

Book Reviews

Education for Animal Welfare

EN Eadie (2010). Published by Springer, Haberstrasse 7, D-69126 Heidelberg, Germany. 88 pages Hardback (ISBN 978-3-642-16813-0). Price £90.00.

The Springer Animal Welfare series edited by Clive Philips was “designed to help contribute towards a culture of respect for animals and their welfare by producing academic texts addressing how best to provide for the welfare of animal species that are managed and cared for by humans”. As number 10 in the series, this book addresses the employment of education to improve animal welfare and animal protection. Although long adopted by non-governmental organisations and charities, education as a means to facilitate improvement in animal welfare is of increasing interest to academics and governmental bodies; for example the 1st International Conference on Animal Welfare Education was held in Brussels 2010 and a report on the topic was recently published by the UK Farm Animal Welfare Committee government advisory body (FAWC 2011). An academic text on this topic is therefore a welcome addition to any series addressing animal welfare.

Chapter 1 briefly introduces the book’s intended scope. The author indicates that the work is not intended to provide detail on the aspects highlighted but rather to indicate the enormous potential for education to improve animal suffering through a range of mechanisms. Chapter 2 deals with ‘Educational themes’. In essence the author conveys areas of information which are considered key to address through education; ie what people need to know in order to improve “protection of animals against suffering inflicted by humans” through “stimulating actions to create a better life for animals”. This includes a brief history of the recognised status of animals in society reflected in changing legislation to acknowledge capacities to suffer; a brief discussion of the roles of human attitudes and speciesism in societal treatment of animals; identification of applicable legislation in different areas of the globe and where certain species or classes of species are not protected; the constraints on protection imposed by the use of certain legal terms and on enforcement of legislation; how reforms in animal treatment can be achieved, eg through legislation, dietary habits and campaigns; the need for training of animal caretakers; and the “scope for science to contribute”.

Chapter 3 deals with ‘Educational contexts’ related to, and involved in, “reduction in animal suffering”, though there is some repetition from chapter 2. Here, the author outlines various avenues through which awareness of chapter 2’s ‘themes’ can be raised, highlighting some of the practical difficulties involved and how these could feasibly be addressed, as well as instances of where this has, or is being done. For example, awareness of animal sentience and capacity to suffer and promotion of human empathy and respect for animals (humane education) can be implemented via primary and secondary school systems, but must

compete for time against many other topics and may not be achievable without appropriate teacher training. The range of mechanisms proposed is pretty comprehensive and in this respect useful to those wishing to begin a campaign for reform, or reviewing their current strategies.

Of note throughout the book is reference to animal protection rather than animal welfare. Though, of course, related, these are quite different things and the emphasis of the former is reflected in the text’s heavy focus on ethical, societal and legislative aspects. Science and research were given little emphasis and, for me, the book tended less towards education in animal welfare and more towards education in animal rights; although the author indicates common goals of these positions. Overall, scientists appeared to be viewed a little negatively and even while acknowledging the benefits of animal welfare science, only one research group was mentioned in chapter 3, potentially giving a disproportionate view of how much research has been and is being conducted. It must be acknowledged that the author states detail would not be included in the text however, what could have been raised is why this huge body of scientific knowledge has been primarily restricted to academia and how we might improve knowledge transfer to the ‘end user’ and to society at large. As a reader I found the excessive use of highly emotive language throughout the book rather off-putting. For example, the inclusion of phrases such as “inflicting suffering”, “tyranny of man over animals” and “terrible living conditions and treatment to which many animals are subjected”, with little or no support. In addition, dietary alteration to vegetarianism and veganism was raised several times as a good way to improve farm animal welfare — a view that might put many readers off and a position with which some would contend. Although, conceivably, numbers of animals used for production may be reduced by increasing vegetarianism and veganism, it could be argued that those pursuing such diets are abdicating their ‘vote’ on the welfare standards of products that a proportion of society will inevitably continue to demand; whilst those who source products produced ethically and to high welfare standards (assuming honest and clear product labelling) may have more influence on animal welfare through driving demand for higher standards.

These features of the text left me feeling unsure as to whom the book is directed; is it to directly educate those new to the areas of animal welfare and protection and encourage them to implement their knowledge through strategies for ‘reform’ or to facilitate those wishing to promote animal welfare and protection through education? For me, it did not quite meet either goal; in large part because receptivity of the audience was not really acknowledged or addressed. The issue, as with many environmental and health concerns, is not how to reach those who are already sympathetic, but how to reach those who are not. The risk of using very emotive and castigating language to raise awareness in the first place is in actually alienating rather than engaging the

audience whose attitudes and knowledge we wish to alter. Likewise, I found the implication that simply raising awareness alone would necessarily change human attitudes and thus improve animal protection somewhat naïve. In terms of aiding the prospective educator, I consider an opportunity to address the education and learning process itself was missed. For example, what should education aim to act upon? Knowledge alone may not necessarily be implemented if it is counter to beliefs or not perceived to be of personal relevance; positive and caring attitudes may actually be detrimental to welfare without appropriate knowledge — pet obesity is an example of ‘killing with kindness’; animal welfare-promoting behaviour may not be implemented if a person does not perceive it to be their responsibility, they perceive it to risk censure or they do not consider their behaviour will make a difference. So, is it necessary to alter knowledge, attitude, behaviour or combinations of these factors? How do we achieve this and how do we address barriers to their implementation? The value of using participatory techniques to facilitate change in many contexts is well known; working with the target population to facilitate self-generation of knowledge and attitudes, together with ownership of and investment in strategies to ensure appropriate implementation and maintenance of behaviour. Finally, how do we know that the education is successful? The author highlights testing competency in training of professionals who handle animals but this is not possible with more general education of consumers and citizens. Traditionally, feedback forms on educational events address enjoyment and interest but does this actually reflect our desired change in practice? Addressing areas such as these would be a significant step forward in generating information on best practice and achieving successful outcomes via education.

Although my expectations were not met, the author does clearly state the intention to take a broad approach and it is likely that the mismatch is due to the definition of education as ‘awareness’ and possibly pitch at a different audience. The scope of the book would be much clearer if it were entitled *Raising Awareness for Animal Protection*. The book’s implications for animal welfare are in raising awareness of certain issues highlighted within the text which might encourage some readers to take action and bring about reform to improve protection of animals. However, as indicated, there are areas, such as the issue of diet where perceived animal welfare benefits may not actually be forthcoming. Overall, the book outlines a benchmark of the current status of animal protection and is an interesting and relatively quick read, but it does not contribute anything particularly new to the employment of education and I would not recommend it as an academic text.

References

FAWC 2011 *Report on Education, Communication, and Knowledge Application in Relation to Farm Animal Welfare*. Farm Animal Welfare Committee: London, UK. www.defra.gov.uk/fawc

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Field and Laboratory Methods in Primatology: A Practical Guide, Second Edition

Edited by JM Setchell and DJ Curtis (2011). Published by Cambridge University Press, The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK. 456 pp Paperback (ISBN 978 0-521 14213 7). Price £35.00, US\$70.00.

The second edition of *Field and Laboratory Methods in Primatology*, edited by Joanna M Setchell and Debora J Curtis offers a comprehensive guide that incorporates many areas of field research. It is intended for the use of primate field scientists, perhaps in particular those in the early stages of their career, and it provides much valuable data regarding why and how to perform field studies. I consider the book’s greatest strength to lie in its ability to convey the writers’ own (hard-earned) experience to the readers, providing them with a clear image of what to expect at the study site (although the unexpected invariably also occurs), and consequently to prepare appropriately. The book comprises twenty-one chapters; some provide descriptions regarding specific research domains such as ethnoprimateology and thermoregulation, while most review various aspects of field research that incorporate a wide range of research interests, such as employing the global positioning system (GPS) in ecological research, marking and radio-tracking, and handling captured individuals.

Studying wild populations of non-human primates is essential to our understanding of their natural traits and behaviours. With the continuing adverse effects on wildlife caused by human interference, such as deforestation and poaching, ‘knowing more’ may be equal to ‘saving more’, as 63% of primate species are currently either under threat or their fate is unknown. With the alarming rate of habitat destruction, and the risk of extinction to primate species, acquiring data for use by future generations is vital. Such data on the wild primates’ behavioural and socio-ecological features can then be utilised by animal welfare scientists in order to design and maintain suitable environments for their captive conspecifics, and to evaluate their well-being. Indeed, many researchers consider the expression of a normal behavioural repertoire in captive animals as a sign of ‘good welfare’.

Field research of non-human primates has undergone major shifts since its early stages, from the collection and dissection of specimens and comparative anatomy to anecdotal reports of behavioural biology in the wild, quantitative studies conducted in the wild and, finally, to studies integrating laboratory and field techniques. In parallel, the readers can find in the book detailed accounts of basic behavioural observation methods, instructions for the use of computerised sophisticated equipment such as the Geographical Information System (GIS), and remote sensing that integrates data on location of the animals and environmental data.

Field studies are conducted in the belief that their outcome will be beneficial for humans (eg by acquiring knowledge on pharmacological substances that can be used to repel parasites), and/or for the animals (eg in cases of conserva-