



Tourism and Animal Welfare in Lapland

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Abstract

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<p>This thesis focuses on the relationship between tourism and animal welfare, with a specific lens on Lapland. The objective is to unravel the dynamics between tourism and the ethical treatment of animals, aiming for a nuanced understanding, especially given the evolving societal attitudes toward animals' sentience.</p> <p>The research method employs a survey strategically disseminated through social media channels like Instagram and Facebook, tapping into the contemporary pulse of public opinion. This study is not just about presenting findings but involves a robust exploration of the evolutionary journey of animal welfare practices in Finland, interwoven with an examination of the existing legislation.</p> <p>One notable finding is the growing significance of Lapland in Finnish tourism, especially with the surge in international visitors. The economic implications are substantial, yet ethical concerns persist. This problem highlights the delicate balance between economic interests and ethical responsibilities, a recurring theme in animal-based tourism.</p> <p>An intriguing aspect of the study is the stark contrast between academic literature and public opinions regarding animal welfare in Lapland's tourism. Despite theoretical assertions of good treatment, public sentiment, as revealed through the survey, remains significantly concerned about animal welfare. This paradoxical gap prompts reflections on the multifaceted influences shaping public perceptions—media narratives, individual experiences, and information sources contributing to this dissonance.</p> <p>The survey responses convey a consistent emphasis on the paramount importance of animal welfare. Participants articulate a reliance on news and media for shaping their perspectives, underlining a perceived need for public education. Concerns extend beyond immediate welfare issues to encompass broader impacts, such as the potential negative consequences of mass tourism on animals and the challenges businesses face, notably exacerbated by external factors like the COVID-19 pandemic.</p> <p>While shedding light on current perceptions, this research also opens avenues for future exploration. Proposals for further research include investigating the role of cultural backgrounds in shaping ethical perceptions, the impact of emerging technologies like virtual and augmented reality, and the nexus between climate change and animal-based tourism destinations.</p>
Keywords Animal-based tourism, human-animal relationship, animal welfare, ethics, Lapland

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<p>Tämä opinnäytetyö keskittyy matkailun ja eläinsuojelun väliseen suhteeseen, erityisesti Lapin näkökulmasta. Tavoitteena on avata matkailun ja eläinten eettisen kohtelun dynamiikkaa, pyrkien hienovaraiseen ymmärtämiseen erityisesti ottaen huomioon yhteiskunnan kehittyvät asenteet eläinten hyvinvointia kohtaan.</p> <p>Tutkimusmenetelmänä käytetään kyselyä, joka jaettiin sosiaalisen median kanavissa, kuten Instagramissa ja Facebookissa, tarttuen nykyhetken julkiseen mielipiteeseen. Tämä tutkimus ei rajoitu pelkästään tulosten esittämiseen vaan sisältää vahvan tutkimuksen eläinsuojelukäytäntöjen evolutiivisesta matkasta Suomessa, kietoutuen olemassa olevan lainsäädännön tarkasteluun.</p> <p>Huomionarvoinen havainto on Lapin kasvava merkitys suomalaisessa matkailussa, erityisesti kansainvälisten vierailijoiden lisääntymisen myötä. Taloudelliset vaikutukset ovat merkittäviä, mutta eettiset huolenaiheet pysyvät. Tämä ongelma korostaa herkkää tasapainoa taloudellisten etujen ja eettisten velvollisuuksien välillä, toistuva teema eläinperustaisessa matkailussa.</p> <p>Mielenkiintoinen näkökulma tutkimuksessa on ristiriita akateemisen kirjallisuuden ja yleisen mielipiteen välillä Lapin matkailun eläinsuojelusta. Teoreettisista väittämistä huolimatta yleinen mielipide, kuten kyselystä käy ilmi, on merkittävästi huolissaan eläinten hyvinvoinnista. Tämä paradoksaalinen ero herättää pohdintaa monimutkaisista vaikuttimista, jotka muovaavat julkista mielipidettä – median kerronnasta yksilöllisiin kokemuksiin ja tiedonlähteisiin, jotka vaikuttavat tähän epäjohtonmukaisuuteen.</p> <p>Kyselyvastaukset välittävät johtonmukaisen painotuksen eläinten hyvinvoinnin ensisijaisuudesta. Osallistujat ilmaisevat luottamuksensa uutisille ja medialle näkemystensä muovaajina, korostaen koettua tarvetta yleiselle valistukselle. Huolet laajenevat välittömien hyvinvointikysymysten ulkopuolelle koskemaan laajempia vaikutuksia, kuten massaturismin mahdollisia kielteisiä seurauksia eläimille ja yritysten kohtaamia haasteita, erityisesti COVID-19-pandemian kaltaisten ulkoisten tekijöiden pahentaessa tilannetta.</p> <p>Vaikka tämä tutkimus valaisee nykyisiä näkemyksiä, se avaa myös ovia tulevalle tutkimukselle. Ehdotuksia jatkotutkimukselle ovat muun muassa kulttuuritaustan roolin tutkiminen eettisten käytösten muovaajana, uusien teknologioiden, kuten virtuaalitodellisuuden ja lisätyn todellisuuden, vaikutus eläinmatkailukokemuksiin sekä ilmastonmuutoksen ja eläinperustaisen matkailun kohteiden välinen suhde.</p>
Keywords Animal-based tourism, human-animal relationship, animal welfare, ethics, Lapland

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

Both travellers and travel operators are increasingly interested in the welfare of animals used in tourism, and there has been a lot of discussion on the topic recently, both globally and in Finland. (Carr & Broom, 2018)

The close connection between tourism and animals is visible in various tourism experiences, including observing wildlife, going on marine trips, visiting zoos, and exploring cultural exhibits. Animals often serve as captivating attractions, offering tourists opportunities for close encounters with species they might never encounter in their natural environments. As a result, animal-based tourism has become a significant contributor to the global travel industry, generating substantial revenue and employment opportunities (Carr & Broom, 2018). These attractions offer enjoyment and education and contribute to conservation efforts; however, when experiences are not meticulously overseen, they can threaten animal well-being.

Finland's northernmost region, Lapland, is known for its breathtaking natural beauty, mesmerizing landscapes, and unique cultural heritage. In recent decades, the region has become an increasingly popular destination for domestic and international tourists seeking unforgettable experiences (Statistics Finland, 2023). The animals are one of these experiences and attractions that draw visitors to Lapland. In Lapland, as in many other regions, animals have become key stakeholders in the tourism sector, offering visitors a unique opportunity for close encounters with various species. Reindeers and huskies have become the symbols for Lapland, in the same way, for example, kangaroos to Australia. (Ojuva, 2018)

1.2 Research objective

This thesis concentrates on the topic of animal tourism and welfare, especially in the Lapland setting. The aim is to comprehensively understand Lapland's dynamic relationship between tourism and animal welfare.

It will also talk about the general public's perceptions and knowledge of the topic, which can be analysed from data collection. The data gathering method is a survey published in different social media channels, like Instagram and Facebook. Additionally, the thesis will provide insights into the evolution of animal welfare practices in Finland and an overview of the country's animal-related legislation.

1.3 Significance of the Study

The topic of animal welfare and ethics using them in tourism has captured public attention and has been talked about a lot more than in the past few decades. The acknowledgement of animals' sentience is a growing reality that significantly influences societal concerns regarding animals' welfare and ethical treatment. While animals are pivotal to the tourism experience and are greatly affected by tourism, there has been limited literature on animals in this context until recently. Previous publications mainly focused on wild animals, especially those preferred by humans. They have touched on the broader subject of animal-based tourism, and only a few, or none, have delved into the specific challenges and opportunities presented in the distinctive setting of Lapland. (Carr and Broom, 2018)

1.4 Thesis Structure

The structure is designed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the topic, allowing the reader to grasp the ethical complexities and welfare considerations inherent in using animals as tourism stakeholders.

Chapter 2 talks about animal-based tourism and further introduces the topic. It reviews the existing literature to better understand key concepts by examining prior research, theories, and perspectives related to animal-based tourism in Lapland, ethical considerations, and the impact on animal welfare. It will also look at Lapland as a tourism destination and its significance to the region.

Chapter 3 dives deeper into the ethical dimensions of using animals in tourism as well as animal welfare. It examines specific ethical dilemmas and concerns, exploring various perspectives and experiences.

Chapter 4 outlines the research methods employed for data collection and analysis. A detailed explanation of the chosen research design, sampling techniques, data collection instruments, and analytical approaches is provided. And in Chapter 5, the data gathered will be analysed further.

The final chapter of this thesis, Chapter 6, will draw together the discussion of animal-based tourism and welfare, highlighting Lapland and various aspects of ethical complexities discussed throughout the preceding chapters. It will summarize the key insights gained from the literature review, data-gathering surveys, and the findings from the data.

2 Animal-based tourism in Lapland

This chapter focuses on animal-based tourism within the Lapland region—the starts with an examination of Lapland's status as a tourism destination in the past few years. Next, an analysis of the motivations driving tourists to visit Lapland and partake in animal-based tourism activities is conducted. The chapter also investigates the role of tourism in Lapland, emphasizing its influence and impact. Additionally, it explores the economic significance of animal-based tourism in this region, underscoring the contributions it makes to Lapland's identity and financial well-being.

Furthermore, the chapter delves into the presence and role of reindeer in Lapland's animal-based tourism industry, highlighting their significance as tourist attractions. It also unravels the world of husky safaris in Lapland, emphasizing their role in the tourism landscape and their appeal to visitors. Lastly, the section centres on the practice of Arctic wildlife viewing, examining its significance as an animal-based tourism activity and its impact on Lapland's appeal to tourists.

2.1 Lapland as a Tourism Destination

Lapland is a region that is located in the northernmost part of Finland. It is most known as the “Home of Santa Claus” and “The Land of the Midnight Sun”, as well as for its indigenous Sami people and culture.

The provided data from Figure 1 indicates a significant role played by Lapland in Finland's tourism, particularly emphasising the growth in international tourism. In September 2023, there were a total of 232,000 recorded nights spent in Lapland. The majority of these nights (about 200,000) were attributed to domestic travellers, while approximately 32,200 were spent by foreign visitors. (Lapin Liitto, 2023; Statistics Finland, 2023)

Analysing the trends, it's noteworthy that while the number of nights spent by domestic travellers experienced a slight decline of 2.3%, there was a substantial increase of 19.4% in the nights spent by international visitors. This suggests a shift in the composition of tourists, with Lapland becoming increasingly attractive to foreign travellers. (Lapin Liitto, 2023; Statistics Finland, 2023)

	September 2023 Amount	Change	Share	Jan-September 2023 Amount	Change	Share
Total	232,000	0.2 %	100.0 %	2,430,000	8.4 %	100.0 %
Finland	200,000	-2.3 %	86.1 %	1,340,000	-3.9 %	54.9 %
Foreign	32,200	19.4 % !	13.9 %	1,100,000	28.5 % !	45.1 %

Figure 1: Registered Bed Nights in September 2023 and Jan-Sep 2023 (Lapin Liitto, 2023).

The broader timeframe from January to September reveals that the number of domestic passengers' overnight stays decreased by 3.9%, totalling 1.3 million. Conversely, foreign overnight stays during the same period demonstrated a notable increase of 28.5%, reaching 1.1 million overnight stays. The overall number of overnight guests during this period experienced a robust growth of 8.4%, totalling 2.4 million compared to the same period in the previous year. (Statistics Finland, 2023; Lapin Liitto, 2023)

These trends point towards Lapland's growing popularity among international tourists, as evidenced by the significant increase in foreign overnight stays. The decline in domestic overnight stays might be influenced by various factors, and further exploration could provide insights into the dynamics of both domestic and international tourism in Lapland. The overall growth in the number of overnight guests indicates Lapland's resilience and attractiveness as a tourism destination, particularly on the international stage. (Statistics Finland, 2023; Lapin Liitto, 2023)

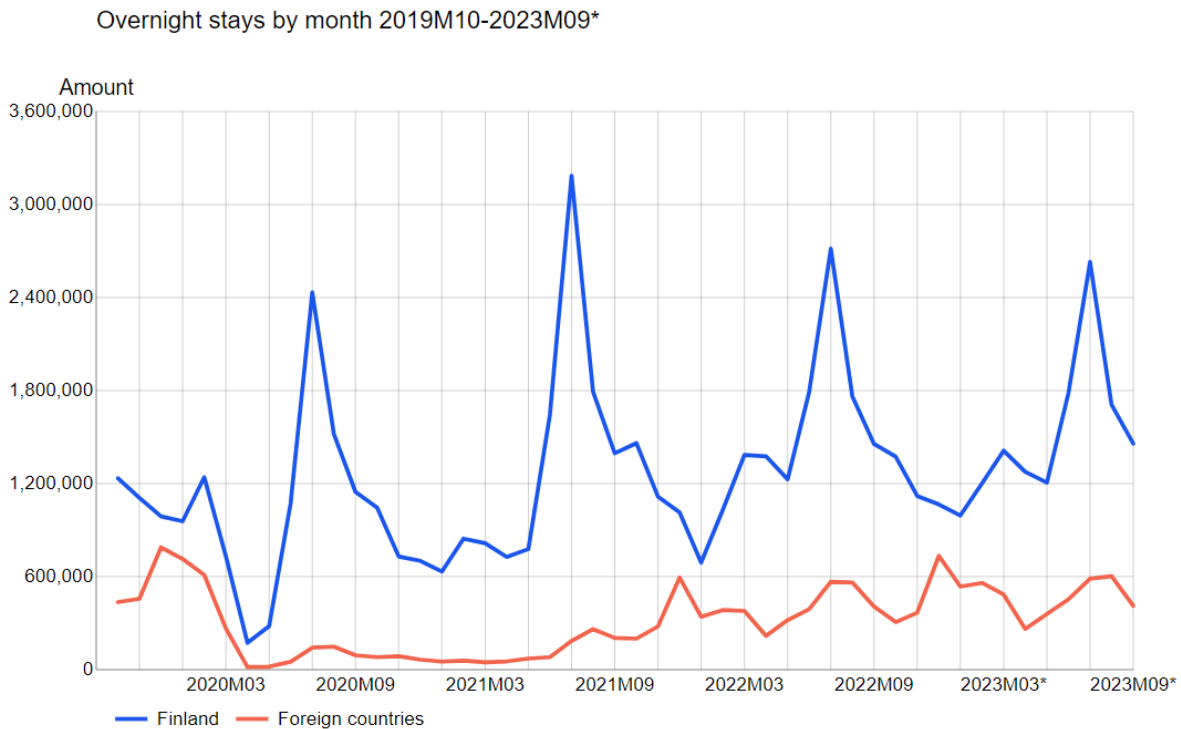
As seen in Figure 2, the majority of foreign travellers to Lapland came from Germany, Switzerland, Sweden, and the United States of America. Notably, the most significant change, in comparison to September the previous year, was observed among travellers from the United States. They accounted for 2,300 recorded nights, an increase of 88.5% from the prior year. The second-highest increase was noted among travellers from Switzerland, with 2,500 recorded nights and a notable growth of 29.1%. (Lapin Liitto, 2023; Statistics Finland, 2023)

	September 2023 Amount	Change	Share	Jan-September 2023 Amount	Change	Share
Germany	5,400	7.0 %	2.3 %	178,000	37.7 % ↓	7.5 %
Switzerland	2,500	29.1 % ↑	1.1 %	53,900	27.0 % ↓	2.2 %
Sweden	2,400	16.1 % ↓	1.0 %	27,900	24.5 % ↓	1.1 %
United States	2,300	88.5 % ↑	1.0 %	31,600	78.9 % ↓	1.3 %

Figure 2: Registered Bed Nights by Country in September 2023 and during Jan-Sep 2023 (Lapin Liitto, 2023).

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted tourism in Lapland, as it did globally. Travel restrictions, lockdowns, and safety concerns led to a substantial decline in tourist numbers. Lapland, known for its winter activities, saw a decrease in visitors due to travel limitations. Hospitality and tourism industry faced challenges, with many businesses experiencing closures or reduced operations. The pandemic brought about uncertainties and changes in travel behaviour, affecting both international and domestic tourism in Lapland. As depicted in Figure 3, based on primary data from Statistics Finland, the market situation caused by the coronavirus led to a significant decrease of

53.0% in overnight stays by foreign tourists and has not reached the same level of foreign tourists as before the pandemic. (Visit Lapland, 2020; Statistics Finland, 2023)



Source: Statistics Finland, accommodation statistics

Figure 3: Overnight stays by month (Statistics Finland, 2023)

2.2 Tourist motivations

Tourists' interest in observing and possibly interacting with animals is a longstanding phenomenon, with zoos having a history spanning over 4,500 years. It has been suggested that people's inclination to observe and interact with animals in zoos and elsewhere stems from the increasing disconnection of animals in the modern urbanised world. Animal tourism provides a chance for individuals to reconnect with nature. (Carr and Broom, 2018)

Tourist motivations for visiting Lapland are as diverse as the experiences the region has to offer. Whether driven by a quest for natural wonders, cultural immersion, adventure, or unique accommodations, visitors to Lapland are motivated by the promise of an extraordinary and unforgettable journey. (Falk and Vieru, 2017; Lapland - Above Ordinary, 2020)

Lapland's position near the Arctic Circle bestows the magical phenomena of the Aurora Borealis and the Midnight Sun. Tourists are drawn to witness these breathtaking displays of nature's grandeur, creating a powerful motivation for those seeking awe-inspiring celestial experiences. (Falk and Vieru, 2017; Lapland - Above Ordinary, 2020)

The unspoiled wilderness of Lapland, with its vast forests, crystal-clear lakes, and snow-covered landscapes, serves as a magnet for nature enthusiasts. The promise of exploring untouched natural beauty motivates tourists to seek tranquillity and a deep connection with the environment. (Falk and Vieru, 2017; Lapland - Above Ordinary, 2020)

Lapland is home to the indigenous Sámi people, and tourists are motivated by the opportunity to engage with and learn from this rich cultural heritage. Traditional Sámi practices, such as reindeer herding and distinctive handicrafts, offer visitors a chance to immerse themselves in a unique and authentic cultural experience. (Falk and Vieru, 2017; Lapland - Above Ordinary, 2020)

Lapland's snowy landscapes create an ideal playground for winter sports enthusiasts. The prospect of engaging in activities like dog sledging, snowmobiling, and cross-country skiing motivates tourists seeking adventure and a taste of the Arctic wilderness. (Falk and Vieru, 2017; Lapland - Above Ordinary, 2020)

Many visitors to Lapland are drawn to the region by its captivating natural phenomena. Among the significant attractions are services centred around animal-based activities, including sledge dog and reindeer safaris. You can see in Figure 3 that over half (68%) consider animal-based tourism attractions to be one of the main reasons to visit Lapland. (Ojuva, 2018)

Animals are an important reason for tourists to visit Lapland.

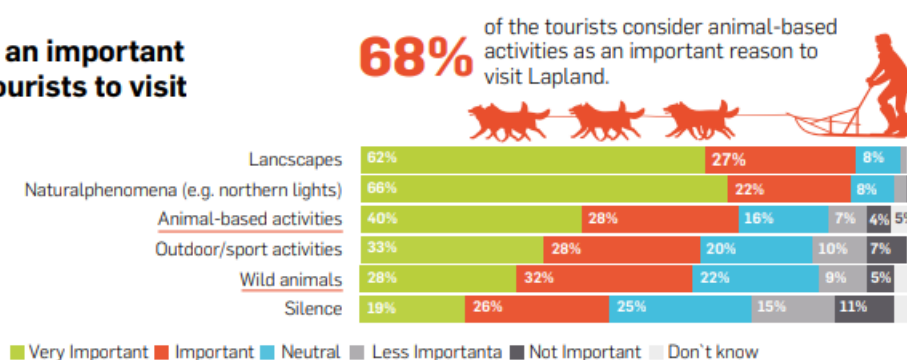


Figure 4: Animals are an essential reason of tourist to visit Lapland (Ojuva, 2018)

2.3 Role of tourism in Lapland

Lapland's economy is significantly driven by tourism. The region's appeal as a winter wonderland and a unique Arctic destination draws visitors from all over the world, contributing to the creation of jobs and economic growth. Tourism is one of the primary industries driving employment in Lapland. It offers many job opportunities, from tour guides and hotel staff to transportation services and souvenir shops. Tourism has also contributed to the growth of entrepreneurship of small local businesses. (Saarinen, 2003)

As you can see in Figure 4, in Lapland, the economic contribution of animal-based tourism is approximated at around €50 million per year. There are a combined 158 companies involved in animal-based tourism. Of these, 42 operate sledge dog safaris, 34 are engaged in reindeer farming, and 11 run horse stables that offer tourism services within the Lapland area that are distributed evenly all around Lapland. (Ojuva, 2018; García-Rosell, 2021)

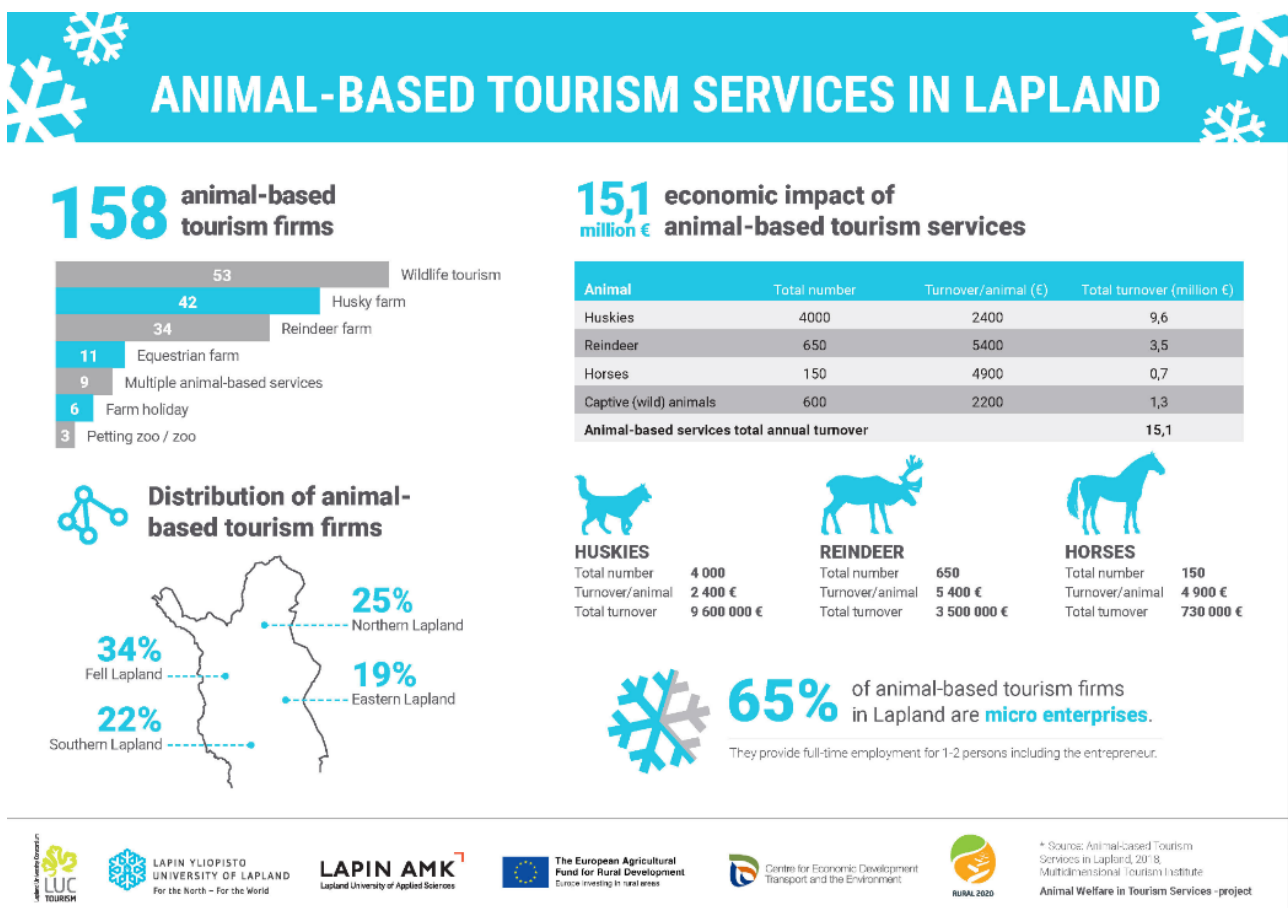


Figure 5: Animal-Based Tourism Services in Lapland (García-Rosell, 2021)

2.3.1 Reindeers

The reindeer is a captivating flagship tourism product in Lapland, prominently featured in marketing materials, brochures, and company logos. Consequently, the entire nation of Finland reaps the benefits from the popularity of reindeer as it is one of the first things foreigners think of when asked about Finland. (Rosell and Tallberg, 2021)

Reindeer herding in Finland commenced in the late 1400s. Lapland hosts around 200,000 reindeer, mostly semi-wild individuals that roam freely in the wilderness. Only about 650 reindeer, constituting around 0.3% of the total number, are employed for tourism activities in Lapland. (Ojava, 2018; García-Rosell, 2021)

Each reindeer contributes a turnover of €5,400 per year, culminating in a total annual turnover of €3.5 million from reindeer-related activities. (García-Rosell, 2021)

2.3.2 Husky safaris

Sled dogs have historically stood out as critical attractions in winter tourism, playing a crucial role in sustaining the region's tourism industry. An individual sledgedog is estimated to contribute a turnover of 2,400 € per year. About 4,000 individual huskies are used for tourism purposes and a total turnover of 9,6 million € per year. (García-Rosell, 2021)

2.3.3 Arctic Wildlife Viewing

Arctic wildlife viewing stands out as a crucial element in Lapland's tourism sector, playing a substantial role in shaping its economic dynamics. Among the 158 animal-based tourism companies, 53, which is the highest compared to other animal-related activities, are actively engaged in wildlife tourism, and viewing. (García-Rosell, 2021) As a region blessed with unique biodiversity and captivating wildlife, Lapland has become a hub for tourists seeking authentic encounters with Arctic animals. These arctic animals include bears, wolves, lynxes, foxes, elks, owls and other birds, otters, beavers, and so many more. (Lapland - Above Ordinary, 2021)

3 Ethics and animal welfare in tourism

The intimate connection between animals and tourism, especially in the unique landscapes of Lapland, is undeniable. Yet, beneath the surface of the captivating experiences offered by animal-based tourism lies a complex web of ethical considerations. The treatment and role of animals in these activities have raised questions about their welfare, the preservation of their natural behaviours, and the impact on local ecosystems.

This chapter delves into the multifaceted ethical concerns associated with animal-based tourism in Lapland. In this chapter, the focus is shifted towards a critical examination of the moral dimensions of animal-based tourism, a subject of increasing concern and relevance in today's global travel industry. The principles of tourism ethics are explored, emphasising the key principles outlined in the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism. Additionally, the concept of animal welfare is sought to be defined, and the ethical concerns surrounding animal-based tourism are examined.

3.1 Tourism ethics

A common ethical foundation is necessary in a world where travel and tourism are connecting people more and more. The United Nations World Tourist Organisation (UNWTO) adopted the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism (GCET) in 1999. It is a document that covers the moral and responsible behaviour of all parties involved in the tourist business. It looks at the history, tenets, and importance of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism, emphasising how it may help advance ethical and sustainable travel practises around the globe. (2020 UNWTO)

3.1.1 Key Principles of the Global Code

Tourism's Contribution to Mutual Understanding

One of the fundamental principles of the Code is the acknowledgment of tourism's role in fostering mutual understanding and respect between cultures. It underscores the importance of appreciating the diverse cultural heritage and values of both host and guest.

Tourism as a Means of Sustainable Development

Sustainable development is a cornerstone of the Code. It emphasizes the economic, social, and environmental dimensions of sustainability. Tourism should not compromise the well-being of local communities, ecosystems, or future generations.

Rights of Workers and Local Communities

The Code underscores the rights of workers and local communities in the tourism sector. This includes fair wages, decent working conditions, and the empowerment of local communities to participate in and benefit from tourism activities.

The Responsibilities of Stakeholders

The Code elucidates the responsibilities of all tourism stakeholders. Governments are called upon to create policies that promote sustainable and responsible tourism. Businesses are encouraged to adopt ethical practices. Tourists, too, are reminded of their role in respecting the places they visit and the people they encounter.

3.2 Defining animal welfare

Animal welfare refers to animals' physical, mental, and emotional well-being, as well as their quality of life and ethical considerations. The concept involves treating and caring for animals humanely to prevent them from suffering unnecessary pain or distress. The welfare of animals is a complex subject due to the fact that different species have different needs. (American Veterinary Medical Association, 2010)

Ensuring the health and well-being of cared-for animals involves paying close attention to their cleanliness and essential physical needs. Providing quality food and drink tailored to each animal's requirements is crucial, avoiding anything known to harm their health. Prompt and proper care is essential in case of injuries, preventing unnecessary delays. (Finlex 3.8-9, 3.11, 1996b)

The design, construction, and maintenance of animal facilities, including structures and equipment, must prioritize the safety of the animals and minimize potential risks. These facilities should promote cleanliness, adhere to high hygiene standards, and facilitate straightforward inspection and care procedures. Ensuring the well-being of animals, the facilities must not endanger their health and should provide suitable shelter against adverse weather conditions, extreme temperatures, and humidity. Considering the unique requirements of each animal species, the facilities must also offer proper space, allowing animals to stand, rest naturally, and move freely within the premises. (Finlex, 1.1, 1996b)

The treatment of animals must be characterized by calmness, avoiding unnecessary fright or agitation. When handling animals, it is essential to leverage their species-specific behaviours, such as herd instincts. Animals should be treated with care, ensuring they do not experience undue distress or pain. Any actions that cause unnecessary harm or distress to animals are strictly prohibited. Furthermore, the well-being of animals must be prioritized, considering their physiological and

behavioural needs. Violent treatment, including kicking or hitting animals for training or similar purposes, is expressly forbidden. Animals should not be trained or utilized in ways that compromise their health or welfare, and they should not be compelled to surpass their natural abilities or strength. (Finlex, 2.3.1, 1996a; Finlex, 4.12-13, 1996b)

3.3 Ethical Concerns in Animal-Based Tourism

Animal welfare is at the heart of the ethical discourse. Questions arise regarding the living conditions, care, and workloads of animals involved in tourism activities.

To address these ethical concerns, several international organizations and initiatives have developed ethical frameworks and guidelines for animal-based tourism. These aim to set standards for animal welfare, environmental impact, and cultural preservation. These guidelines help in the assessment of ethical practices in animal-based tourism. (von Essen, Lindsjö and Berg, 2020)

Species typical behaviour holds great importance in animal wellbeing. Animals possess a compelling drive to engage in behaviours typical of their species. When an animal cannot fulfil this natural need, its overall well-being becomes compromised, potentially leading to behavioural issues. Even if these issues are not immediately apparent as abnormal behaviour, like repetitive movements or restlessness, the inability to perform species-specific behaviours consistently diminishes an animal's quality of life. (Ojuva, 2018)

Animals have their own different traits such as stress resilience, sociability, motivation, and physical activity levels which means species-specific behaviour and individual treatment needs to be acknowledged and taken care of for the animals to be used in tourism. (Ojuva, 2018)

Animals involved in tourism need to be in good physical, mental, and social to be used as tourism stakeholders. It's important to consider both the typical behaviours of their species and their individual needs in all activities that impact their physical, mental, and social well-being. (Ojuva, 2018) In Figure 4 have been listed all the things that has to be considered on every animal used for tourism purposes.

Factors in the well-being of animals used for tourism



Figure 6: Factors in the well-being of animals used for tourism (Ojuva, 2018)

Ethical concerns in animal-based tourism are multifaceted and arise from the interactions between humans and animals in the tourism industry. Some of the key ethical concerns include (Rosell and Tallberg, 2021; Coleman, 2021):

- Ensuring the physical and psychological well-being of animals engaged in tourism activities is of utmost importance. Concerns include issues like confinement, stress, excessive workloads, and inadequate veterinary care, all of which can severely affect animal welfare.
- Many tourist attractions promote close and often invasive interactions with animals, like elephant rides or swimming with captive dolphins. These interactions can disrupt an animal's natural behaviour and habitat.
- The line between genuine conservation efforts and exploiting animals for profit is often blurred in animal-based tourism. Some argue that such tourism can fund research and habitat protection, but it can also lead to exploitation.

- The popularity of certain animal-based tourism activities can result in over-tourism, causing harm to ecosystems and animals, particularly in delicate environments.
- The commercialization of animal-based tourism can threaten cultural traditions involving animals. It is vital to respect and preserve the cultural significance of animals in different regions.
- Some animal-based tourism activities involve endangered species, which can undermine conservation and population recovery efforts.
- Many animal-based attractions rely on training and conditioning methods that may involve inhumane practices, raising ethical concerns about animal exploitation and suffering.
- Weak or inadequate regulations in certain areas may allow the mistreatment of animals in tourism. Inconsistent enforcement of existing laws is also problematic.
- The lack of awareness among tourists about ethical issues can perpetuate harmful practices. Encouraging tourists to make responsible choices is a critical ethical consideration.
- Evaluating the sustainability of animal-based tourism and its impact on local communities is essential. It ensures that the industry contributes positively to the economy and society without harming animals and the environment.

Dealing with these ethical problems requires cooperation from tourists, the tourism industry, governments, and animal welfare groups. This involves promoting responsible and ethical practices, making people more aware, and backing laws that protect animals in tourism. (Rosell and Tallberg, 2021; Coleman, 2021)

3.4 Development of Animal Welfare in Finland

The progression of animal welfare in Finland reflects a journey marked by changing societal values, scientific advancements, and a growing awareness of ethical responsibilities towards animals. The development of animal welfare in Finland is a journey that spans the realms of tradition, legislation, and societal values. At its core, this reflects on how society tries to find a balance between human needs and desires with the ethical responsibility towards the animals. (Nieminen, 2001)

The narrative of animal welfare in Finland is intertwined with the activities of SEY, the Finnish Federation for Animal Welfare Associations. SEY, serving as a key player in the realm of animal welfare in Finland, was found in 1901, primarily aimed to protect horses and other animals from mistreatment. Throughout its existence, SEY has consistently pursued the overarching objective of enhancing animal welfare in everyday life. A significant step in Finland's commitment to animal welfare was the introduction of the first Animal Protection Law in 1934. (Nieminen, 2001; SEY - The Finnish Federation for Animal Welfare Associations, 2020)

In the 1990s, SEY advocated for a revised Animal Protection Law, which was subsequently approved by Parliament in 1996. This marked a significant shift in attitudes, expanding the law's purpose from merely protecting animals to actively enhancing their welfare and ensuring good treatment. The revised law also mandated municipalities to address stray animals by providing temporary shelters for them. Notably, the same law approved in 1996 remains in effect today. Also, Finland joins the EU, and EU animal welfare legislation also comes into effect in Finland in 1995. (Nieminen, 2001)

On March 1, 2023, Parliament approved the legislative proposals outlined in the government's HE 186/2022 vp proposal. The reform is an effort to modernize the 1996 law to align with current standards for animal husbandry and legislation. The project involves updating the Animal Welfare Act to meet constitutional requirements and clarify existing legislation. (Maa- ja metsätalousministeriö, 2023)

The reform's objectives include improving animal welfare, enhancing animal protection supervision, and ensuring the effective integration of EU legislation into national laws. Throughout the reform of the Animal Welfare Act, the latest research on the needs and welfare of animals is considered. (Maa- ja metsätalousministeriö, 2023)

3.5 Importance of animal welfare

Tourism often takes place in areas of rich biodiversity. Animals play integral roles in maintaining the ecological balance of their respective habitats. The preservation of biodiversity is contributed to by ensuring their welfare, as each species is played by a unique part in the intricate web of life. Animal-based tourism, when conducted responsibly, can harmonize with these natural ecosystems, fostering a sustainable coexistence. (Freire et al., 2017)

Neglecting animal welfare in tourism activities can have a huge effect on the entire ecosystem. Stress-induced behaviours or disruptions in migration patterns can influence not only the targeted species but also other flora and fauna in the area. Certain tourist activities, if not managed responsibly, can pose threats to endangered species. Protecting the welfare of animals in tourism becomes a crucial element in the conservation of endangered species. (Freire et al., 2017)

Respecting the welfare of animals in tourism aligns with the preservation of cultural values, particularly in regions where indigenous communities have longstanding relationships with local fauna. Animals often hold cultural significance, and their ethical treatment is intertwined with the authenticity of cultural narratives. In Lapland, where indigenous cultures like the Sámi have coexisted with nature for centuries, animal welfare is intricately woven into cultural practices. (Freire et al., 2017; von Essen, Lindsjö and Berg, 2020)

Tourists seeking authentic experiences are increasingly drawn to destinations that uphold ethical standards, including the humane treatment of animals. Aligning tourism practices with indigenous values enhances the authenticity and longevity of cultural storytelling. (von Essen, Lindsjö and Berg, 2020)

4 Research methods

This chapter outlines the research methods employed to gather and analyse data for the study on "Tourism and Animal Welfare in Lapland: The Usage of Animals as Tourism Stakeholders." The aim of this research is to explore public perceptions and attitudes toward animal-based tourism in Lapland, with a focus on the ethical considerations of using animals as tourism stakeholders. To achieve this, a quantitative survey using Webropol was used to collect and analyse data.

The survey questionnaire included questions that explored respondents' awareness of animal-based tourism, their perceptions of animal welfare, ethical considerations, and factors influencing their decisions to participate in animal tourism activities. It was distributed online through various platforms and social media channels, ensuring a diverse and representative sample of respondents.

4.1 Quantitative data collection method

Quantitative data collection is a research method that involves the systematic collection of numerical data that can be analysed statistically. This approach is used to gather information about quantities and measurements, making it particularly useful for answering research questions that require objective, structured, and quantifiable data. (Labaree, 2020)

In quantitative research, data is collected in a structured and standardized manner. This often involves the use of closed-ended questions with predefined response options. Respondents are asked to select from a set of choices or provide numerical answers. (Labaree, 2020)

Quantitative research typically involves relatively large sample sizes. The goal is to collect data from a sufficiently large and diverse group of participants to ensure that the findings can be generalized to a broader population. (Labaree, 2020) This is why, this type of data collection method was used as the objective was to capture the general public's opinions and thoughts on the topic.

While doing research, it is crucial to focus on both reliability and validity. Reliability concerns the consistency of results, ensuring that outcomes remain steady across repetitions. On the other hand, validity ensures that the findings faithfully capture the essence of the studied concepts. Although attaining reliability and validity in a survey can be demanding, it's essential to make concerted efforts to enhance these aspects for successful research. (Patino and Ferreira, 2018)

In the realm of survey research, several challenges might hinder achieving reliability and validity. Self-report bias arises as participants answer based on their self-reports, opening the door to biases like response bias, social desirability, and memory limitations, potentially yielding inaccurate

information. Sampling bias is a risk when the composition of a survey sample diverges from an accurate representation of the target population, thereby compromising the validity of your survey research. (Voxco, 2021)

The design of your questionnaire is also pivotal. Ambiguous language or a poorly constructed survey can introduce response errors, underscoring the importance of meticulous question formulation, selection of appropriate question types, and thoughtful sequencing. Memory effects also come into play, especially when surveys require respondents to recollect past experiences. Conducting a survey long after an event can introduce memory bias, and extended recall periods may contribute to inaccuracies in responses. (Voxco, 2021)

5 Results

This section involves the examination of interview outcomes. Refer to Appendix 1 for a comprehensive understanding of the survey questions, which is essential for interpreting the subsequent results.

The primary objective of the survey was to gain insights into the public's perceptions of animal-based tourism, particularly in Lapland. The questions were adapted based on participants' responses, allowing them to draw from personal experiences and avoid answering questions that weren't necessary for them. The survey was distributed in various social media channels, such as Facebook and Instagram. The survey was open and available during the dates 7. - 13.11.2023. During this time, a total of 64 responses were collected.

5.1 Participant Demographics

The survey was designed to capture insights from a diverse range of age groups, reflecting a broad spectrum of perspectives and more comprehensive understanding of the topic. In Figure 6, you can see the percentage of participants in each age group from the survey.

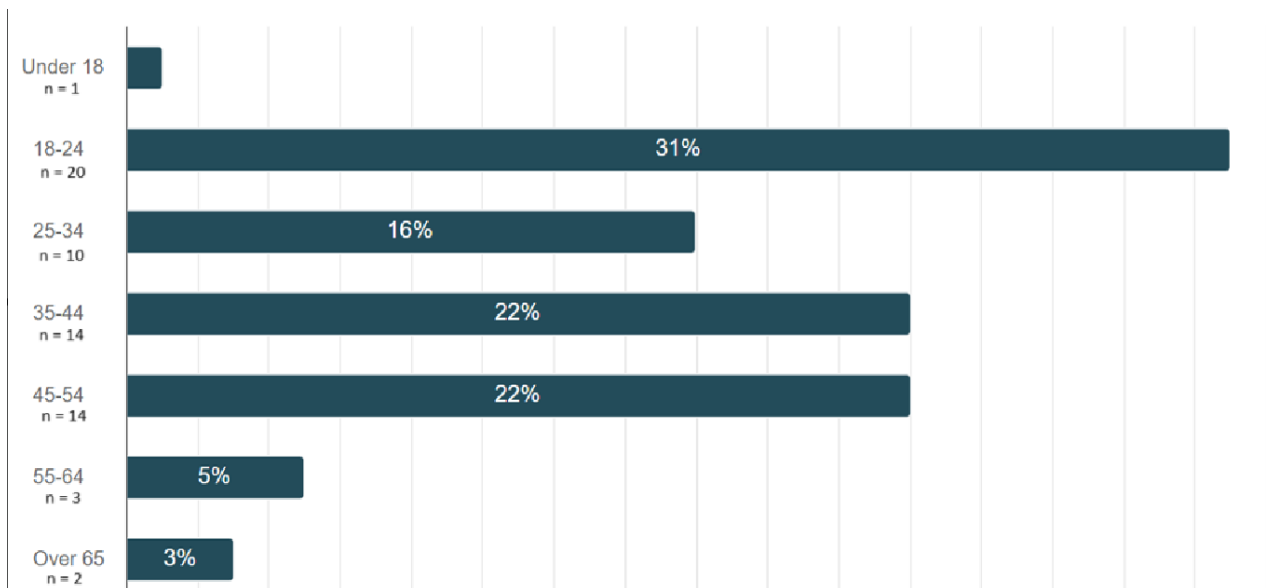


Figure 7: Age of the participants

There was one participant under 18 years old, constituting 1.6% of the total number of participants. This group represents the younger segment of the participants, offering a unique perspective on animal-based tourism in Lapland from a youthful viewpoint. And continuing with the younger generation, the 18-24 age group forms a significant segment of the respondents, providing insights into

the views and attitudes of young adults toward animal-based tourism. This category comprised a total of 20 participants, accounting for 31.2% of the overall responses.

The following group consisted of participants aged 25-34, totalling 10 individuals (15.6%). Their valuable insights played a crucial role in bridging the transition from early to mid-adulthood.

The next age groups are the second highest in number of participants. Ages 35-44 and 45-54, the number of participants was for both 14 participants (21,9%). This age bracket encompasses individuals in their mid-30s to mid-50s, providing perspectives from a more established stage of adulthood as well as viewpoints from the middle-aged segment, contributing to a holistic understanding.

The last group were participants in the 56-64 age range and over 65 years old. They offer insights from a more elderly demographic, reflecting potentially distinct perspectives on animal-based tourism. There were 3 (4,7%) participants from the age group 56-64 and 2 (3,1%) over 65 years.

The participants in the survey represented a diverse range of nationalities, with the majority being Finnish (44 participants) as you can see in Figure 8. Other nationalities included Swiss (4), German (4), British (3), Mexican (1), Slovenian (1), Thai (1), Norwegian (1), Lithuanian (1), Dutch (1), Iranian (1), Estonian (1), and Spanish (1), totalling 64 participants and 13 different nationalities in the study.

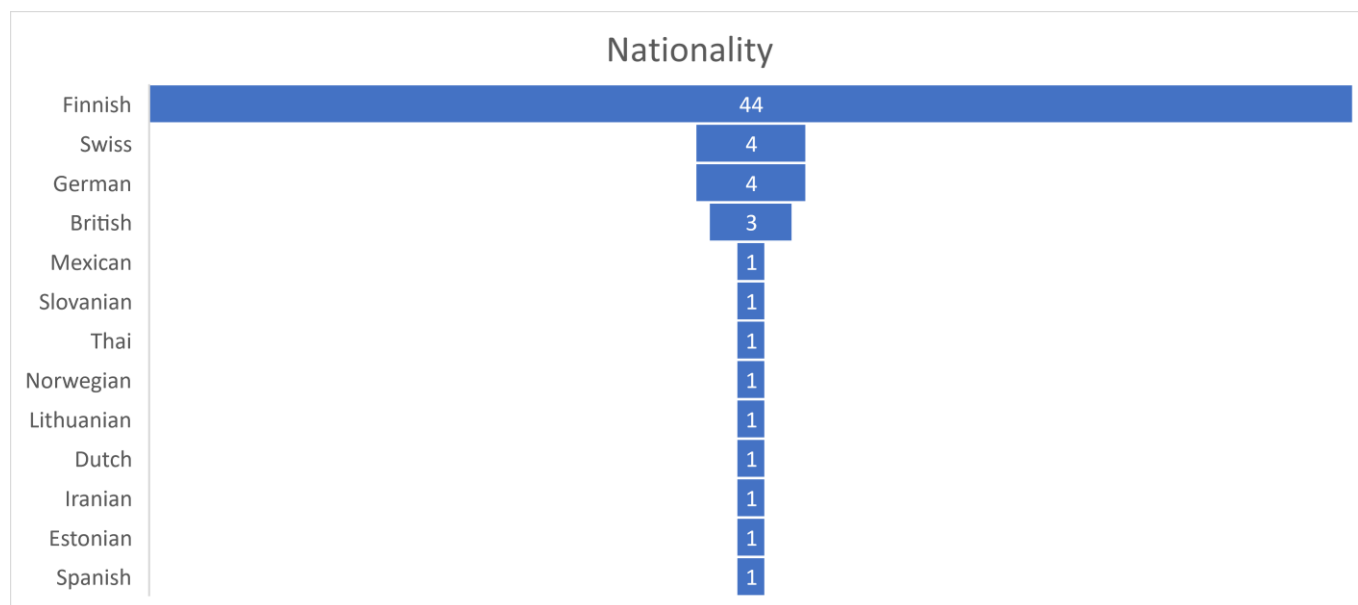


Figure 8: Nationalities of the participants

The survey attracted a diverse group in terms of gender, as you can see in the Figure 9, with 15 participants identifying as male, comprising 23.4% of the total respondents. On the other hand, the majority of participants, accounting for 68.8%, identified as female. Additionally, 2 respondents

chose to identify with genders other than male or female, representing 3.1% of the total, while 3 participants preferred not to disclose their gender, making up 4.7% of the respondents.

	Number of answers	Percent
Male	15	23,4%
Female	44	68,8%
Other	2	3,1%
Prefer Not to Say	3	4,7%
Total	64	100%

Figure 9: Gender of the participants

5.2 Qualitative Results

In the Figure 10, you can see the summarized answers to question 4 “First thing that comes to your mind when thinking about animal-based tourism in Lapland?”. These are the overall perceptions of Lapland's animal-based tourism from the respondents, ranging from positive experiences like reindeer sleigh rides and husky safaris to concerns about animal welfare. The enchanting image of reindeers and huskies are in the majority of answers as well as offering adventure and unique encounters. However, there are some mentions of accidents, such as a tourist's death during a husky sled ride, which raises safety issues. Some respondents emphasize the need for better rules on animal welfare, expressing concern about the industry growing out of control. Overall, Lapland's animal-based tourism evokes a mix of delight, adventure, safety considerations, and a call for improved animal welfare regulations.

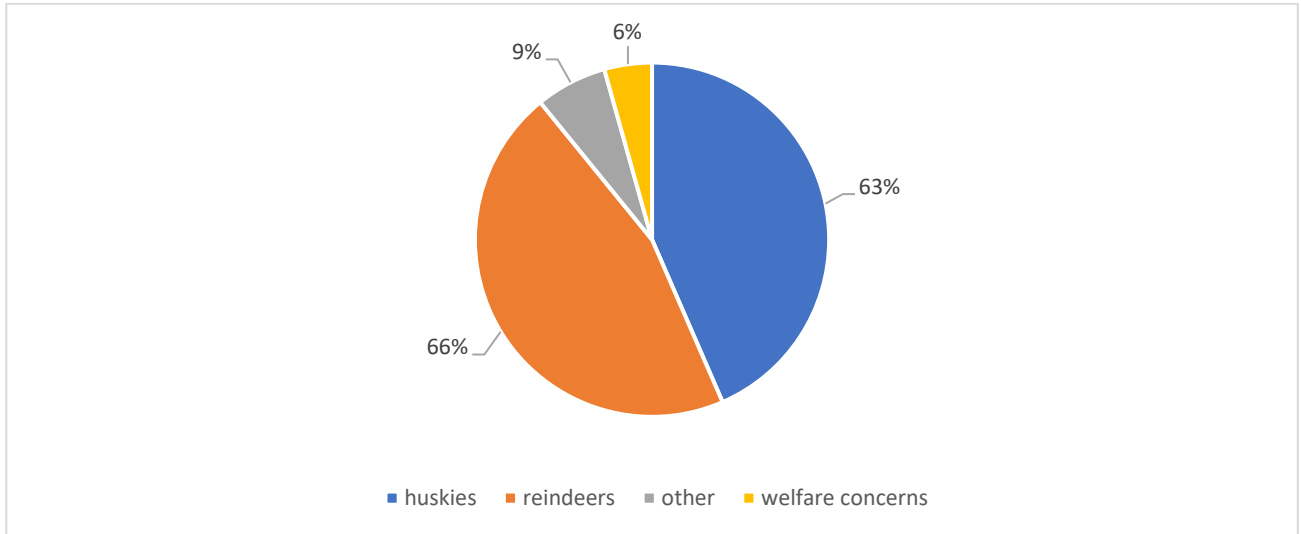


Figure 10: First thing that comes to your mind when thinking about animal-based tourism in Lapland?

Participants responded to the question 5 "How familiar are you with animal-based tourism?" on a scale ranging from 0 to 10. The minimum value, which stands at 0.0, represents the lowest score given by participants, indicating the least familiarity expressed with animal-based tourism. On the other end of the spectrum, the maximum value, marked at 10.0, signifies the highest score provided by participants, reflecting the maximum familiarity expressed by someone with animal-based tourism.

The calculated average, which stands at 5.1, represents the arithmetic mean of all responses. This figure suggests that, on average, participants possess a moderate level of familiarity with animal-based tourism.

As depicted in Figure 11, 66% of the respondents, equivalent to 42 individuals, have previously visited Lapland, while 34%, comprising 22 respondents, have not had the opportunity to visit Lapland.

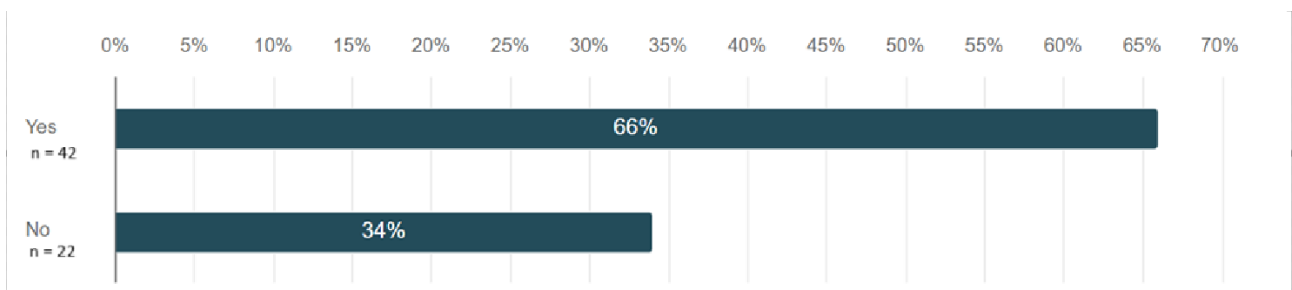


Figure 11: Have you visited Lapland?

Depending on the answer, the responder got different questions after. If the answer was “yes”, the next questions would have been “Have you used any animal-based attractions (husky sled riding, reindeer safaris, wildlife watching...)” and “What animal-based attraction(s) have you tried?”. If the response was “no,” the questionnaire proceeded without including the extra questions.

Out of the 42 respondents who answered “yes,” indicating they had visited Lapland before, 25 individuals (59.5%) reported engaging in animal-based activities during their visits, as you can see some of the answers in the Figure 12. The predominant activities included husky sled riding and visiting reindeer parks. Additionally, a few respondents had experience working in the animal-based tourism industry.

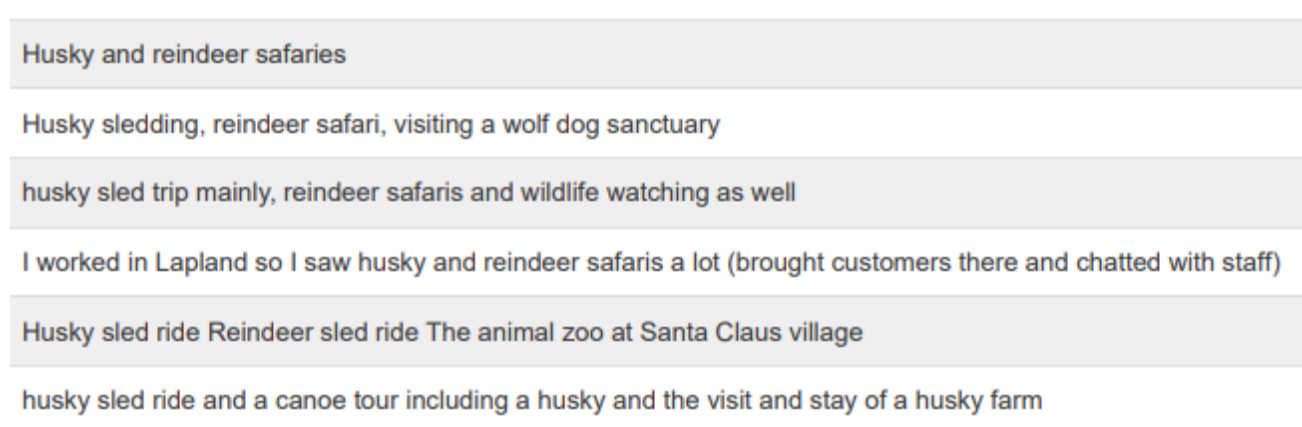


Figure 12: What animal-based attraction(s) have you tried?

The next question divides the participants again, as the question went like “Do you believe that Lapland has a good ethical treatment of animals used in tourism?” and the options were either “yes” or “no”. Depending again what was answered, participants were directed to different follow-up questions. A majority of participants, constituting 81.3% (n=52), responded affirmatively, stating that Lapland has good ethical treatment of animals in tourism. Subsequently, they were asked a follow-up question, “Why?”. This aimed to delve deeper into their perspectives. On the other hand, 18.7% (n=12) expressed a negative opinion, believing that Lapland does not have good ethical treatment. The subsequent questions sought to understand the reasons behind their perspective and explore potential improvements.

Some respondents expressed positive views, citing personal experiences and observations. Here are a few direct quotes, from anonymous responders, reflecting the thoughts of the respondents on why ethical treatment is good in Lapland:

- “Finnish people and especially from Northern Finland, have a long history of treating animals well and researching how to be ethical.”

- “if you compare it to other countries i feel like lapland has good environment and treatment for the animals.”
- “Legislation propably gives same kind of protection as cattle etc. has. If the protection is ethically sufficient or good is another thing.”
- “i haven't hear that much bad things so i guess its good”
- “I have friends who have worked there and told about it”

Several respondents expressed positive sentiments regarding the ethical treatment of animals in Lapland. One respondent highlighted the historical legacy of Finnish people, particularly those from Northern Finland, emphasizing a long-standing tradition of treating animals well and engaging in ethical research practices. Another respondent, in a comparative perspective, felt that Lapland provides a favourable environment for animals compared to other countries.

However, this viewpoint was cautious, acknowledging that while legislation might offer protection similar to that for cattle, the ethical sufficiency of this protection remains uncertain. Additionally, a respondent mentioned a lack of exposure to negative information, leading to an optimistic assumption about the ethical treatment of animals in Lapland.

Lastly, insights from individuals who had friends working in Lapland's tourism industry were mentioned, suggesting a positive influence on their perceptions of animal welfare practices in the region. Collectively, these viewpoints reflect a mix of confidence, cautious optimism, and personal connections influencing positive perceptions of animal welfare in Lapland.

Individuals with a negative opinion on ethical treatment provided valuable insights and held strong views on the topic. Several respondents highlighted the need to shift the focus from profit to the well-being of animals in these activities. Concerns were raised about the variation in ethical treatment across different enterprises, with some prioritizing animal care over workers and vice versa. Participants expressed uncertainty about the conditions of animals in such activities, with perceptions of imperfections in their treatment.

Additionally, some respondents emphasized the importance of regulations and certifications for ensuring good animal treatment. Criticisms were directed at the lack of strict rules in Finland compared to other Nordic countries like Norway and Sweden. Suggestions for improvement included reducing the number of dogs per kennel, minimizing short rides, enhancing staff training, and implementing better accommodations for animals, including heated and insulated housing, daily interactions in free-run areas, and increased understanding of the psychology of dogs and their needs.

As you can see in Figure 13, when respondents were asked whether they had researched the background and practices of an animal tourism activity, the results showed that 20.3% answered

"Yes," 17.2% responded "Yes, sometimes," and the majority, comprising 62.5%, indicated "No." The responses provide insights into the participants' level of engagement and awareness regarding the ethical considerations associated with such activities. As significant portion of participants are not actively researching the matter, this suggests that there might be room for increased awareness and education regarding the ethical treatment of animals in the context of tourism.

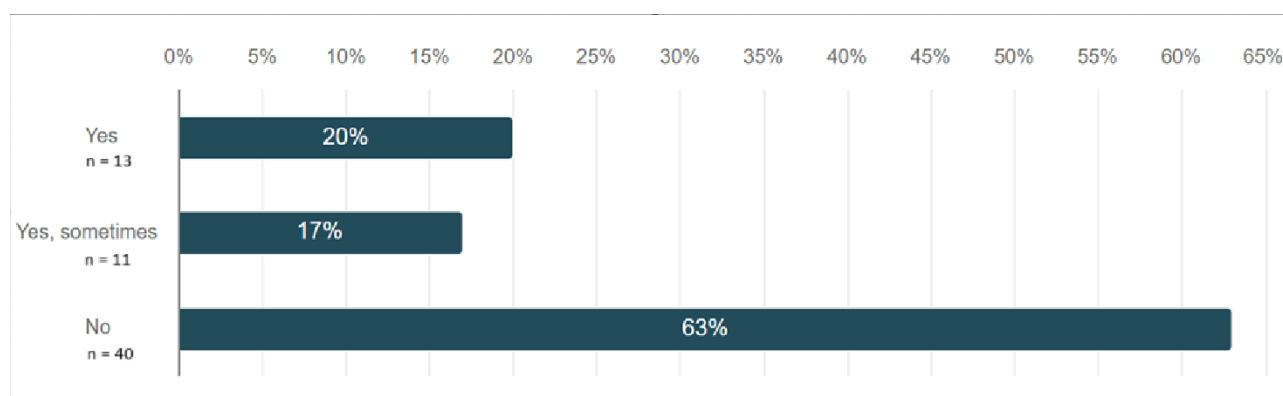


Figure 13: Have you ever researched the background and practices of an animal tourism activity?

As seen in Figure 14, the responses to the question about awareness of regulations or guidelines related to animal welfare in tourism offer insights into the participants' knowledge in this domain. The fact that only 12.5% considered themselves "very aware" suggests that there might be a limited understanding or exposure to specific regulations governing the treatment of animals in tourism. The larger group, 40.6%, indicating they were "somewhat aware," indicates a moderate level of awareness, but there still might be gaps in their knowledge.

The most significant portion, 46.9%, stating they were "not aware," raises questions about the overall familiarity of participants with existing regulations. This lack of awareness could be due to insufficient promotion of these guidelines, limited public discourse, or a need for more education on the ethical considerations in animal-based tourism.

The survey data reveals a noteworthy perspective from participants when questioned about the importance of tourism operators offering educational information about the animals involved in their activities. The substantial average score of 8.5, seen in Figure 14, underscores a collective emphasis on the significance of educational components in animal-based tourism experiences.

This data indicates a strong consensus among participants on the significance of tourism operators offering educational information about the animals engaged in their activities. The high average suggest that a majority of respondents prioritize being informed about the animals, emphasizing the role of education in animal-based tourism experiences.

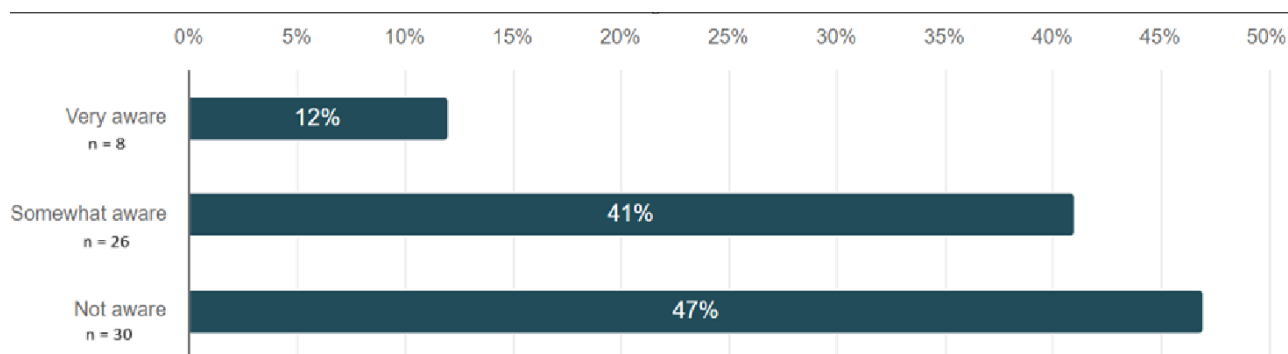


Figure 14: Are you aware of any regulations or guidelines related to animal welfare in tourism?

The participants' responses can be seen in Figure 15, to the question regarding factors influencing their decision to engage in animal tourism activities provide valuable insights. A significant majority, 96.9%, emphasized the importance of considering the welfare and treatment of the animals involved. This strong emphasis on animal welfare reflects a heightened awareness and concern among tourists regarding the ethical dimensions of animal-based tourism.

Additionally, a considerable percentage, 68.8%, highlighted the potential to support local conservation efforts as a crucial factor. This indicates a growing recognition among participants of the interconnectedness between tourism activities and conservation initiatives, emphasizing a desire to contribute positively to local environments.

Moreover, 60.9% emphasized the cultural and educational value, suggesting an appreciation for experiences that offer insights into local cultures and ecosystems. This aligns with a trend in tourism where travelers seek more meaningful and educational interactions rather than mere entertainment.

The economic benefits to local communities were considered by 57.8% of the participants, showcasing an awareness of the broader socio-economic impact of their tourism choices.

It's noteworthy that recommendations or certifications from recognized animal welfare organizations influenced 51.6% of the participants, suggesting a reliance on external endorsements for ethical assurance.

The potential to observe animals in their natural habitat (59.4%), and the opportunity for direct interaction with animals (39.1%) were also factors deemed important by a considerable number of participants.

In summary, the participants demonstrated a nuanced and ethically conscious approach to animal tourism, prioritizing the welfare of animals, supporting local conservation, and valuing cultural and educational dimensions. These findings suggest a growing demand for responsible and ethical practices in animal-based tourism experiences.

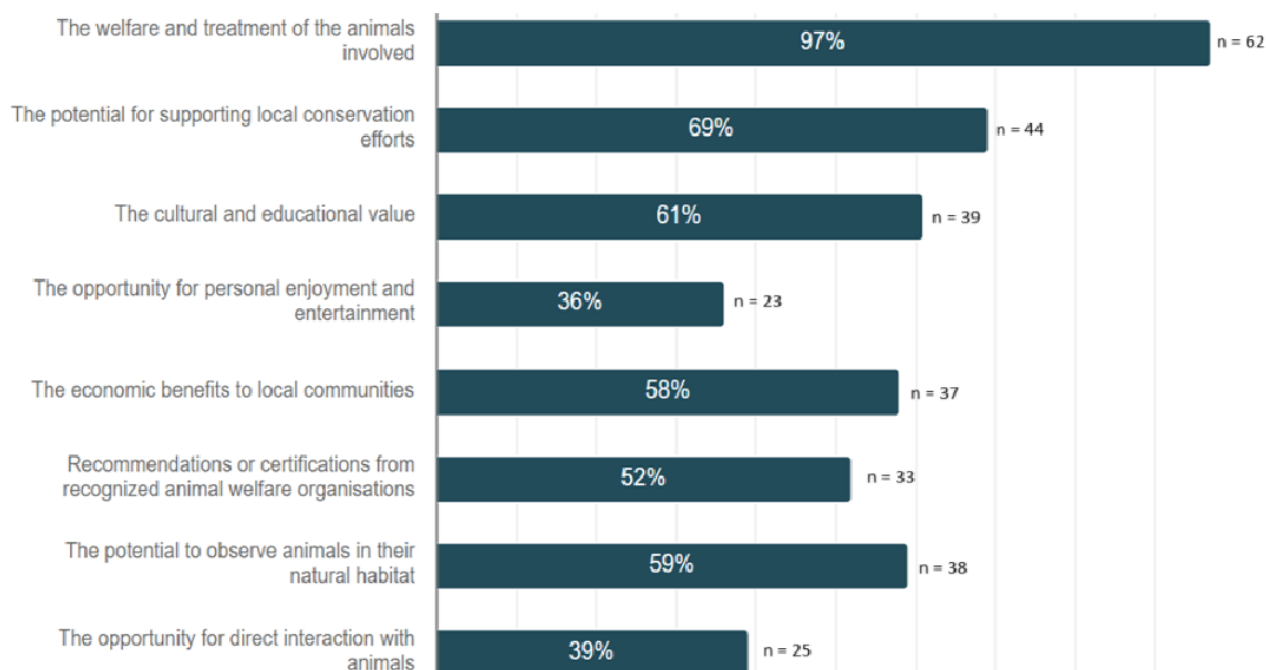


Figure 15: What factors should be considered when deciding to participate in animal tourism activities? (Select all that apply)

When answered to question, "Do you believe that animal-based tourism activities in Lapland can contribute positively to animal welfare and conservation efforts?" participants presented varied perspectives as can be seen in Figure 16. A notable 10.9% strongly agreed, while 45.3% expressed agreement. Additionally, 32.8% adopted a neutral stance. Conversely, 6.3% disagreed, and 4.7% strongly disagreed.

This spectrum of responses underscores a diversity of opinions. A substantial portion acknowledges the potential positive impact of animal-based tourism on animal welfare and conservation, while others maintain a more contemplative or dissenting viewpoint.

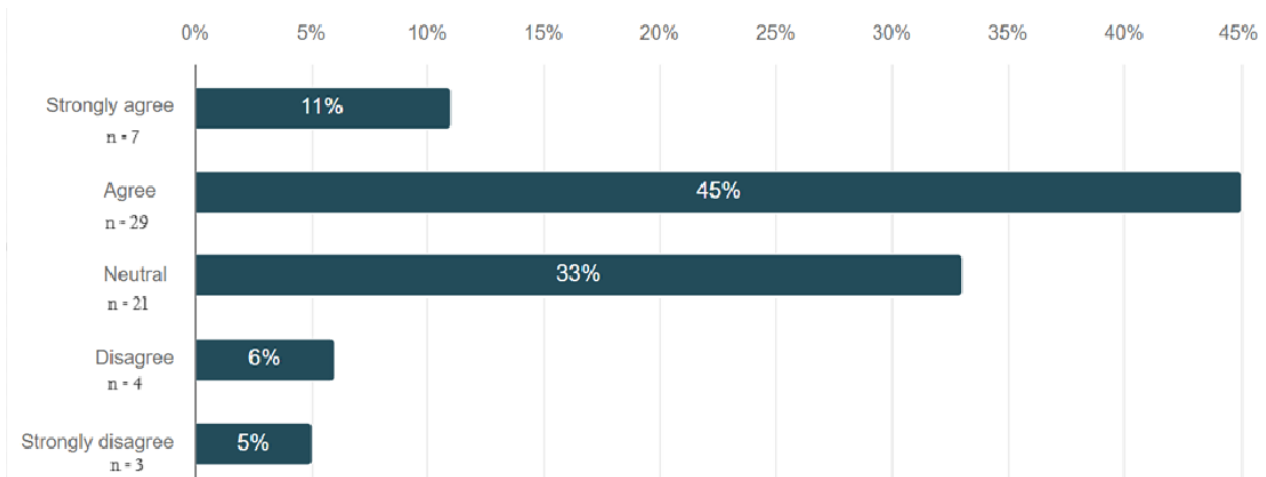


Figure 16: Do you believe that animal-based tourism activities in Lapland can contribute positively to animal welfare and conservation efforts?

Finally, participants were given the opportunity to provide additional comments or insights on the topic of animal-based tourism in Lapland. Here are some of the comments from the anonymous responders:

- “Good that this issue is noticed. Without concern for animals' welfare situation could get worse.”
- “Dogteamdriving is starting to become somewhat like mass tourism. That's always bad for the animals. The dogs are overpowered after seasons nowadays quite often.”
- “As a consumer a valid certificate would make the choice of a farm easier to me.”
- “There is a strong need for an international agreement on how to take care of and handle sleddogs (for whole Lapland)”
- “I mostly based my arguments on what I have read on news etc. Covid was very hard on the businesses”
- “If anything I think that the public should be educated on the fact that huskies aren't part of the local culture.”

These answers show that participants consistently emphasized the paramount importance of animal welfare. The sentiment resonates that the well-being of animals should be prioritized in any tourism activity. They express a reliance on news and media for shaping their arguments and that there is a need for public education. They underscore the potential negative impacts of mass tourism on the well-being of animals as well as recognize the adverse effects of external factors, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, on businesses.

5.3 Comparison

The findings from the survey conducted among the general public unveil a distinct narrative, one characterized by heightened concerns regarding animal welfare in Lapland's tourism. This narrative diverges from the stance upheld by academic research, which asserts that the animals are well-tended, and that Lapland maintains commendable standards of animal welfare.

Academic research, likely based on empirical studies and firsthand observations, has painted a positive picture of Lapland's animal tourism. This narrative emphasizes good treatment practices, ethical considerations, and adherence to welfare standards. The research suggests that the region's commitment to animal welfare aligns with industry expectations and ethical guidelines. Conversely, the survey responses from the general public reveal a heightened level of concern regarding animal welfare in Lapland. These concerns are reflected in the perceived treatment of animals during tourism activities, indicating a gap between public expectations and the actual practices described in the academic literature.

Some factors that can be influencing more on the public's point of view could be for example the heightened media influence. The media's role in shaping public perception cannot be understated. Negative incidents or portrayals might have a more lasting impact on public sentiment than academic research that emphasizes positive practices. Also, individual experiences and/or stories shared among the public might carry more weight in shaping perceptions than broader academic studies. Emotional connections forged through personal experiences often influence opinions significantly.

The unexpected contrast between academic literature and public opinions on animal welfare in Lapland's tourism raises intriguing questions about the intricate interplay of media, personal experiences, and information sources in shaping public sentiment. The gap suggests a significant disconnect between what is known within academic circles and what the wider public believes.

6 Conclusion

Lapland, nestled in the northern reaches of Finland, presents a captivating scene for animal-based tourism. In this dynamic landscape, where cultural traditions harmonize with pristine natural beauty, the ethical considerations surrounding animal welfare come to the forefront.

Tourists, drawn by the allure of reindeers, husky safaris, and Arctic wildlife encounters, participate in activities that intertwine with the lives of these animals. The narrative unfolds against a backdrop of evolving global ethics in tourism and the growing recognition of animals as sentient beings.

This exploration delves into the ethical complexities, emphasizing the need for responsible tourism practices. It scrutinizes the global principles outlined in the Global Code and contemplates the development of animal welfare in Finland. The synthesis of findings calls for a delicate balance — a future where tourism thrives, and animals thrive alongside, respected as integral stakeholders.

6.1 Discussion

The primary goals of this work were to get a better understanding of the animal welfare and ethics of using them in tourism field, focusing on Lapland setting, as well as research general public's opinion on the matter. Through meticulous planning and rigorous execution, I believe that these goals were, for the most part, successfully achieved. Through the literature research as well as data gathering, I believe that a deeper understanding, or at least a basic one, has been provided.

The research yielded several noteworthy results and outputs. The participant pool reflects a diverse range of age groups, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of perspectives across different life stages. Predominantly Finnish participants (68.8%) contribute to a study enriched with varied nationalities. Gender diversity is notable, with 23.4% identifying as male, 68.8% as female, and smaller percentages falling into other or undisclosed categories. The qualitative analysis unearths a blend of positive experiences such as reindeer sleigh rides and husky safaris, juxtaposed with safety concerns and a collective call for enhanced regulations. The average familiarity score of 5.1 suggests a moderate awareness of animal-based tourism. A substantial majority (66%) has visited Lapland, with 59.5% actively participating in animal-based activities. Notably, 81.3% express confidence in Lapland's ethical treatment of animals, citing historical practices and favorable conditions. Awareness of existing regulations is varied, with 12.5% considering themselves "very aware" and 40.6% claiming to be "somewhat aware." A significant average score of 8.5 emphasizes the high value placed on receiving educational information from tourism operators. These results not only contribute to the existing body of knowledge in animal-based tourism but also provide valuable insights for the ethical dimension of animal tourism in Lapland. The participants exhibit nuanced

preferences, with a pronounced emphasis on animal welfare, support for local conservation efforts, and an appreciation for cultural and educational dimensions in animal-based tourism.

Upon reflection, there are aspects of the process that could have been managed differently to enhance both efficiency and outcomes. In particular, I recognize the opportunity for more strategic time management and a clearer process towards the goal. The concurrent demands of extensive work commitments during the thesis writing process, limited the time and energy available for thoughtful planning and execution.

Moving forward, these reflections offer valuable lessons that extend beyond this project. Specifically, I acknowledge the importance of more meticulous time planning and balancing work commitments during intensive academic work. This awareness is instrumental for refining both future studies and professional practices, ensuring a more harmonious integration of research and work life.

6.2 Further research on animal-based tourism

Some interesting and unexplored areas and topic that I found myself thinking during this research were, firstly, “How would cultural backgrounds shape perceptions of what constitutes ethical treatment of animals in tourism?”. This question arose in me when I was looking through the gathered data and saw some different nationalities that might have different way of seeing animal welfare. Exploring these cross-cultural differences in attitudes toward animal welfare and their usage in the tourism field would, in my opinion, be quite exciting topic for further research. For example, cultures that have traditionally coexisted closely with animals may have a more nuanced understanding of their needs or religious teachings. This could affect attitudes toward using animals for entertainment and/or impact the perceptions of animals. Urban and rural cultural differences might also play a role. People in urban settings might be more disconnected from traditional relationships with animals, impacting their attitudes toward animal-based tourism.

Secondly, examine the impact of emerging technologies, specifically virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR), on animal tourism experiences and what its impact could be on the field. VR and AR can be used to offer tourists immersive experiences, allowing people to virtually encounter animals in their natural habitats. This heightened sense of proximity enhances the overall perception of closeness to wildlife without physical presence. One notable aspect is the educational potential of these technologies. They can be harnessed to create informative programs, providing profound insights into the lives and behaviours of animals. Virtual tours, guided by experts, contribute to a better understanding of wildlife conservation and ecosystems, fostering environmental awareness.

However, ethical concerns arise concerning the authenticity of virtual experiences. While VR can simulate natural environments, the question persists: Can it genuinely capture the essence of wild-life behaviour and ecology? Additionally, there could be a potential psychological disconnect between humans and animals when starting to use technologies instead of actual interaction. Virtual experiences might impact individuals' sense of urgency and responsibility for real-world conservation efforts.

Thirdly, I would think that analysing social media's role in shaping perceptions on animal-based tourism unveils a complex interplay between virtual platforms and tourist expectations, with profound implications for ethical considerations. In today's digital era, social media plays a powerful role in promoting ethical practices in animal-based tourism. Tourists use the platform to share positive experiences, creating narratives of responsible engagement. Endorsements from ethical organizations add strength to the spread of conscientious practices, cultivating a culture of awareness and responsibility.

However, the landscape of social media is not devoid of challenges. The prevalence of misleading or staged content injects an element of unreality into the virtual realm. This can cultivate unrealistic expectations among tourists, who may anticipate manipulated animal behaviors designed solely for capturing visually captivating content. Also, negative trends, such as selfies with wildlife or interactions that exploit animals for entertainment, can be amplified through social media. This can perpetuate unethical practices if not countered with educational content.

The next further study idea would be examining the psychological dimensions of animal tourism and investigate the emotional bonds formed between tourists and animals during tourism activities. Also, the development of empathy, and potential cognitive shifts in perceptions of animals among tourists.

Lastly, examining the relationship between climate change and animal-based tourism destinations, shedding light on how shifts in weather patterns and ecosystems may impact the availability and quality of these tourism experiences. Consideration is given to the potential effects of climate change on the weather patterns of animal tourism destinations. Exploration includes alterations in temperature, precipitation, and seasonal variations that could influence the natural behaviors of animals, consequently shaping tourist experiences. Broad changes in ecosystems due to climate change could be explored further and from shifts in vegetation to adjustments in animal habitats, the focus would be more on understanding how these transformations might affect the dynamics of animal-based tourism, influencing the types of species encountered and the overall ecological balance. "How might climate change create new opportunities, challenges, or limitations for tourists seeking wildlife encounters?"

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Survey and the questions asked

Tourism and Animal Welfare in Lapland

 Mandatory questions are marked with a star (*)

Lapland, renowned for its breathtaking natural landscapes, unique wildlife, and indigenous culture, has become a premier destination for travellers seeking unforgettable experiences. The involvement of animals in tourism activities, such as reindeer sleigh rides, husky safaris, and wildlife encounters, is a key attraction.

This survey is designed to gather insights and opinions regarding people's thoughts on animal-based tourism activities and focuses on animal tourism in Lapland. Your participation in this survey will contribute to a better understanding of the general public's perspective.

Your responses are completely anonymous. Your feedback will be used for research and academic purposes only.

Please answer the following questions candidly, based on your experiences and beliefs. Your honest input is highly appreciated. Thank you!

Demographic Questions:

1. Age *

- Under 18
- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- Over 65

2. Gender *

- Male
- Female
- Other
- Prefer not to say

3. Nationality *

4. First thing that comes to your mind when thinking about animal-based tourism in Lapland? *

5. How familiar are you with animal-based tourism? *



Next

6. Have you visited Lapland before? *

- Yes
 No

7. Have you used any animal-based attractions (husky sled riding, reindeer safaris, wildlife watching...)

- Yes
 No

8. What animal-based attraction(s) have you tried?

9. Do you believe that Lapland has a good ethical treatment of animals used in tourism? *

- Yes
 No

10. Why?

- No

11. What can be improved?

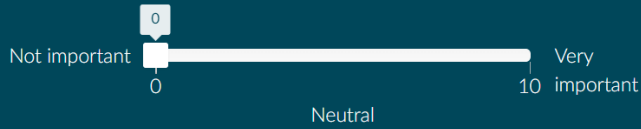
12. Have you ever researched the background and practices of an animal tourism activity? *

- Yes
 Yes, sometimes
 No

13. Are you aware of any regulations or guidelines related to animal welfare in tourism? *

- Very aware
 Somewhat aware
 Not aware

14. How important is it for tourism operators to provide educational information about the animals involved in their activities? *



15. What factors should be considered when deciding to participate in animal tourism activities? (Select all that apply) *

- The welfare and treatment of the animals involved
- The potential for supporting local conservation efforts
- The cultural and educational value
- The opportunity for personal enjoyment and entertainment
- The economic benefits to local communities
- Recommendations or certifications from recognized animal welfare organisations
- The potential to observe animals in their natural habitat
- The opportunity for direct interaction with animals

16. Do you believe that animal-based tourism activities in Lapland can contribute positively to animal welfare and conservation efforts? *

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Previous

Next

17. Anything else you want to add on the topic of animal-based tourism in Lapland?