A black monkey is shown in a forest setting, looking upwards and to the right. The monkey's mouth is slightly open, showing its teeth. The background is a soft-focus green forest. The text is overlaid on the image in a bold, white, sans-serif font.

MULTISPECIES LIVELIHOODS & ONE WELFARE: RECONCILING NONHUMANS' RIGHTS, AGENCY, & WELFARE IN SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

Presented by: Dr. Bastian Thomsen

Presentation Overview

- Who I am as an academic
- Veterinarians in Society
- Multispecies Relations Intro
- One Welfare/One Health
- Costa Rica Tourism/Policy



Veterinarians in Society

- The lack of priority on veterinary professionals' welfare is perhaps a gendered issue. In Australia, 2016 data show “80% of vet graduates and 60% of practitioners were female” (Brandwood 2023).
- The neglect of studies of veterinarian wellbeing in disciplines outside of psychology possibly reflects long-held Western beliefs about humans' right to control or 'manage' the environment and other species.
- Animals and women remain marginalized in contemporary multispecies relations, and vet medicine elucidates the entangled embodiments of patriarchal dominance.
- Beyond obvious concerns for gender or animal rights, agency, and welfare, why should the *status quo* be challenged and why should society care about multispecies relations broadly?

Vets in Society Continued

- Veterinary practice is inherently a site of multispecies encounters that provides critical insights that extend beyond medical care or financial motivations, such as mitigating species extinction, developing new cancer remedies, or reducing the risk of poor mental health in humans who work with animals.
- It is a profession oft romanticized in popular media for its fundamental representation of our relationship to 'more-than-human' worlds.
- Whether increased interest in multispecies relations is due to medical concerns of One Health, the biodiversity crises, or improved human attitudes and beliefs toward nonhuman animals, the scale of the veterinary industry and its effects warrant greater research focus.

One Health & One Welfare

- Multispecies relations in society:
- One Health and One Welfare, a better understanding of vets' professional milieu and the social and economic dynamics that shape it are critical for our survival as a species, and the others that we depend on (Gibbs & Gibbs 2012; Patz & Hahn 2012; WHO et al. 2022).
- One Health is an emerging paradigm that recognizes the interdependency of human, nonhuman, and ecosystem health, and that human health is undoubtedly dependent on animal health (Stephens 2021).
- One Welfare is a complementary approach to understanding the dynamics that shape welfare and well-being for *all* species and their environment (Pinillos et al. 2016).
- In practice, One Welfare may proffer insights into providing better quality care for vets and their staff, so that they can in turn provide better care for their patients.

Veterinary Anthropology & MOS

- Veterinary anthropology originally focused primarily on livestock for the social understandings of multispecies relations between farmers and ranchers and their animals (McCorkle 1989).
- Some studies in past 30 years, recently became a more topical object of anthropological inquiry.
- Veterinary anthropology studies the relationship between veterinarians, their work, and larger role within society.
- It provides a distinct view of multispecies relations as a subfield of medical anthropology and at the nexus of human, animal, and ecosystem health and well-being (i.e., One Health and One Welfare) (see Brown & Nading 2019; Broz et al. 2023).
- Management and organization studies complements veterinary anthropology by providing a business examination of the industry and its mechanisms, as well as the organizational factors that shape veterinary work and practice (see Diez, 2020; Pradies 2023).

Multispecies Ethnography

- ME: an emerging methodological position from anthropology that formally recognizes 'beyond the human' in 'more-than-human worlds'; blend of anthropology and ethology (animal behaviour).
- Does it better account for the agency of nonhumans and our relationship with other beings in multispecies relations (see Hartigan 2021; Thomsen et al. 2023)?
- The combination of these theories and methods are exceedingly rare in this context.
- Interdisciplinary collaborations with wildlife biologists/ecologists, veterinarians, psychologists, management scholars, charities, etc.

Research Questions

Primary	What do veterinarians wish their clients knew before you walked through the clinic's door?
Secondary	<p>How do economic factors influence veterinary care and well-being?</p> <p>How does veterinary medicine affect One Health and our understandings of global pandemics?</p> <p>Which socioeconomic conditions may improve veterinary health and well-being from a One Welfare lens?</p> <p>What factors inhibit veterinarians from wielding more power in society, and how may they be improved to result in better One Welfare outcomes?</p>

Lines of Research Inquiry

- 1) **General Practice:** This is the most common veterinary setting and produces the baseline to compare other vet settings to, but is limited for its focus on cats, dogs, and small household pets.
- 2) **Emergency and Critical Care:** This setting is essential to any medical field and engenders high levels of intense emotional responses due to high rates of euthanasia, intense encounters with clients, and increased, often unplanned for, costs.
- 3) **Wildlife Medicine (e.g., zoos, rehabilitation and release hospitals):** Wildlife care is a highly contested space due to exogenous issues concerning biosecurity, invasive species, **economic resources, and environmental policies.**
- 4) **Large Animal (livestock, food production, equine):** This sector is essential to issues of One Health, nutrition, and sport, yet often influenced by economic concerns over multispecies health.
- 5) **Rural Health & Medicine:** Rural veterinary care combines multiple sectors listed here but remains separate for critical reasons. It is increasingly difficult to recruit and retain vets in rural Australia, there is a constant lack of resources, and top-quality care is often centered in major urban areas (e.g., Sydney, Brisbane, Melbourne, Perth, Adelaide).
- 6) **Biosecurity (e.g., policy, wildlife trafficking):** Australia faces an epidemic of biodiversity loss, invasive species, looming global pandemic issues, and wildlife trafficking. Governmental policies and efforts to redress wildlife health are paramount to improving the ecological crises.

Lines of Research Cont.

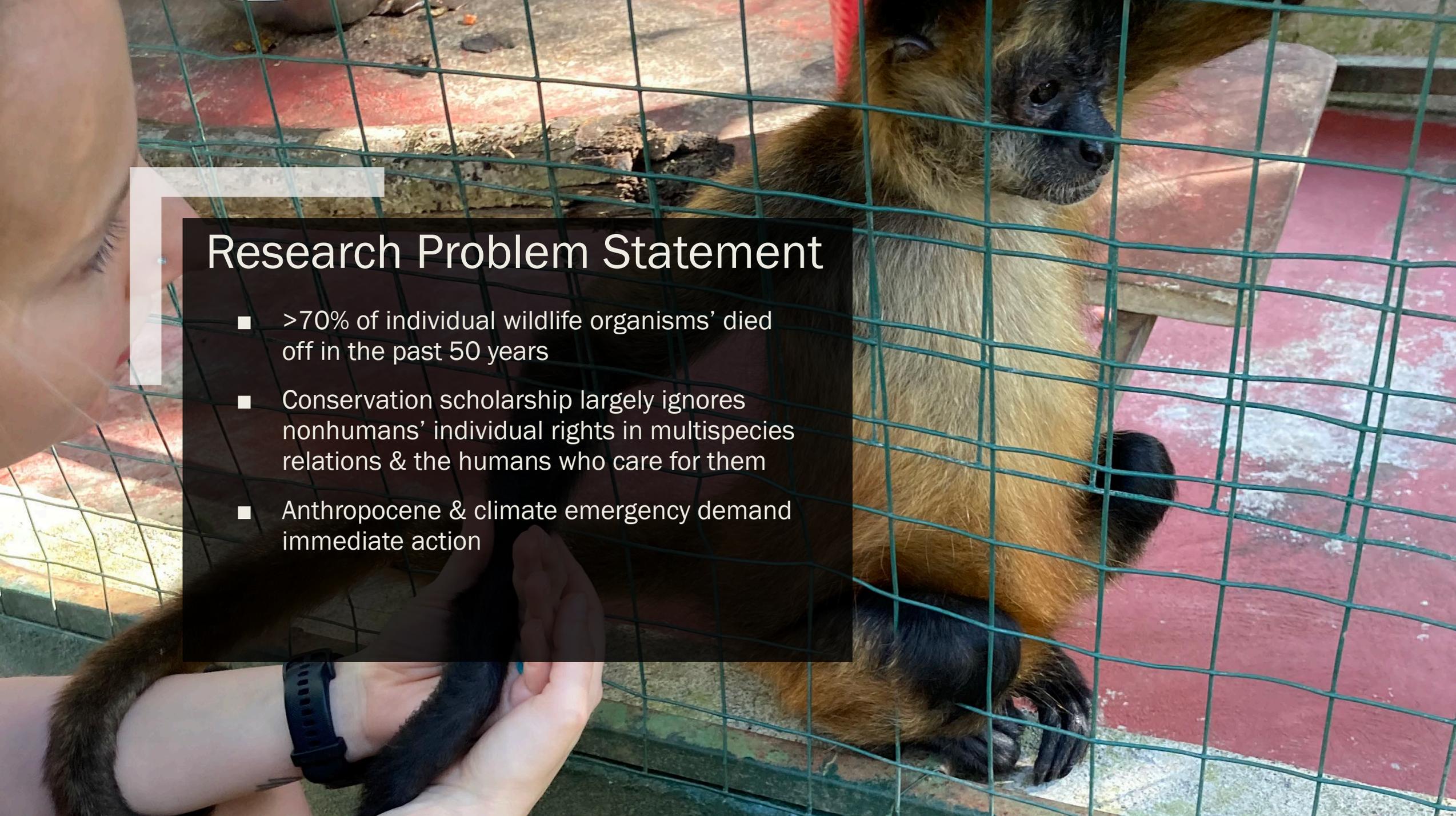
- 1) **Specialities (e.g., cancer, internal medicine, rehabilitation):** Other nonhuman specialities are critical to nonhuman well-being but are often distanced from quotidian client pet-care, until there is a problem. Various sub-specialities are undoubtedly specialised but face different issues in multispecies relations.
- 2) **Laboratory (e.g., pharmaceutical development):** Nonhuman animals are used for a wide variety of medical and experimental reasons yet are often treated as a necessary sacrifice to improving human health. This sector grapples with ethical decisions for complex, human social reasons.
- 3) **Shelter Medicine:** Previous research in this field illuminated the quotidian role of shelter medicine in multispecies relations. This includes rescuing unwanted domesticated animals and responding to animal welfare abuse cases, oft related to human abuse cases.
- 10) **More-than-Western Veterinary Medicine:** I am new to Australia but have established connections with Indigenous academics in Brisbane and Sydney. This sector focuses on first nations' veterinary relations to nonhumans that is vastly understudied yet critical to multispecies relations in the Anthropocene.
- 11) **International Veterinary Medicine:** From a social anthropology lens, comparative studies between countries illuminate 'best practices' that may provide insights into how Australia may improve veterinary care and practice. Pilot studies in Costa Rica, U.S., U.K. and Canada suggest that other nation-states suffer from similar veterinary-related issues but hold promise in certain areas for Australian practices to improve. New Zealand and Costa Rica will particularly include (in a minimal capacity) to elucidate various positive and negative aspects of veterinarian medicine in to inform better care in Australia.

Research Aims

- To determine the social and economic factors that influence poor welfare for nonhumans and the humans that take care of them (e.g., One Welfare approach to wildlife/wildlife veterinarian well-being).
- To elucidate the effects that tourists, clients and society have on multispecies relations.
- To develop a practical, applied framework that helps clients understand how to better support One Welfare in practice.
- To provide wildlife veterinarians with alternative business models that empowers their well-being.
- Develop a framework that balances posthumanism and utilitarianism.

Approach to Multispecies Relations Studies

- Interdisciplinary scholar: Multispecies Relations
 - *Sustainability + Social Entrep. & Innovation + Environmental Anthropology*
 - *Methods: Qualitative Focused; Mixed with Collaborators*
 - *Theories: Sustainability, Social Entrep., Environmental Anthropology, Ethics*
 - *Inclusive: Global South; Indigenous, Local, Student Collaborators*
- Global & Local Networks/Collaborations
- Costa Rica/Student Mentorship



Research Problem Statement

- >70% of individual wildlife organisms' died off in the past 50 years
- Conservation scholarship largely ignores nonhumans' individual rights in multispecies relations & the humans who care for them
- Anthropocene & climate emergency demand immediate action

A photograph of a wolf in a snowy forest. The wolf is the central focus, looking directly at the camera with its yellow eyes. It is surrounded by snow-covered ground and bare, snow-laden tree branches. The lighting is soft, suggesting a winter day. A dark grey rectangular box is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing text.

Primary Research Question

- *'How would (sustainable) tourism change if nonhumans were granted equal rights, agency, and welfare as equitable partners?'*

Multispecies Livelihoods

- Human and nonhuman animals possess equal rights to (co)exist and to secure life's provisions in a way that does not violate another's, with the exception of self-security or sustenance hunting (Thomsen & Thomsen, 2020, p. 1).

Case Study: Costa Rica Tourism and One Welfare

- Wildlife Sanctuaries – Sites of Encounters
- Tourism operations in Costa Rica
- Posthumanism vs. Utilitarianism
- Policy and Governance



Theoretical Grounding

- Sustainable Tourism/Conservation Management
- Sustainability
- Posthumanism & the 'Animal-turn'
- Social-Ecological Systems
- Biopower & Multispecies Relations
- Ecological Rehabilitation & Conservation



Methods

- Multispecies Ethnography
- Mixed-methods, predominantly qualitative, with surveys
- Iterative, bottom-up approach to understand context that actors face (Creswell & Creswell, 2017)
- Ethnographic research: 400 + interviews, archival data, and participant-observation
- Draws on four key studies across 7 countries

Key Theme #1: Community ‘buy–in’ and the power of environmental education

- Socioenvironmental contexts are crucial in climate and environmental research
- Strong need for community involvement and environmental education to foster coexistence.
- Efforts to revive wildlife knowledge in local communities is paramount for coexistence.
- Stress the importance of integrating human and animal welfare considerations comprehensively.

Key Theme #2: One-welfare and the interdependency of all species

- One-health emphasizes the interconnectedness of humans, the environment, and other species (i.e., zoonotic origin of the COVID-19 pandemic); one-welfare broadens this perspective to prioritize the welfare of humans, nonhumans, and ecosystems rather than just humans.
- Initiatives like wildlife rescue centers doubling as ecotourism sites in Costa Rica illustrate the importance of holistic conservation approaches.
- Nonhuman caregivers (i.e., veterinarians, ecologists, etc.) face high burnout rates.

One Welfare

- Similar to One Health, One Welfare is an emerging term that looks at issues from a wider, national, global and holistic perspective. The concept refers to not only animal welfare but includes human welfare and societal mental health, as well as environmental conservation (Borque 2017, p. 218).

Key Theme #3: Organising and operating for intrinsic value rather than profit-driven incentives

- Local environmental education campaigns in emphasize importance of keystone and endemic species.
- Nature-based economic activities and volunteers changed human perceptions towards wildlife to be more positive changes.

Applying the MR Framework

#1: Legitimise nonhumans as equitable partners directly and indirectly in conservation theory and practice.

#2: Measure and test how Multispecies Relations/One Welfare could operate as a mechanism to financially compensate nonhumans through traditional economic notions of bartering or in-kind exchanges for products and services.

#3: Actually be entrepreneurial when considering multispecies relations. That is, they should disrupt current anthropocentric paradigms and markets that favour unsustainable production and consumption to engender new modes of multispecies relations in tourism settings and in business practices.



**THANK
YOU!**

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