

Survey on public awareness of animal protection

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Abstract: We are a big wildlife country and the need for animal protection is huge. It is important to mobilise everyone to support and participate in the development of animal protection however the number of people in our country who understand and engage in animal protection is very small. By distributing questionnaires online and investigating the basic information of the respondents, the degree of understanding and methods of animal protection, and the attitudes towards animal protection, I summarised the public's awareness of animal protection and the factors influencing it, analysed the existing problems, considered improvement measures, and aimed to promote the development of animal protection.

Keywords: Animal protection, Protection awareness, Questionnaire

1. Research background

Wildlife is of great importance to our lives and to the world: wildlife resources, together with humans and soil, plants, water and air, constitute an ecological system. This system works in harmony and is a prerequisite for human reproduction and development [1]. The recent emergence of infectious diseases such as SARS and avian influenza in the world are all related to wildlife, and the new coronavirus in 2020 has even jumped wildlife into the public eye at once.

China is the country with the richest biodiversity in the world, with more than 2,100 species of wild animals, accounting for about 10% of the world's total [2]. At the same time, the public's awareness of animal protection has been regarded as an important symbol reflecting the moral standard of society and modern civilization, and is an important measure of national quality, which has attracted worldwide attention [3]. In such a context, there is an urgent need to raise awareness of our wildlife conservation.

Everyone should be involved in the conservation of wildlife. However, the analysis of information and questionnaire results shows that more than half of the people have little or no knowledge of animal protection, which is a worrying situation. At the same time, there is little information on the awareness of animal protection among the general public in existing surveys, which led to this study: a survey on the awareness of animal protection among the general public and the factors influencing it.

This study aims to draw more attention to animal protection and to urge more people to try and join the animal protection movement.

2. Research concept

2.1 Research hypothesis

The following hypotheses were first made:

Hypothesis 1. The level of knowledge about animal conservation is related to the environment in which one grows up. People growing up in rural areas or in places with inherently fragile ecosystems and more nature reserves have more exposure to nature and animals and are likely to be more knowledgeable and curious about animals and nature conservation efforts.

Hypothesis 2. Students in more economically developed regions are more aware of animal conservation than students in less developed regions. This is because of the more open and advanced social environment they live in and their broadened horizons.

Hypothesis 3. People who keep pets are more affectionate towards animals and more aware of animal rescue and protection than those who do not.

Hypothesis 4. Less educated people are less aware of animal protection than more educated people due to their horizons or economic reasons etc.

Hypothesis 5. Middle and high school students have less opportunity to learn about this or practice animal protection due to busy academic schedules etc. and also do not yet have a clear understanding of animal protection.

2.2 Research subjects

The study used a random sample of episodic sampling method to publish an online questionnaire and 138 questionnaires were returned, all of which were valid. Of these, 18 were under the age of 18, 25 were aged 18-30 and 95 were over 30, all of whom were middle-aged. There was a gender balance between men and women, with 68 men and 70 women. The educational level of the survey respondents was 1 person in junior high school or below, 21 in high school or secondary school, 17 in college and 99 in bachelor's degree or above. The growing up area (residing for more than five years) is concentrated in East China, with 116 people, accounting for 84.06%.

3. Research results

3.1 Respondents' knowledge of animal protection

On the question of "knowledge of animal protection", 6 people (4.35%) chose "somewhat knowledgeable", 61 people (44.2%) chose "somewhat knowledgeable" and 71 people (51.45%) chose "not knowledgeable". "71 people (51.45%) did not know", as shown in Figure 1.

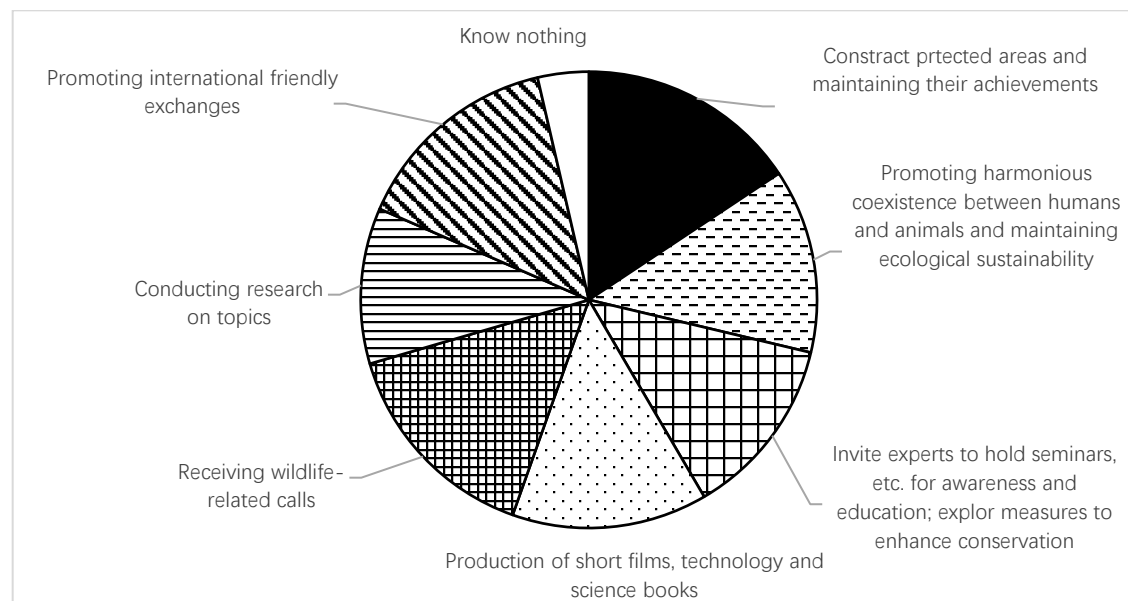


Figure 1: Knowledge of the work animal protection does

Among those who "know about animal protection organisations", China Wildlife Conservation Society (75.36%), Wildlife Conservation (68.84%), World Society for the Protection of Animals (68.12%), WWF (43.38%) and none of them (7.97%).

(The above two items were assigned a score of 1 for each respondent, except for the "don't know" option, and the results are as follows)

After assigning scores, 9 people were given 0, 20 people 1, 28 people 2, 44 people 3, 35 people 4 and 1 person 5 for "knowledge of wildlife conservation organisations".

For "knowledge of animal protection work", 18 scored 0, 15 scored 1, 17 scored 2, 25 scored 3, 20 scored 4, 11 scored 5, 6 scored 6 and 24 scored 7.

It can be seen that scores of 6-7 are predominant, i.e. knowledge of 3-4 animal protection organisations and 3-4 animal protection efforts are predominant; scores >8 are significantly lower. Most have some awareness of animal protection but clearly not enough.

Table 1: Combined assignment table

Score	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Numbers	6	4	11	16	7	12	20	24	8	9	7	13	1

3.2 Factors influencing knowledge of and interest in animal conservation

3.2.1 The effect of living in the countryside on knowledge of animal protection

The data in the Composite Assignment Table 1 is grouped into three categories, with "0-5" being low, "6-8" being medium and "9-12" the "9-12" scale is high.

Among those who live in rural areas, 38 (73.1%) were given lower scores, 33 (68.8%) were medium and 13 (34.2%) were higher; among those who do not live in rural areas, 14 (26.9%) were lower, 15 (31.2%) were medium and 25 (65.8%) were higher.

It can be seen that the level of knowledge about animal conservation is higher among respondents who live in urban areas than those who live in rural areas (more than five years), in line with hypothesis 1: "People who grew up in rural areas... Contrary to hypothesis 1: "People who grew up in rural areas... are more curious and knowledgeable about animals and nature conservation". The reason for this may be that people living in urban areas are more receptive to new ideas, and their families are better equipped to support animal protection; and that differences in education and social environment make urban residents more likely to be exposed to animal protection organisations, lectures, etc., than those living in rural areas, and that the spread of animal protection knowledge starts in cities as a priority.

3.2.2 The effect of literacy on knowledge of animal protection

In the overall assignment, the highest percentage of "lower" scores were for high school or secondary school, accounting for 61.9% of the total number of high school or secondary school students, followed by 55.56% for college and the lowest 34.34% for bachelor's degree and above; among the "higher" scores, bachelor's degree and above accounted for 26.26% of the total number of bachelor's degree and above students, college 0 and 19.05% for high school or secondary school students. In the "higher" category, bachelor's degree and above accounted for 26.26% of the total number of bachelor's degree and above, college 0, and high school or secondary school 19.05%.

It can be assumed that the level of education has an impact on the level of knowledge of animal protection, with the higher the level of education, the higher the level of knowledge of animal protection. Those with higher levels of education are likely to be more open-minded and have a greater sense of responsibility; those who have been through undergraduate and above are exposed to more social practices including animal protection during this time, and many animal protection organisations also specialise in promoting animal protection to university students, and are therefore more knowledgeable about animal protection. Hypothesis 5 holds true.

3.2.3 The effect of the level of economic development of the city on interest

Fewer respondents were in less economically developed areas and Hypothesis 3 could not be tested.

3.2.4 Whether living in a nature reserve or a more ecologically fragile area has an impact on knowledge of and interest in animal conservation

Ecological fragile areas which referred to above mean nature reserves or ecologically fragile areas refer to areas with more than 15 nature reserves such as Yunnan, Sichuan, Guangxi, Guangdong, Hubei, Jiangxi, etc., and areas where the ecological environment is fragile due to climate, such as Inner Mongolia, Xinjiang, etc.

Of those in the above-mentioned regions, 72.4% were interested and 27.6% were not interested; of those in other regions, 62.39% were interested and 37.61% were not interested.

From the data, it can be seen that the level of interest in animal conservation among the respondents in the above-mentioned areas differs somewhat from the data in other areas, and hypothesis 1, "the ecological environment itself is fragile... Curiosity and knowledge" is valid.

Qu Hongyan points out that "... Still facing many problems, one of which is that because wildlife management and protection work started late in China, many places have not set up special wildlife protection institutions" [4], the possible reason for the difference exists is the setting of institutions. The local community may strengthen animal protection propaganda and knowledge dissemination, organise social practices, etc. due to the special local environment. Local people have a deep and comprehensive

understanding of wildlife and the importance of animal conservation, and therefore have a deeper interest in animal conservation when living in nature reserves or in areas with a more fragile ecological environment.

3.2.5 Whether or not owning a pet has an impact on knowledge and interest in animal protection

On the question of whether pet ownership has an impact on knowledge and interest in animal protection, 81.94% of respondents who answered 'yes' were interested in animal protection, while 45.45% of those who answered 'no' were interested in animal protection. This shows that people who keep pets are more interested in animal protection. Although wild animals and pets are different states of existence for animals, it is possible that people who keep pets are more interested in animal conservation because they love and value their pets and are more interested in other animals. Hypothesis 4 is valid.

3.2.6 Impact of age on knowledge and interest in animal conservation

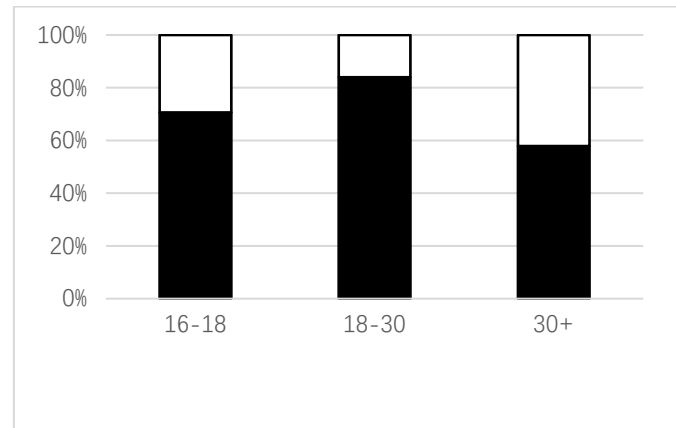


Figure 2: The effect of age on interest in animal conservation (Black represent "Be interested in" and white represent "Lost interest in")

The sample of respondents, junior and senior high school students, was small and unrepresentative, and hypothesis 6 could not be tested. However, it can be guessed that junior and senior high school students may not have extra energy to learn about animal protection due to academic pressure, and at the same time study a relatively single curriculum, have less contact with social resources, and have a low interest in animal protection; in this survey, most of the respondents aged 18-30 are university students, with less academic pressure, richer after-school life, more social resources, and are also encouraged to carry out various social practices, so a high percentage of people aged 18-30 are interested. Therefore, a high percentage of 18-30 year olds are interested, as shown in Figure 2.

It is also clear from the graph that those under 30 have a higher interest in animal protection. This group of people are mostly post-90s, who are in a period of rapid social and economic development and are liberal in their thinking; at the same time, animal protection is in the public eye and people are paying more and more attention to animal protection; moreover, people under 30 are generally more receptive to new things than those over 30, make good use of social media and have access to convenient and extensive knowledge.

3.3 Ways to understanding of animal protection

In the question "Where do you get your information (on animal protection) from", 67 people filled in the question. Of these, 82.09% chose "documentaries", 59.7% "books (not compulsory)", 20.9% "specialist textbooks, specialist knowledge", 20.9% "lectures", 8.96% "already an animal conservationist" and "other". 20.9% chose "lectures", 8.96% chose "being an animal conservationist" and 8.96% chose "other" (4 respondents gave the following answers: heard of it, social media, internet, b-site]. internet, b-site) 5.97%.

The most widespread sources of information on animal protection are documentaries and non-mandatory books, both of which are ineffective and do not allow for timely access to new information. It is important to keep abreast of the current situation, which requires wider access to information and more accessible dissemination of information. Lectures are a good medium for delivering information directly and for communicating with the public to identify problems. However, the figures show that the number of lectures given is low.

3.4 Insufficient research

The sample was small in age and under 30 years of age; the survey area was small, mainly concentrated in Eastern China; the study population was highly educated, and there were not enough data on people with low incomes or in less economically developed areas, while people with lower education or income may have less knowledge of protection and are more in need of research. It is hoped that some researchers will conduct further and more in-depth research.

3.5 Research findings

The results of the survey show that the general public is still in the early stages of understanding animal protection, and that many people are aware of the general content of animal protection and understand its necessity, but do not have a deep understanding or practice. Only one person out of 138 questionnaires said that "animal protection is unnecessary", but it is worth noting that animal protection requires the motivation and attention of everyone.

During the questionnaire period, a lot of feedback was received, with many people actively reflecting on their lack of animal protection and expressing a willingness to get involved in animal protection activities when the opportunity arises. Most of the respondents who studied a related subject such as biology or were in an ecologically specific area had an awareness that animals are part of the ecological environment.

The survey also revealed that there may be a common misunderstanding of animal protection. In the questionnaire "Are you interested in animal protection", 13 of those who chose "interested" mentioned "small animals", "cute ". In fact, animal protection is not only about cute animals in the traditional sense, but also about animals that people are afraid of in their daily lives, such as insects and snakes, and that pose a threat to their health.

In today's increasingly developed online media, it is no longer difficult to spread knowledge about animal protection. Sharing science through social media such as b-site; holding offline lectures to report on the latest progress and interact with the public to answer questions; or using the online medium to hold online lectures and invite animal conservationists from different countries around the world to exchange ideas and break time and space constraints are all good options.

Where conditions allow, the public can make direct attempts at animal protection. The survey revealed that many people do not want to get involved in animal protection, but do not have the opportunity to do so. Therefore, animal protection organisations can also go into the crowd and recruit volunteers so that more people can experience animal protection first hand.

It is also important to increase knowledge of animal protection in rural areas. In China, the traditional concept of "nourishment" and so on leads to the consumption of "wild game", which is more likely to happen in rural areas. The first is that it is easy to source, the natural environment in rural areas is better, and the second is that the rural population is less educated and less aware of wildlife. The elderly make up a large part of the population in rural areas, many of whom do not use modern equipment and are better informed, and are more likely to eat wildlife by mistake due to customs and other influences.

I have learned about 'eco-fiction' - a type of ecological narrative novel that focuses on animals - and have seen that eco-fiction is more interesting to young children than general science books; children's writers are also beginning to reflect on human behaviour and stop looking at animals in a human way. Writers of children's literature have also begun to reflect on human behaviour and no longer look at animals in a stereotypical way [5]. We can perhaps encourage and look forward to the emergence of more eco-novelists and more new communication media.

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