

Animal Based Tourism Should be Free from Exploitation

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Tourism of today has developed into alternative tourism that pays more attention to quota, education, social-economic and environmentally friendly characteristics. This also touched on animal husbandry sector. But challenges are still encountered in this type of tourism, such as rights, veterinary welfare, social conflict, and environmental degradation.

“Currently, attractions that rely on animals are getting high interest. Practice on the field, however, is abusive that ignores the comfort and welfare of the animals, as well as physical sanction,” said professor from Faculty of Animal Sciences UGM, Prof. Budi Guntoro, S.Pt., M.Sc., Ph.D., IPM.

The issue was raised in his inaugural professorship remarks on Wednesday (20/9) at UGM Main Office, titled Participation of Local Community in Animal Based Tourism Development.

He explained animal based tourism as one type of alternative tourism that uses animals as tourism attractions makes the animal as the setting and object to get tourism experiences. This cover tour to farming sites, zoo, elephant show, bird singing, circus, etc. Many of the animals used in this tourism activities, said Budi, have been caught in the wild, and they will be displayed as entertainment, load carrier, or object for hunt, sports, competition, or dangerous attractions.

“There are around 550,000 wildlife that are abused due to irresponsible tourism attraction,” he cited resources.

Budi suggested scientists focusing on animal tourism and practitioners to take into account the moral and ethics when using the animal as tourism attraction, even just for personal entertainment. Some approaches of freedom for the veterinary welfare include the freedom of hunger, freedom of discomfort, and free from illness or injury.

“The failure to provide one of these conditions will endanger the health of the animal,” said Budi.

To resolve the problem, local community participation and experts needs to be improved to develop good and sustainable tourism. He said animal based tourism has potential such as improving breeder’s income, improving interest in local cattle, and preserving animal germ plasms that will become extinct. Participation and cooperation, however, are needed between local government, business community, breeders, and individuals to promote tourism attraction as well as protecting existing resources.

“It’s time the government and society as well as animal experts to avoid all kinds of animal exploitations for the veterinary welfare,” said Budi Guntoro.

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