

Anthrozoology

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Anthrozoology is the interdisciplinary study of relationships between humans and other animals.

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1. Introduction

Anthrozoology is an emerging multidisciplinary field, defined as the study of the interactions between humans and other animals.^{[1][2]} The discipline reportedly began following reports of numerous potential mental and physical health benefits associated with animal interactions ^[3], resulting in the creation of the *Anthrozoos* journal in 1987 and *Society & Animals* journal in 1993.^{[4][5]}

2. The History of Animal-Human Bonds in Medicine and Research

Florence Nightingale (1861) is credited with suggesting the first official use of the animal-human bond. In her *Notes on Nursing for the Labouring Classes*, Nightingale discusses the ability of 'small pet animals' to comfort (or distract) patients, especially those facing long-term confinement.^{[6][7]} However, human-animal bond studies did not enter the mainstream until psychologist Boris Levinson, considered the 'father of animal assisted therapy', began to publish his work on child-pet bonds and their application in establishing rapport between therapists and young patients.^{[7][8][9]} Levinson also examined the use of pets in treating behavior disorder in children^[10] and suggested dogs might function as 'psychotherapeutic aides'.^[11]

In 1977, the Delta Foundation was established in Oregon to examine the interdependent relationships between veterinarians, animals and clients.^[7] According to Dr Bill McCulloch, the 'Delta Concept' first began to develop in 1959 when one of his patients mentioned that her husband considered their pet beagle a family member.^[7] McCulloch reengaged with human-animal interaction (henceforth HAI) studies following Levinson's publications on child-pet bonds and Levinson's call for further research into the 'mental health role of the veterinarian'.^[7] McCulloch and his brother, Michael (then a medical student) formed the Delta Foundation with the aim of furthering HAI research and examining the role of veterinarians in both mental health and human-animal bond studies.^[7] The Delta Foundation was relabeled the Delta Society in 1981. Dr Bill McCulloch is also the co-founder of the International Association of Human-Animal Interactions Organization (IAHAIO), the founder of Pet Partners, and the author of the first AAT standards for health care providers. The introduction of *Anthrozoos* as a Delta Society publication began in 1987 (ISAZ took over the journal in 2001).^{[7][4]} 1987 also saw the advent of the Human Animal Bond Association of Canada.^[12]

The International Society of Anthrozoology (ISAZ) emerged in Europe following a gathering of interdisciplinary researchers at the Waltham Symposium on Pets, Benefits & Practice in 1990.^[13] These researchers, John Bradshaw, Lynette Hart, Ben Hart, Erika Friedmann (the first ISAZ president), Dennis Turner, and James Serpell formed ISAZ with the dual goals of supporting each other and future research.^[14]

In 1991, Arnold Arluke began published a series of works on human perspectives on and interactions with animals in a variety of settings including animal shelters, research labs, and social science.^[15] In 1993, Arluke and Sanders published *If Lions Could Speak: Investigating the Animal-Human Relationship and the Perspectives of Nonhuman Others*. This seminal work is important for a variety of reasons, including the placement of 'animal' before 'human' in the title. Arluke remains an important contributor to the field of anthrozoology, examining animal abuse, sheltering, ethnozoology, animals in veterinary training, hoarding, dog bites and pet food insecurity. Arluke also serves on a team of veterinary forensic investigators focused on criminal abuse cases.^[16]

The term 'anthrozoology' does not appear in Web of Science articles until 1998, peaked in 2002, and is now experiencing a resurgence.^[17] This may be due in part to past academic debates as to whether anthrozoology was simply a subfield of anthropology^[18], or because many early anthrozoology scholars were primarily grounded in other fields such as

psychology, veterinary medicine or behavior. Some scholars separate anthrozoology from similar fields, such as critical animal studies, due to concerns that anthrozoology 'prioritizes the human angle and to all intents and purposes objectifies the animals involved.'^[19] Hurn^[19] argues that human-animal studies (HAS) places both humans and other animals on an 'equal footing' and thus views their interactions through a lens of interconnectivity, whereas animal studies (AS) remains focused on animals with a view toward balancing their representation in academia.^[19] However, many current anthrozoology scholars argue that they place the agency and perspective of non-human animals on an equal or greater footing to that of humans, yet do not necessarily embrace the political undertones implicit in AS.^{[19][20]} Thanks to the interdisciplinary nature of anthrozoology, these 'sub-fields' may foster understanding rather than creating chasms.

Current status of the field

The discipline now encompasses a wide range of topics including public policy, one health initiatives, species commodification, animal-assisted interventions (AAI), conservation practices, ecotourism, companion animals, animal welfare and companion species. Research draws from the fields of psychology, anthropology, law, history, veterinary medicine, ecotourism studies, arts, linguistics and many more. The International Society for Anthrozoology, formed in 1991^[4], has dedicated itself to 'the scientific and scholarly study of human-animal interactions', and several other international organizations exist to support the exploration of these interactions.^[21] ^{[22][23]} Universities have launched anthrozoology research groups and conferences, including working groups at the University of Exeter (Exeter Anthrozoology as Symbiotic Ethics), the University of Canterbury (New Zealand Centre for Human-Animal Studies), the Anthrozoology Institute at the University of Bristol, and the Gheorghe Zane Institute of Economic and Social Research (Anthrozoology Symposium).^{[23][24][25][26]} Anthrozoology topics courses can be found globally^[27] and two US schools now offer anthrozoology-designated undergraduate degrees.^{[28][29]} Masters degree courses have arisen in both the US and UK^{[30][31]}, but the University of Exeter currently offers the only PhD specifically labelled as Anthrozoology. Postgraduate and doctoral programs in Animal Studies, Critical Animal Studies, and Human Animal Studies continue to grow globally.

Important authors and readings in anthrozoology include: Deleuze and Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*^[32], Jakob von Uexkull's *A stroll through the worlds of animals and men: A picture book of invisible worlds*^[33], Jacques Derrida, Boria Sax, Donna Haraway's *When Species Meet*^[34], Linda Kalof and Brigitte Resi's series *A cultural history of animals*, Tom Regan, Peter Singer, John Bradshaw's *The Animals Among Us: The New Science of Anthrozoology*^[35], and Hal Herzog's *Some We Love, Some We Hate, Some We Eat: Why It's So Hard to Think Straight About Animals*^[36], Samantha Hurn's *Humans and Other Animals: Cross-Cultural Perspectives on Human-Animal Interactions*^[37], and Margo DeMello's *Animals and Society: An Introduction to Human-Animal Studies*^[38], etc. This is not a comprehensive list, as anthrozoology represents a complex and transdisciplinary field of study.

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