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Use of animals in entertainment – an outline of the problem

Abstract: The article outlines issues related to the use of animals in entertainment, specifically addressing circuses. So far, measures banning or restricting the use of animals in circuses have already been adopted in about 1/5 of the world's countries, and similar legislation is under discussion in many other countries. Poland has a nationwide ban on the use of wild-born animals in circuses, but there are still about a dozen circuses that use animals in their performances. The total number of animals in circuses is estimated at around 250 specimens. In recent years, Polish society's attitudes toward the use and exploitation of animals have undergone dynamic changes. The purpose of the work was to provide examples of the use of animals in entertainment, with a particular focus on circuses, and to highlight the main associated problems. By attempting to estimate the magnitude of the phenomenon with regard to the country and drawing attention to the controversies surrounding the topic presented, the authors hope that the outlook presented will become a contribution to a broader discussion, also within science.

Keywords: recreation, entertainment, tourism, animals, circuses

1. Introduction

According to the Polish language dictionary, entertainment is that which serves relaxation and rest (<https://sjp.pwn.pl/slowniki/rozrywka.html>). This means activities performed for pleasure and amusement that distract from daily responsibilities. Animals are sometimes used in entertainment, and they are often kept and forced to perform in front of people in dolphinariums and circuses. Hundreds of millions of animals work in sports or help people in therapy. Such activity as a primary or auxiliary form of treatment has found a place in modern medicine since the 1960s (Girczys-Poędniok et al., 2014). Nevertheless, the use of animals in tourism, recreation and entertainment raises debates, especially since the human-animal relationship is most often an asymmetrical one (Grabowska, 2014). This article focuses on the issue mainly in relation to animal performances in circuses. Such activity is still socially accepted by certain groups, moreover, it is even perceived by them as

having educational value. Some authors points out that phenomena treated as sports or recreation with the use of animals can be evaluated differently by different people or social circles depending on their worldview (Jastrzębska et al., 2017). For others, on the other hand, the presence of animals in the cited places arouses controversy. Voices coming from different parts of the world have contributed to the fact that the subject of the use of animals in circuses is recognized in scientific considerations on the grounds of various disciplines. In Polish science, the subject of human-animal relations is only just struggling to find its rightful place (Błońska et al., 2017). However, already more cities in the country are declaring that they will not make city land available to circuses with animals.

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text is a continuation of considerations about the use of animals in tourism. So far, the journal has published papers on this topic in rela-

tion to tourist destinations, illegal natural souvenirs, and on the problem of hunting tourism and zoos.

2. Animals in entertainment – worldwide examples

Animals have accompanied man since the dawn of time. Their role has changed over the years. Nowadays, more and more attention is being paid to their welfare. And while much remains to be done in this regard, the discussions that arise with regard to the role of animals in tourism, recreation and entertainment can help in the search for better solutions. Events involving animals often attract crowds of tourists. One such example is bullfighting, which is an illustration of the human-animal relationship involving antagonistic struggles between animals initiated by humans. During a corrida, a matador kills a bull in the arena in the presence of an audience. Initially, foreign tourism contributed to the development of bullfighting in Spain, but in recent times it has been an ambivalent tourist attraction with declining appeal (Cohen, 2015), but people are also killed or injured during the spectacle. Between January 2012 and November 2019 in Spain, Portugal and southern France, the average accident rate was 9.13% and the

mortality rate was 0.48% (Reguera-Teba et al., 2021). Animals are also used in other places to give humans entertainment. They are viewed in dolphinariums, where tourists can see the animals up close, but also often swim or interact with them. Legislation has already emerged in some countries banning the breeding or keeping of whales, dolphins and porpoises in captivity, or just swimming with them. In response, alternatives are emerging – such as robotic dolphins (Lesman, 2020). The part of the entertainment industry in which animals are often used is cinema and advertising. Many times audiences do not consider whether living creatures are subjected to stress, suffering and even death during film production. Meanwhile, on more than one occasion animals have been killed during film shoots (Michalczak, 2013). The examples cited above do not exhaust the possibilities of entertainment involving animals. More controversial examples are cited in the table below.

Table 1. Examples of controversial use of animals as attractions and during events (Source: based on: Ewa Malchrowicz-Moško et al., 2020)

The way animals are used	Examples
Animals competing with other animals	- cockfighting in Bali, - camel wrestling in the Aegean region - dog racing in Ireland
Animals competing with humans	- bullfights - Fiesta de Interes Turistico Internacional in Spain
Animals involved in competition between humans	- camel polo in Mongolia
Animals as religious sacrifices	- Gadhimai festival in Nepal
Animals as game	- dolphin slaughter organized by Japanese fishermen every year. - A hunt for pilot whales in the Faroe Islands
Animals used for tourist transport	- elephants in Southeast Asia
Animals as circus attractions	- circuses worldwide
Animals as roadside attractions	- snake charming using a musical instrument in India
Animals as toys, playthings	- Tiger Temple in Thailand
Animals in tourists' photos (selfies with wild animals)	- photos with llamas in Peru - photos with dressed-up monkeys in Asian countries
Animals as a delicacy for tourists	- China Dog Meat Festival

3. Animal use in circuses

The Latin etymology of the word „circus” means circle and this refers to both the venue and the performance (Siedlecka, 2013). The Oxford Encyclopedia of Theatre and Performance defines circus as „A quintessentially popular performance genre, in which highly skilled performers offer demonstrations of extreme physical virtuosity, precision, and daring. In its traditional form, circus refers to a traveling show, generally comprising a variety of acts, taking place in or above one or more circular stage areas called ‚rings’ (...) (Kennedy, 2005). In EU regulations, a circus refers to an establishment that organizes traveling shows or traveling performances involving one or more animals (Rozporządzenie..., 2005). The early modern circus began in the late 18th century (Peta, 2021). In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, hundreds of thousands of animals ended up in museums as dead specimens, and live ones in menageries and circuses (Peta, 2021). At the time, a number of hunters in Africa and Asia publicly warned of an alarming decline in the number of species in the wild from which circus animals were obtained. The shift away from the use of animals in circuses was mainly associated with the fact that the emerging movements fighting for animal rights in the second half of the 20th and 21st centuries – opposing their detention in inhumane conditions, training and exploitation during shows – gained increasing public support (Leyko and Snielewska-Stempień, 2019). In recent years, the use of animals in circuses has become the subject of debate around the world. This one has led, in a number of countries, to the approval of legislation on the use and display of animals in circuses. Most EU member states have already adopted a total or partial ban on the use of wild animals in circuses. However, the scope of these regulations varies from country to country. The approach to animal performance in circuses is one of the most notable elements of the broader process of change taking place in circuses worldwide (Snielewska-Stempień, 2013). It is noted that the welfare of wild animals in circuses is not optimal, due to the fact that:

- animal enclosures in circuses and traveling animal shows are generally small, and the

provision of living conditions diversity is very limited or non-existent,

- there are difficulties in providing food typical for the species, as well as in storing food.
- normal behavior of wild animals is disturbed or prevented by handling, training, performance, transportation, restraint and degraded living environment.
- the methods of training commonly used in circuses do not facilitate the minimal use of negative reinforcement, coercion, force and aggression.
- keeping animals in cages/confinement contributes to physical deformities, injuries, limping and mental distress (Dorning et al., 2016).

In addition, the use of wild animals in circuses can lead to accidents involving circus workers and the public. However, it is difficult to carry out inspections with regard to the health, trade and possession of wild animals in the venues in question, since circuses are not only on the move most of the time, but also change their names (Interpelacje, 2021). It's also not easy to monitor the issues of captive-bred protected animals, and this translates into illegal trade in endangered species and their parts in the EU, and affects the less effective implementation of EU wildlife trade regulations (Interpelacje, 2021). Meanwhile, wildlife training professionals and circus owners themselves maintain that the presence of animals in circus performances is an integral part of circus arts, emphasizing its entertainment and educational value (Januszczyk, 2021). Despite this, contemporary circuses are increasingly abandoning the use of animals. Underlying this phenomenon are, on the one hand, movements fighting for animal rights, and on the other hand, the fact that the contemporary circus is turning more to the presentation of the strength and uniqueness of the human body and its capabilities (Snielewska-Stempień, 2013). Measures banning or restricting the use of animals in circuses have already been adopted in 49 countries, and similar legislation is being discussed in many other countries (Table 2) (<https://www.federalcircusbill.org/briefings/worldwide-summary/>)

Table 2. Legislation on banning or restricting the use of animals in circuses (as of 02.2022). (Source: based on: Worldwide Summary. Measures to prohibit or limit the use of animals in circuses <https://www.federalcircusbill.org/briefings/worldwide-summary/>)

Country	Scope of restrictions
North and South America	
USA	111 partial or full bans on performing animals in jurisdictions in the US, in 34 states. (A 'partial' ban or restriction includes restrictions on specific species, or types of performance, or certain uses of animals or animal management practices (such as use of elephant hooks)).
Canada	Local bans on the use of animals in circuses in 33 municipal jurisdictions including Vancouver.
Mexico	Nationwide ban on the use of wild animals in circuses
Argentina	Local bans on the use of wild animals in circuses in over 20 cities including a ban in the city of Buenos Aires
Bolivia	Nationwide ban on the use of wild and domestic animals in circuses
Brazil	Local bans on the use of animals in circuses in 11 states and over 20 cities
Colombia	Nationwide ban on the use of wild animals in circuses; Local ban on the use of animals in circuses in the capital, Bogota
Costa Rica	Nationwide ban on the use of wild animals in circuses.
Ecuador	Nationwide ban on the use of native wild animals; restrictions on the use of exotic animals; ban on the import of both native and exotic wild animals with circuses
El Salvador	Nationwide ban on the "Income, use or abuse of wildlife species in all kinds of entertainment"
Guatemala	Nationwide ban on the use of animals in circuses
Panama	Nationwide ban prohibiting "entry of wild animals for use in static and travelling circuses and similar shows"
Paraguay	Nationwide ban on the use of wild animals in circuses.
Peru	Nationwide ban on the use of wild animals in circuses as well as a local ban on all animals in Magdalena del Mar
Europe	
Austria	Nationwide ban on the use of wild animals in circuses.
Belgium	Nationwide ban on the use of most wild animals in circuses (Parrots and camel are classed as domestic)
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Nationwide ban on all animals in circuses
Bulgaria	Nationwide ban on certain wild animal species in circuses, variety shows and other entertainment facilities
Croatia	Nationwide ban on the use of wild animals in circuses
Czech Republic	Nationwide ban on the use of certain species in circuses; from January 2022 circuses will be prohibited from obtaining and breeding wild animals and using those born after this date.
Cyprus	Nationwide ban on all animals in circuses
Denmark	Nationwide ban on the use of certain species in circuses
Estonia	Nationwide ban on the use of wild animals in circuses
Finland	Nationwide ban on the use of certain species in circuses
France	Nationwide ban on use of wild animals for public display/travelling circuses; prohibits keeping, acquisition, breeding and transport of animals for such use
Germany	Local in bans in more 90 towns and cities
Greece	Nationwide ban on all animals in circuses

Hungary	Nationwide ban on the use of wild caught animals in circuses, the purchase and training of elephants and primates for circus performances and the purchase, training and use of CITES (Appendix 1) listed species in circuses
Ireland	Ban on wild animals in circuses
Latvia	Nationwide restrictions effectively banning the use of wild-caught animals
Lithuania	Nationwide ban on the use of wild mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians in circuses
Luxembourg	Nationwide ban on wild animals in circuses
Macedonia	Nationwide ban on the use of wild animals in circuses
Malta	Nationwide ban on all animals for performances, exhibitions, shows or training for the circus
The Netherlands	Nationwide ban on the use and transport of animals in circuses, with exemptions for certain, mostly domestic, species
Norway	Use of wild species effectively banned nationwide – positive list of permitted animals only includes domestic animals (apart from camels)
Poland	Nationwide ban on the use of wild-born animals in circuses
Portugal	Nationwide ban restricting the use of great apes in circuses and the acquisition and breeding of CITES listed species
Romania	Nationwide ban on the use of wild animals in circuses (apart from certain exotic bird species and cetaceans)
Serbia	Nationwide ban on the use of wild animals in circuses
Slovakia	Nationwide ban on the use of wild animals in circuses
Slovenia	Nationwide ban on the use of wild animals in circuses
Spain	Local bans on the use of wild animals in circuses in more than 400 towns and cities including Barcelona
Sweden	Nationwide ban on the use of certain species in circuses
UK	Scotland, England and Wales have passed nationwide bans on the use of wild animals in circuses; no such legislation is currently in place in Northern Ireland. Over 200 local authorities have bans on animal circuses (more than two thirds of these ban all performing animals, the remainder ban just wild animals).
Ukraine	Nationwide ban on “mobile menageries” and the transportation of wild animals for use in circus performances
Australia	
Australia	Local bans on the use of animals in circuses in several towns including Hobsons Bay, Surf Coast Shire, Parramata and Lismore
Asia	
India	Nationwide ban on the use of certain species in circuses
Iran	Use of wild animals in circuses effectively banned nationwide (no permits issued)
Israel	Nationwide ban on the use of wild animals in circuses
Lebanon	Nationwide ban on the use of certain species in circuses
Singapore	Nationwide ban on the use of wild animals in circuses
Taiwan	Nationwide prohibition on the import or export of protected wildlife for circuses

4. Use of animals in Polish circuses

One of the first documents in the world on the protection of animals and their rights is the World Declaration of the Rights of Animals, adopted in London on September 21, 1977. Article 10 states that no animal shall be used for the entertainment of man, and that the exhibi-

tion of animals for show and shows involving animals compromise the dignity of the animal (Światowa..., 1997). The Declaration provided the impetus for the introduction of animal rights regulations in other countries. In Poland 1997, the Law on the Protection of Animals came into

force (Ustawa..., 1997). Chapter 4 deals with issues of animals used for entertainment, spectacle, film, sports and special purposes. Article 18 reads, among other things, that animals used for entertainment, show, film, sports and special purposes may be kept, bred and presented only in stud farms, circuses or circus bases and in places designated for animals used for special purposes, under the supervision of the Veterinary Inspection (Ustawa..., 1997). Other regulations also apply to the issue at hand related to the treatment of animals. However, legal acts are not the only regulator of people's behavior toward animals, as attitudes are influenced by religion, tradition, culture and its products, as well as upbringing and education (Klimek, 2018). In recent years, Polish society's attitudes toward the use and exploitation of animals have undergone a dynamic change (Januszczyk, 2021). The results of a survey conducted in 2016 on a group of 500 people showed a clear predominance of those opposed to providing urban areas to owners of circuses with animals over those in favor of providing such areas (Miasto Toruń, 2016). Among opponents, 65% of respondents pointed to the mistreatment of animals in circuses, opposition to training (26% of respondents), the negative image of the city in the media (6% of respondents) and expressed the opinion that it is an outdated form of entertainment (2% of respondents) (Miasto Toruń, 2016). Supporters, on the other hand, indicated that it is an attraction for residents (55% of respondents) and that a circus without animals loses its character (20% of respondents), children have the opportunity to watch animals perform (16% of respondents) and often admire their exoticism (12% of respondents) (Miasto Toruń, 2016). There are still more than a dozen circuses in Poland that use animals in their performances. Among the best known are: Circus Zalewski, Circus Korona and Circus Arena. The total number of animals in circuses is estimated at around 250 specimens (Siła..., 2020). In recent years, they have housed, among others, elephants, lions, tigers, but also camels, seals or crocodiles (Siła..., 2020). Circuses with animals are on tour from February to November and on average visit about 250 settlements per season (<https://www.cyrkbezzwierzat.pl>). However, performances with animals are not possible in all of them, as more cities in Poland

are passing bans on providing urban areas for circus performances with animals. However, such activities require further regulation. The Supreme Audit Office (Najwyższa Izba Kontroli) notes the widespread non-compliance with regulations in circuses, especially when it comes to bans on: „abuse, deliberate mutilation, use for entertainment purposes of animals too old or too young, infliction of pain, movement under stress and beating. The provision prohibiting the use of animals not born in captivity for training is also not always observed. It seems that animals in circuses are administered pharmaceuticals to affect their behavior. There is no obligation to employ a veterinarian in a circus. In this situation, there is no way to ensure the welfare of animals undergoing training” (Najwyższa Izba Kontroli, 2016). Nor are these issues of concern to groups representing the scientific community. On March 27, 2015, the Psychology Committee of the Polish Academy of Sciences issued a resolution stating that „circus performances involving animals are devoid of educational value, and potentially harmful to the process of raising young people” (Badowski, 2020). Of a different opinion, however, are representatives of the Association of Circus and Entertainment Employers, who conveyed the position of the Association of Circus and Entertainment Employers on the parliamentary bill amending the Law on the Protection of Animals and certain other laws, passed by the Sejm of the Republic of Poland at its 17th session on 18.09.2020. They believe that animals are a small part of a circus performance, accounting for about 1/4 of its duration, but they are the main magnet for the audience, which defines the circus as a show in which animals are always shown (Związek..., 2020). In turn, they consider the observations of pro-animal organizations to be primarily a false description of the facts. According to representatives of this organization, circuses in most European countries, including Germany, Italy and France, work with animals without restrictions (Związek..., 2020). In response to the use of animals in circus activities, a number of projects are being developed to raise awareness of the problem. The Circus Without Animals campaign aims to draw public attention to the lives of animals imprisoned for entertainment and to bring about a legal ban on the

use of animals in circuses in Poland. However, despite the fact that the campaign has been running for many years, circus performances involving animals are still extremely popular, especially in smaller towns and cities. On the

other hand, other initiatives, such as circuses with holograms of animals, which have begun to appear both in the world and in Poland, are also becoming more prominent.

5. Summary

Accompanying humans since the dawn of time, animals have been and continue to be used by humans in various ways. Some of them live only to entertain people and thus give them enjoyment. They find work in circuses, aquariums, amusement parks and street shows for tourists. Many times the adoption of animals to being used as entertainment is paid for by their suffering, and sometimes it ends in their death. In some cases, as is the case with cockfighting or bullfighting, the death of the animal is an objective in and of itself. In recent years, the use of animals in circuses has become the subject of debate around the world. This has led, in a number of countries, to the passing

of legislation on the use and display of animals in circuses. Most EU member states have already adopted a total or partial ban on the use of wild animals in circuses. However, the scope of these regulations varies from country to country. In Poland, public attitudes toward the use and exploitation of animals have undergone a dynamic change in recent years, and this brings with it discussions on changes to the regulations. Before this can happen, however, bans on providing urban areas for circus performances involving animals are appearing in more cities in the country, but this still requires legislative adjustment.

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