal relationships formed between humans, dogs, and the ecosystems they help protect, highlighting how ethical frameworks that prioritize mutual well-being can enhance both conservation outcomes and animal welfare. The story of Sparrow, a Belgian malinois rescued from Spain and successfully trained for fieldwork in the UK, exemplifies how these partnerships create mutually beneficial opportunities: dogs gain meaningful roles and enriched lives, humans gain skilled collaborators, and ecosystems receive enhanced protection. Such initiatives provide a model for the future of anthrozoology, illustrating how cooperative, ethically grounded interactions across species can foster enduring ecological and social impact.

Bio:



Kylie Eichberg-Levitt is a conservation biologist, ecologist, and conservation detection dog trainer. She co-founded K9 Commando with her husband, Dan, in 2022, where she develops and implements canine-led conservation programs to support wildlife monitoring. After graduating from the MA Anthrozoology programme at the University of Exeter in 2023, she has focused on integrating ecological research with practical human and non-human animal collaboration, exploring how detection dogs can contribute to conservation practices.

Suggested readings:

Bearman-Brown, L.E., Wilson, L.E., Evans, L.C., and Baker, P.J., 2020. Comparing non-invasive surveying techniques for elusive, nocturnal mammals: a case study of the West European hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*). *Journal of Vertebrate Biology*, 69(3): 20075.1-17. <https://doi.org/10.25225/jvb.20075>

Thompson, S.A, Thompson, G.G., Withers, P.C., Bennett, E.M., 2024. Conservation detection dog is better than human searcher in finding bilby (*Macrotis lagotis*) scats. *Australian Zoologist*, 41(1): 86–93. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7882/AZ.2020.012>

Kris Hill

What's in it for the cats?

Abstract:

A colony of cats (*Felis catus*) inhabiting a popular beach-style holiday destination on the Costa del Sol, Spain, serves as a case study to elucidate prominent features of a transspecies community situated within a touristic landscape. Fieldwork undertaken between 2022 and 2025 has documented tourist attitudes and interactions between colony cats, residents, and visitors. Tourists of all ages, genders, and various nationalities openly express joy at seeing the cats, stopping to look, take photos, and sometimes pet them. Prominent signs explain the colony cats are fed by licensed feeders and that unauthorised feeding can incur a fine. However, observations, interviews, and survey responses indicated that both residents and visitors largely ignore this message. Participants provided a range of reasons for feeding the cats that were not limited to concerns the cats might go hungry. Some used food to initiate interactions with cats or to encourage them to pose for the camera. Many of these images are shared on social media, which is something several colony caretakers take issue with. While it can be argued that the private lives of these highly social cats are not being violated, unintended harm could result from drawing attention to the colony.

Similarly, the publication of research can have unforeseen consequences, which is something I am constantly grappling with as an anthrozoologist. As researchers we have a responsibility to respect and protect participants of all species, but how can we know when attentions are helping or harming individuals or a community? Applying the lens of anthrozoology as symbiotic ethics, and using examples from my own research, this presentation will examine some key issues and dilemmas encountered while undertaking multispecies ethnography.

Bio:



Dr Kris Hill is a graduate of the MA in Anthrozoology (2018) and went on to earn her PhD from Exeter (2023). Her doctoral research focused on cat-human relations, and discourses surrounding free-roaming cats (*Felis catus*).

She has authored/co-authored 21 peer-reviewed articles in the field of human-animal studies and her academic interests include animals and tourism, more-than-human families, and cat-human cultures. Kris is founder of the Cat Academic Think Tank (eCATT), Anthrozoology as International Practice (AIP), and co-host for The Anthrozoology Podcast.

Kris is a Communication Officer and Trustee of the Society for Companion Animal Studies (SCAS), serves on the board of the International Society for Anthrozoology (ISAZ), and is co-editor for *Sloth: A Journal of Emerging Voices in Human Animal Studies*. Kris is a Research Associate in the Philosophical Faculty at the University of Hradec Králové, Czech Republic.

Visit www.academiccatlady.com to learn more about Kris' research and collaborative projects.

Suggested readings:

Hill, K. (2025). Cats, Community, and Tourism on the Costa del Sol: A Transspecies Ethnography. *Tourism Geographies*, 27(8), 1700–1718.

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14616688.2025.2581193>

Hill, K. (2024). Humano–Cat Cultures and Tourist Attitudes Towards Local Free-Living Cats of the Costa Del Sol, in *Emerging Voices for Animals in Tourism* (Eds. J. Hooper & C. Kline), CABI. 99-114.

<https://www.cabidigitallibrary.org/doi/10.1079/9781800625259.0009>

Samantha Hurn

Poor health = poor welfare: Assessing the impact of veterinary training and provision on the welfare of animals classified as 'exotic pets', and its implications for legislative reform



Abstract:

Several UK animal welfare NGOs (e.g. RSPCA, Born Free Foundation, OneKind, ScottishSPCA) and veterinary professional bodies (e.g. the British Veterinary Association or BVA) have expressed concern in recent years regarding the perceived increase in the numbers of different non-traditional companion animals (NTCAs), or 'exotic pets' being acquired and kept in the UK. The concerns are varied but include the high prevalence of wild caught animals in the pet trade, the variety of species being kept, as well as the often complex care needs of the majority of species which fall into this category.

When coupled with irresponsible ownership and lack of consistent and reliable information on what these animals need in order to flourish, compromised welfare and poor health is an inevitable result for many.

This is of particular concern for the veterinary profession, as shown in the 2022 BVA 'Voice of the Profession' survey which found that "over eight in ten vets (81%) were concerned that the welfare needs of NTCAs were not being met, with the most cited welfare issues being 'irresponsible animal ownership' (82%), 'irresponsible breeding or sourcing' (11%), and 'lack of specialist veterinary care' (10%). Vets who treat NTCAs report that over half (58%) of the NTCAs they see do not have their five animal welfare needs met." Health is one of the five domains of animal welfare, and the one which vets as well as those who keep exotic animals arguably share responsibility. For animals to have this aspect of their welfare needs met, the veterinary profession itself needs to be suitably equipped to provide both emergency and routine care to the diverse range of species involved.

However, a key finding of research I have been conducting over the past two years into the exotic pet trade in the UK is that this is not the case. For example, the 'Find a Vet' database managed by the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) lists 1972 UK practices which advertise an ability to cater for exotics from a total of 5331 veterinary practices in the UK. That means only 37% of UK veterinary practices are set up to treat exotic pets, and within those practices, not all staff will have an interest in exotics, and exotics vets may not be available out of hours, leading to long wait times for appointments and a lottery when it comes to emergency care. This has been a significant issue for many of the participants in my research to date, who often find themselves unable to obtain timely access to suitably qualified and experienced vets. Some of the findings from my research on this issue will be discussed, focussing on the implications of current veterinary training and provision for 'exotics' in the context of calls for legislative reform aimed at tighter control of exotic pet ownership.

Suggested readings:

Azevedo, A., Guimarães, L., Ferraz, J., Whiting, M. and Magalhães-Sant'Ana, M., 2021. Pet reptiles—are we meeting their needs? *Animals*, 11(10), p.2964.

<https://www.mdpi.com/2076-2615/11/10/2964>

Espinosa Garcia-San Roman, J., Quesada-Canales, Ó., Arbelo Hernandez, M., Deniz Suarez, S. and Castro-Alonso, A., 2023. Veterinary education and training on non-traditional companion animals, exotic, zoo, and wild animals: Concepts review and challenging perspective on zoological medicine. *Veterinary Sciences*, 10(5), p.357. <https://www.mdpi.com/2306-7381/10/5/357>

Goins, M. and Hanlon, A.J., 2021. Exotic pets in Ireland: 2. Provision of veterinary services and perspectives of veterinary professionals on responsible ownership. *Irish veterinary journal*, 74(1), p.13. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13620-021-00191-5>

Samantha Hurn

Chair for the panel discussion: 'What does it mean to advocate for animals?'

This session will provide opportunity to reflect on the work of different animal advocacy organisations and to consider what it means to advocate for animals in an anthrozoological context.

What are the challenges that campaigners face when navigating the competing interests of different human stakeholders when attempting to advocate on behalf of other animals?

We will be joined by four speakers, all working for animal welfare and advocacy NGOs in different research and policy focussed roles. The session will start with a brief contextualising introduction from Prof Samantha Hurn, discussing what advocacy means in academic research, and anthrozoology in particular.

Each of the five invited speakers (Dr Molly Sumridge, ASPCA; Evangeline Button, RSPCA; Chris Lewis, Born Free Foundation; Kirsty Jenkins, OneKind), Dr Anna Wilkinson (PETA) will then individually present on their work.*

These presentations will be followed by a panel discussion with opportunity for Q&A from conference delegates.

*(Please find biographies and images of the five invited speakers on the following pages)

Evangeline Button

RSPCA Senior Scientific and Policy Officer Exotics Positive List

Panellist in the Saturday afternoon discussion on
'Advocating for Animals'



Bio:

Evie Button is a senior scientific and policy officer in the RSPCA's wild animals department, leading their work on wild animals kept as pets. Evie has worked at the RSPCA for 10 years, first supporting the work of their animal centres in rescue and rehoming, then starting to specialise in wildlife while also studying for a Masters in Animal Welfare.

Evie has worked on campaigns as varied as banning glue traps used to control rodents, preventing wild animals being injured by litter, and stopping pets from being given away as prizes. In this talk, she'll talk about the strategy she's developed to improve the welfare of wild animals as pets through different approaches to advocacy.

Kirsty Jenkins
Director of Policy for OneKind

Panellist in the Saturday afternoon discussion on
'Advocating for Animals'



Bio:

Kirsty Jenkins is Director of Policy for OneKind, a charity advocating for animals across Scotland, where she has worked since 2020. Her work involves identifying and implementing effective pathways towards legislative and cultural change; ensuring OneKind campaigns are well informed; working closely with politicians, civil servants and partner organisations; and seeking innovative ways to stay at the forefront of advancing (more than human) animals' interests in Scotland.

Previously she spent years working to try to help horses and humans understand each other, and to help horses navigate a human world. She also has some practical experience with wild, farmed and companion animals, and has an MSc (Distinction) in Animal Behaviour and Welfare.

Chris Lewis

Born Free Foundation Captivity Research and Policy Manager

Panellist in the Saturday afternoon discussion on
'Advocating for Animals'



Bio:

Chris Lewis graduated from the University of Exeter in 2012. He has spent over eight years working in the animal care industry, including time working in zoos and colleges within the UK and abroad with roles ranging from keeping, student training, managing, and zoo legislative compliance, before joining Born Free, where he has now worked for over half a decade, advocating for wild animals living in captivity.

In his current role, Chris leads and oversees the production of evidence-based reports, publications, and recommendations that inform and influence policy, practice, and public opinion on the issues affecting captive wild animals.

Molly Sumridge

ASPCA Director of Research

Panellist in the Saturday afternoon discussion on
'Advocating for Animals'



Bio:

Dr Molly Sumridge, (they/them), is a Director of Research at the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA), where they lead national studies on access to veterinary care and the structural factors that influence animal welfare outcomes. Their work is grounded in qualitative research methodologies and a sustained commitment to representing the experiences of both humans and animals.

Molly earned their PhD in Anthrozoology from the University of Exeter where they studied the social construction of New Guinea singing dogs. Their research expertise includes digital multispecies ethnography, domestication theory, access to care, and the ideological frameworks that shape how human–animal relationships are classified, valued, and practiced. Molly is proudly neurodivergent and multiply disabled; their lived experience with disability and neurodiversity informs both their scholarly work and their broader advocacy for more inclusive approaches to knowledge production within the field of animal welfare. Outside of research, Molly spends their time exploring rural Montana with a colourful cast of canine companions.

Anna Wilkinson
Policy advisor for PETA UK

Panellist in the Saturday afternoon discussion on
'Advocating for Animals'



Bio:

Dr Anna Wilkinson is a policy advisor for PETA UK, working to end the use of animals in science. She is a policy expert with over 15 years' experience at the intersection of ethics, science, and medicine. She has experience leading on legislative and regulatory reform, the development of regulatory guidance and ethical analysis of emerging biotechnologies. Her work has involved stakeholder engagement, research, policy analysis, and communication of complex policy issues to government, Parliament and regulatory bodies. She holds a doctorate in moral philosophy from the University of Sheffield. Anna's work at PETA involves promoting PETA's Research Modernisation Deal, which outlines a six-step strategy for ending experiments on animals, with Parliamentarians and policymakers, in the context of the UK strategy to replace animals in science.

Katja M. Guenther

Keynote Address: Multispecies Hope and Resistance during Endless Crises

Abstract:

The call to practice symbiotic ethics becomes ever more urgent as climate -related and other environmental disasters continue to accelerate. Critical theories, like feminism, also remain essential for understanding the human-created structures of power that support continued environmental devastation, and which undermine multispecies justice.

In this talk, I bring together symbiotic and feminist ethics to examine two local human-driven projects in the Los Angeles area aimed at improving the lives of, and building multispecies communities with feral (aka community) cats and pumas.

Analysing my research experiences and findings from fieldwork with community cat advocates and puma conservationists, I show how bridging symbiotic ethics with feminist animal studies can enrich our analyses of multispecies efforts at resisting animal suffering and habitat destruction.

Further, symbiotic and feminist ethics guide us towards affirming the lives of human and other-than-human animals in ways that centre hope, care, and collective liberation, even in the face of the state's organized abandonment of specific populations of animals—like feral (community) cats.

Bio:



Professor Katja M. Guenther is Professor Gender & Sexuality Studies at the University of California, Riverside (USA), where her research, writing, and activism centre on feminist politics, human exploitation of non-human animals, and justice projects of various kinds, especially multispecies justice, disability justice, and gender justice. Katja is the author of *The Lives and Deaths of Shelter Animals* and *Making Their Place: Feminism After Socialism in Eastern Germany*, and co-editor of *When Animals Die: Examining Justifications and Envisioning Justice*, as well as of numerous book chapters and journal articles.

More information is available at www.katjamguenther.com.

Suggested readings:

Gillespie, Kathryn, 2025. *The Sound of Feathers: Attentive Living in a World Beyond Ourselves*. Durham: Duke University Press (the whole book or any substantive chapter is recommended).

Guenther, Katja M. 2026. "The People's Puma as Place-maker in Los Angeles." Pages 151-166 in *Animals and Landscapes: Multispecies Locations, Space and Place*, edited by Claire Parkinson and Brett Mills. New York and London: Routledge. Available open access at <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/oa-edit/10.4324/9781003614807-13/people-puma-place-maker-los-angeles-katja-guenther?context=ubx&refId=b1a0f4ec-f2fd-443d-87f9-c750d981d3f0>.

Jessica Groling

**Plausible deniability as practice:
How ‘feel for the game’ sustains and challenges illegal
foxhunting**



Abstract:

This paper will examine the persistent difficulty of prosecuting illegal foxhunting in England and Wales under the Hunting Act 2004. It will do so through the lens of animal criminology, drawing on Pierre Bourdieu’s concepts of tacit knowledge and *sens pratique* (‘feel for the game’). The paper argues that enforcement failure cannot be understood solely in terms of evidential shortcomings or institutional reluctance, but rather as the outcome of a tension between codified legal rationality and the embodied practical mastery of actors within the hunting field.

Focusing on the period leading up to a consultation on a proposed ban on legal ‘trail-hunting’, and informed by revelations from the leaked Hunting Office webinars as well as the author’s own experiences ‘in the field’, the paper will examine the conditions that enable the continued misrecognition of animal harm and the persistence of foxhunting under the symbolic and legal cover of trail-hunting. It will shed light on how hunters collectively cultivate a practical sense of how to reproduce prohibited practices while remaining within the thresholds of legal deniability, while also showing how anti-hunt activists acquire a parallel practical competence through prolonged immersion yet find that this tacit knowledge is difficult to translate into the propositional forms required by courts.

The letter of the law is systematically outplayed by the practical logic of fields in a way that leaves animal victims caught in this structural epistemic gap. Their suffering is visible within the field but illegible to the court. A criminological perspective rooted in symbiotic ethics, which is attentive to multispecies entanglements and power, can challenge the legal and symbolic structures that continue to obscure and normalise animal harm.

Bio:

Dr Jess Groling is an anthrozoologist whose primary research interests are united by the theme of *transgression*: transgressive other-than-human animals (concepts of hybridity, pestilence, invasiveness, liminality) and humans whose transgressive actions harm or advocate for other animals. She prioritises collaborative and impact-focused research and has worked for and with a range of clients and partners including Natural England, ICF, RSPCA, Badger Trust and the Society for Companion Animal Studies.

Suggested readings:

Bourdieu, P. (1987) The force of law: Toward a sociology of the juridical field. *Hastings Law Journal*. 38:5. 814-853.

Casamitjana, J. (2015) *Trail of lies: Report on the role of trail hunting in preventing successful prosecutions against illegal hunters in the UK*. IFAW: International Fund for Animal Welfare.

Mukerji, C. (2014) The cultural power of tacit knowledge: Inarticulacy and Bourdieu's habitus. *American Journal of Cultural Sociology*. 2:3. 348-375.

Claire Musser

**Bears in Hot Tubs –
Co-thriving begins with us**



Abstract:

'Bears in Hot Tubs' is an award-winning visual multispecies ethnography, released in December 2025. The film has received multiple accolades, including *Best Documentary Short* at the Ladyface Mountain Film Festival (2026). As a practice-based research project, it explores a world where black bears are not simply subjects of observation, but co-participants in the storytelling process, with their movements and behaviours shaping the visual and narrative fabric of the film.

Using an approach akin to *lively ethnography* (van Dooren & Rose, 2016), I position bears not as passive entities to be documented, but as active agents in a shared landscape where human and more-than-human lives intersect. Through non-intrusive remote trail cameras and observational filmmaking, I track how black bears navigate suburban environments, particularly their engagement with hot tubs and pools.

By working with sound and image to approximate aspects of the bear's sensory world, their heightened sense of smell and acute hearing, and encounters with fences not as fixed barriers but as obstacles to move through, I attempt to immerse the audience in the bear's perspective.

This mode of storytelling moves beyond documentation, creating a space where human audiences can engage with the bear's lived experience not through anthropomorphic projection, but through *egomorphism* (Milton, 2005), recognising the bear's intrinsic subjectivity and, in doing so, begin to recognise themselves in both the humans and the bears.

As co-creators of this visual narrative, including Maddie the bear as co-director, the bears themselves disrupt human-centred framings of landscape and belonging, inviting us to reconsider our own presence within these shared spaces. In doing so, *Bears in Hot Tubs* forms part of my PhD research, which establishes [co-thriving](#) as both a theoretical framework and praxis, shifting the focus from control and management toward more attentive, relational ways of living with large carnivores.

Bears in Hot Tubs will be available to watch from March 28 to April 03. Tickets are \$10 USD and include access to 12 short films, with all proceeds supporting the Grand Canyon Wolf Recovery Project and my work to advance co-thriving futures.

Bio:

Claire Musser is a multispecies collaborator, filmmaker, and executive director of the



[Grand Canyon Wolf Recovery Project](#), where she leads education, fieldwork, and advocacy for endangered Mexican gray wolves. She is a PhD candidate at Falmouth University working at the intersection of anthrozoology and environmental film. Her work spans visual storytelling and applied conservation, with a focus on human–carnivore relationships across the Western United States. She collaborates with [Project GRIPH](#) and ranching communities on field-based approaches to wolf conflict prevention, bringing together participatory research, multispecies ethnography, and ethical storytelling. Claire is also co-author of the forthcoming book chapter *Beyond Coexistence: Co-*

Thriving with Wolves in the Anthropocene (Exeter University Press, 2026).

Suggested readings:

Bekoff, M. (2010) 'Compassionate conservation and individual animals', *Conservation Biology*, 24(6), pp. 1580–1581. doi:10.1111/j.1523-1739.2010.01585.x.

Milton, K. (2020) 'Anthropomorphism or egomorphism? The perception of non-human persons by human ones', *Animals in Person*, pp. 255–271. doi:10.4324/9781003135883-13.

van Dooren, T. and Rose, D.B. (2016) 'Lively ethography: Storying animist worlds', *Environmental Humanities*, 8(1), pp. 77–94. doi:10.1215/22011919-3527731.

Eve Marshall

(Eve is unable to present but invites students to contact her with questions or comments on her research field)

Building alliance between vegans and livestock farmers: Towards a kinder and more sovereign UK food system

Abstract:

New trade deals and debates surrounding imported animal products have become a flashpoint in UK food politics, raising questions of multi-species justice. Drawing on semi-structured interviews with seven UK livestock farmers, and an interdisciplinary literature review, this paper explores how ‘lower welfare’ imported animal products affect both the lives of British farmers and the legitimacy of the UK’s ‘world-leading’ animal welfare standards, particularly in light of the Labour government’s new animal welfare strategy.

The interviews reveal tensions between economic survival and ethical commitments to animals in the food system. They also illuminate unconventional areas of convergence between livestock farmers and vegan animal protection advocates. Situating these findings within broader campaigning efforts for stronger import standards, the paper highlights tensions between animal rights and welfare, and explores how discussions of food sovereignty can become entangled with nationalist sentiments; a dynamic the author reflexively engages with throughout.

A symbiotic ethics approach highlights the shared human-animal justice implications of global agricultural interdependencies, and the paper argues that in putting aside ideological differences and recognising shared interests, vegans and livestock farmers can work together, with a louder collective voice, to reform food and trade systems to the benefit of animals and farming livelihoods.

Bio:



Eve Marshall is an MRes Social Sciences student at the University of Exeter. With a BA in Sustainability and Management, her research focuses on just and sustainable transitions in agriculture, particularly pathways toward plant-based and vegan food systems that are attentive to farmer livelihoods and multispecies justice. Alongside her academic work, she is actively engaged in food system advocacy and farmer outreach initiatives, working with organisations including Animal Rising, Vegan Support for Farmers, Farm Adaptation Network, and Animal Justice Project.

Suggested Readings:

Oxley Heaney, S., Szydlowski, M., Hill, K., & Hooper, J. (2025). Rethinking Animal Welfare in a Globalised World: Cultural Perspectives, Challenges, and Future Directions.

Animals, 15(6), 891.

Nye, C; Wheeler, R (2023). 'I've got nothing against vegans... but': To divulge, dissemble or divert positionality in rural research settings. University of Exeter. Journal contribution.

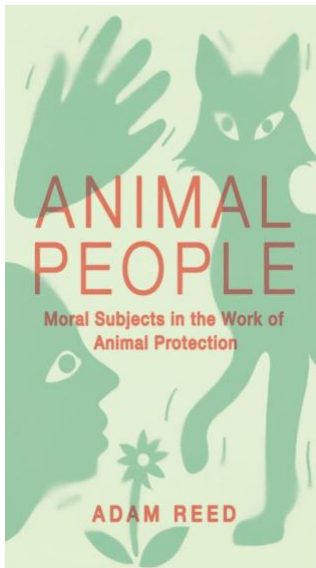
<https://hdl.handle.net/10871/133845>

Adam Reed

'Animal People: Moral Subjects in the Work of Animal Protection'

Abstract:

Animal People and Moral Patency:



What does it mean to work on behalf of animals? This book introduces readers to the professionalised world of Animal Protection in the UK from the perspective of those who consider themselves to be 'moderate activists' and typically define themselves as 'animal people' (i.e., moral subjects who would do anything for non-human animals and whose lives have been crucially defined at an early age by the experience of 'making contact' with specific critters). The book explores the interrelationships between Animal Protection as moral cause and organizational culture, and more specifically examines the ways in which roles or recognised forms of expertise become ethical exercises. This includes a consideration of the way certain expert figures emerge as moral archetypes within the field of Animal Protection but also a much wider exploration of some of the typical ways the categories of moral agent and moral patient get invoked, including within the diverse debates of animal ethics.

NB: MA Anthrozoology students, in particular: Please be prepared to question Adam on the challenges he found in researching and developing '*Animal People*,' from the perspectives and definitions of the 'moderate activists' to whom he refers, and about how expertise practices become 'ethical exercises'.

Bio:



Professor Adam Reed is a Reader in Social Anthropology at the University of St Andrews. His research explores the intersections between moral and literary imagination and institutional life. He is the author of *Literature and Agency in English Fiction Reading* and *Papua New Guinea's Last Place*. Adam's volume is available as an e-book from the University of Exeter library, but please see below for a discount on book purchase.

There is a 30% discount code for the purchase of '*Animal People*'

January 2025 | 9781501779640 | £31.00* | PB | 324pp

*Price subject to change

30% Discount Code: FFF24

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Valid only for orders shipping to the UK, EMEA & AP

Camilla Parry

Death at work: Discussing veterinary staff experiences with companion animal euthanasia in a veterinary hospital

Abstract:

For the most part, veterinarians in the UK view euthanasia as a positive tool in aiding animal welfare, however even with good intentions, there is some debate over the ethics surrounding animal euthanasia. The veterinary field has some of the highest records of mental health issues such as anxiety and compassion fatigue within its workforce and some research has linked this with euthanasia, amongst other factors.

The aim of this project was to provide an in-depth assessment of companion animal euthanasia in a veterinary hospital, as well as to establish if an increase in compassion fatigue in a workplace has an effect on animal welfare. Methodology was a combination of qualitative interviews with participants working in a veterinary hospital and an ethnographic journal by the researcher who was also employed within the hospital.

Findings produced descriptive data on the experiences and emotions from the veterinary staff's point of view, and in-depth observations of the animals' experiences in the hospital.

It was found that although all veterinary staff agree with euthanasia on welfare grounds, they are often put in situations where they feel out of control or conflicted. Many of the staff reported feeling fatigued in the workplace but not all felt this was directly linked to euthanasia, more so to factors such as pay and long hours. When asked how to improve the process of euthanasia, almost all participants requested a separate area of the hospital to be devoted to end of life clients, and this suggestion was put forward to the hospital.

Bio:



Camilla Parry has a BSc in Animal Behaviour and recently graduated with an MA in Anthrozoology, both with the University of Exeter. Camilla is currently working in the field of emergency veterinary medicine and is interested in companion animal welfare and the close relationships that develop between humans and their animal family members, as well as in those human individuals who work with companion animals for a living.

Suggested readings:

Hamilton, L. and Taylor, N., 2013. *Animals at work: Identity, politics and culture in work with animals* (Vol. 16). Brill. Chapter 7.

Desmond, J., 2022. Medicine, value, and knowledge in the veterinary clinic: questions for and from medical anthropology and the medical humanities. *Frontiers in veterinary science*, 9, p.780482.

Fiona Handyside and Benedict Morrison

Scrublands, Sanctuaries, Screens: Co-creating knowledges alongside donkeys

Abstract:

In this paper, we will discuss our experiences teaching our module Scrublands, Sanctuaries, Screens: co-creating knowledges alongside donkeys. This module which has been running for two years is delivered in partnership with the Sidmouth Donkey Sanctuary. It takes seriously the idea that “fair” representation in screen media must move beyond its anthropocentric focus on human identity categories. It attempts to think alongside more-than-human animals about how their experiences and subjectivities are translated into film and allied media. Benedict will focus on how we incorporated our visit to the sanctuary and our use of canonical critical animal studies scholarship; Fiona will focus on questions of donkey performance and how questions of agency, intent, and skill could inform how we think about this labour.

Bios:



Professor Fiona Handyside is Associate Professor of Film Studies at the University of Exeter. Her research interests include postfeminist media studies, cinemas of girlhood, and hairstyles. Her most recent publication is *Girls’ Hairstories: Resilience and Sparkle in Contemporary Cinema* (Edinburgh University Press, 2025).

Dr Benedict Morrison is Senior Lecturer in Film Studies at the University of Exeter. His research interests include queer film and television, critical animal studies, and golden age detective fiction. His most recent publication is *Eccentric Laughter: Queer Possibility in Post war British Film Comedy* (SUNY Press, 2024).



They began collaborating on a module with the Sidmouth Donkey Sanctuary early 2025. You can watch a short video about it [here](#) and read a short interview with Benedict [here](#).

Suggested readings:

David Batty, 2025. “Beasts unburdened: film course aims to rehabilitate donkeys’ reputation”, *The Guardian*

<https://www.theguardian.com/education/2025/feb/19/beasts-unburdened-new-film-course-aims-to-rehabilitate-maligned-donkey-reputation>

Cara Clancy, Emma McClaughlin & Fiona Cooke, 2023. “Invisible Animals: Exploring Public Discourses to Understand the Contemporary Status of Donkeys in Britain” *Anthrozoös*, DOI: 10.1080/08927936.2023.2248762.

Alexander Badman-King

How Can Anthrozoology Help Us Understand AI?

Abstract:

'Artificial Intelligence' is a term which covers a multitude of sins, and yet, in many of its current and possible incarnations, that term describes a monster which looms large in our imaginations. The most obvious and general way in which the future of anthrozoology relates to the emergence of artificial intelligences, is that our field specialises in how we can and should think about intelligences which are not human. Should we think about these intelligences as being capable of consciousness? If so, how so? If not, how not? But the nuances of anthrozoology, its many methods and manifestations, mean that finer details and complexities, beyond the highly abstract, can be explored in these non-human agents of tomorrow. Indeed, it is in the idea of monstrosity which I think most light can be shed on these entities, and how, by developing the way in which anthrozoology deals with monsters, we can help ourselves (and perhaps any future non-human artificial beings) approach our relationship most fruitfully.

Bio:



Dr Alexander Badman-King writes that as far as possible he tries to avoid specialisms. 'I try to be a philosopher in a very general (some might say archaic) sense. The kind of philosophy I try to practice has been described as "Philosophy as a Way of Life", which is really just a new label for a very old idea largely associated with ancient Greek traditions.

It mostly means that I view philosophy as an inherently ethical business, it is about trying to be the best we can be by better understanding life, the universe and everything. Central to my ethics is the inclusion of non-humans as significant, so a lot of what I do is focused on that inclusion (particularly the inclusion of other living things, although I also spend time on artificial minds).

'To this end, I am also concerned with a very practical, personally engaged way of coming to understand the lives of others (this is where I tend to argue for the coextension of philosophy and anthropology/participant observation).

‘Another very important element of my attempt to be a philosopher is the emphasis I place on ordinary language. I don’t only (or even primarily) mean the school of philosophy which took ordinary language as its subject, but rather the need for clear, forthright and accessible communication in academia.

‘The upshot here is that, despite being a full-time academic working at a university, I do not view philosophy as solely or even chiefly the business of academics but instead something which is and should be the concern of everyone.’

Suggested readings:

Marušič, J.Ž. and Sergaš, U. (2023) ‘The basilisk and the zombie: exploring the future of life with AI through the medium of popular culture’, *Deeds and Days*, 79, pp. 95–113. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.7220/2335-8769.79.6>.

[The basilisk and the zombie: exploring the future of life with AI through the medium of popular culture](#)

Asma, Stephen. (2020). MONSTERS AND THE MORAL IMAGINATION.

10.5749/j.ctvtv937f.18. ([PDF](#)) [MONSTERS AND THE MORAL IMAGINATION](#)

Danta, C. (2012). The future will have been animal: Dr Moreau and the aesthetics of monstrosity. *Textual Practice*, 26(4), 687–705.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/0950236X.2012.696490>

[Full article: The future will have been animal: Dr Moreau and the aesthetics of monstrosity](#)

