

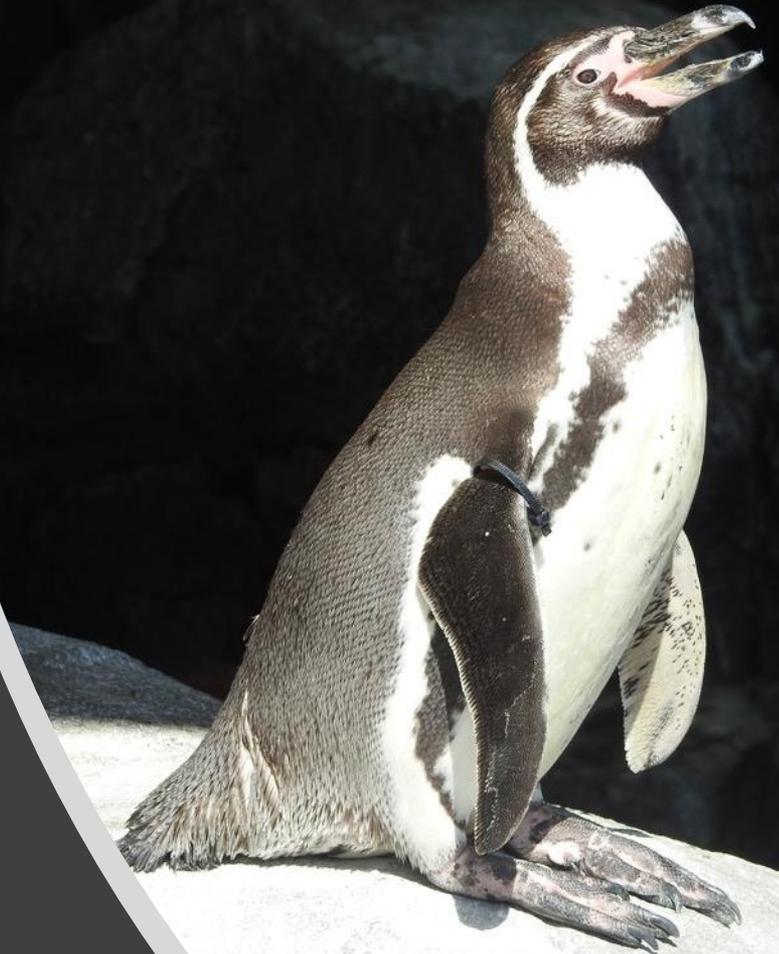
# Sliding Scales: Designing a Zoo Experience to Cultivate Empathy and Motivate Action

**Jeffrey C. Skibins**  
East Carolina University



# OVERVIEW

- Empathy
  - Concepts
  - Measurements
- Actions & behaviors
  - What to do
  - When to do it
- Interpretation
- In-class exercise



Why do we care about  
caring??

# CONSERVATION PSYCHOLOGY

- ❖ The scientific study of the reciprocal relationships between humans and the rest of nature, with particular focus on how to encourage conservation of the natural world
- ❖ An applied field that uses psychological principles, theories, or methods to understand and solve issues related to human aspects of conservation
- ❖ Motivated by the need to encourage people to care about and take care of the natural world



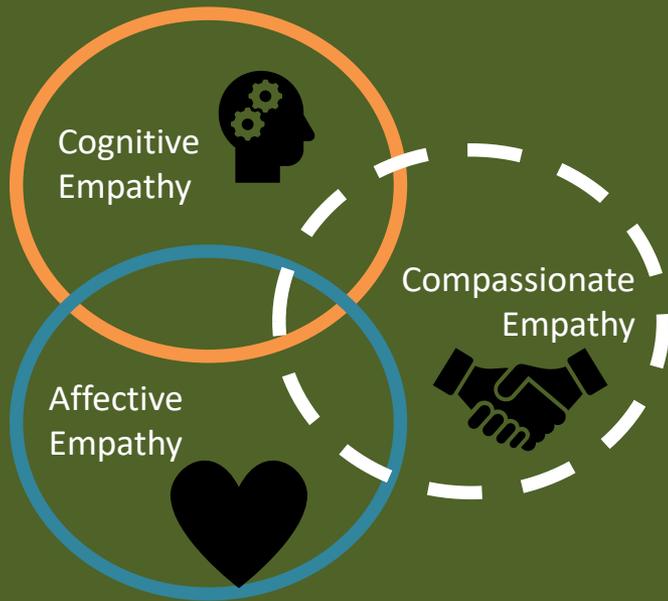
**empathy**

**action**

“In the end we will conserve only what we love; we will love only what we understand; and we will understand only what we have been taught.” Baba Dioum

# EMPATHY

A stimulated emotional state that relies on the ability to perceive, understand, and care about the experiences or perspectives of another person or animal.



**Cognitive Empathy** is the ability to identify or understand another's emotions; the mental process where one is able to see things from another's perspective, but not necessarily experience that same emotion.

**Affective Empathy** is described as the vicarious feelings or emotions that arise in response to observing the emotions or experience of another. In this construct one can physically feel the emotions or experience of another, sometimes as if they are contagious (e.g., crying in response to movie character)

**Compassionate Empathy**, driven by cognitive and affective empathy, is the ability to feel and show appropriate concern in response to another's needs and be moved to help in some way. This construct can be a motivational basis for taking action help others.

# EMPATHY – MEASUREMENTS & APPLICATIONS

## From Conservation Psychology

- Conservation Caring
  - Care that: cognitive information & values
  - Care about: affective information & experiences
  - Care for: direct & indirect caring behavior

## From Empathy

- Cognitive Empathy: understanding emotions
- Affective Empathy: vicarious feelings of emotions
- Compassionate Empathy: behavioral response



# EMPATHY – MEASUREMENTS & APPLICATIONS

## A Sampler of Measuring Empathy, Emotions, & Connections

**Emotional Affinity to Nature scale** (Kals, et al., 1999):

construct embracing several inclinations to nature including love, freedom, safety, and oneness with/for nature; meant to be distinctive from cognitive 'interest' in nature; 9 sub-constructs

**Love & Care for Nature scale** (Perkins, 2010)

deep love and caring for nature which includes a clear recognition of nature's intrinsic value as well as a personal sense of responsibility to protect it from harm; 15 items

**Conservation Caring** (Skibins & Powell, 2013)

includes 'care that' addressing cognitive elements and values towards wildlife, 'care about' which are affective based on experiences, and 'care for' which are expression of behavior; 6 item

**Dispositional Empathy with Nature** (Tam 2013)

dispositional tendency to understand and share the emotional experience of the natural world; 10 items

# EMPATHY – MEASUREMENTS & APPLICATIONS

So what does measuring empathy/emotions/connections tell us and why do we want to know?

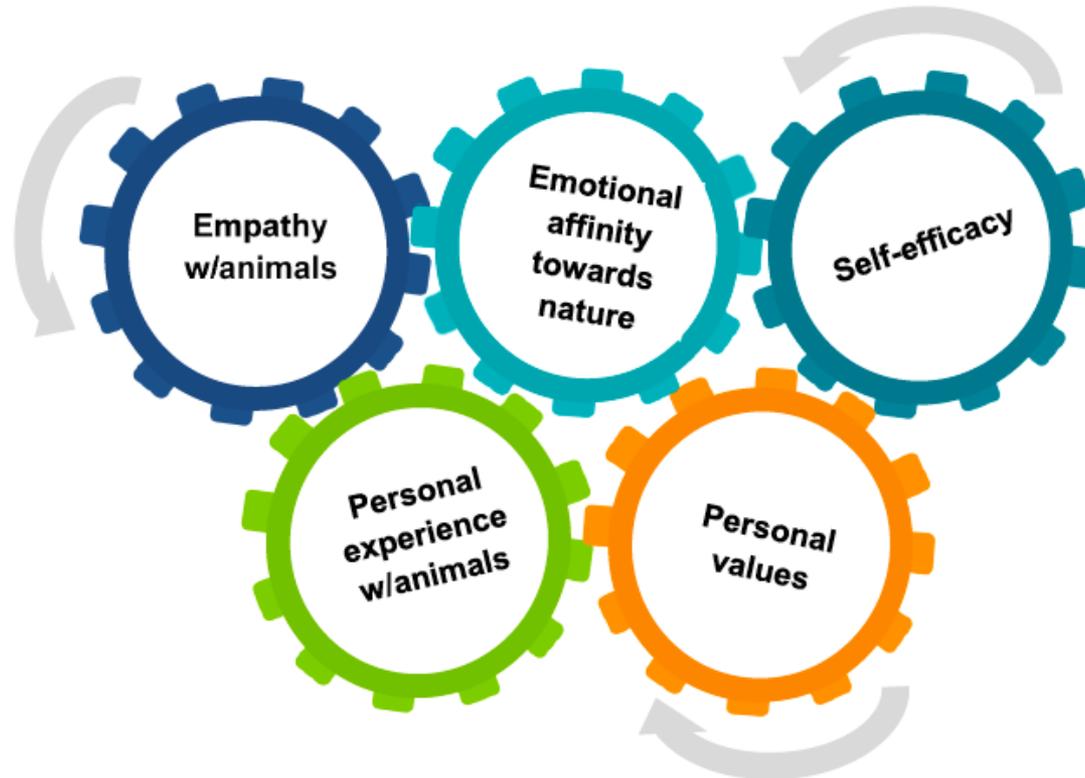
Measurements and scales provide us a way to assess and evaluate variables such as emotions that cannot be directly measured.

Allows for consistency and a wider application. For example, we can measure empathy at multiple zoos for multiple species and compare the results.

Having scales also allows for the evaluation of exhibit design, communication strategies, and interpretation.



# EMPATHY – MEASUREMENTS & APPLICATIONS



**Beneficial Action for Animals**



# EMPATHY CREATES ACTION

- Common behavior models don't explicitly include empathy/emotions, but have room for it
- Addition of empathy to behavior models has shown dramatic improvement to predictive ability of models
  - Value- Belief - Norm theory (VBN)
  - Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM)



# EMPATHY CREATES ACTION

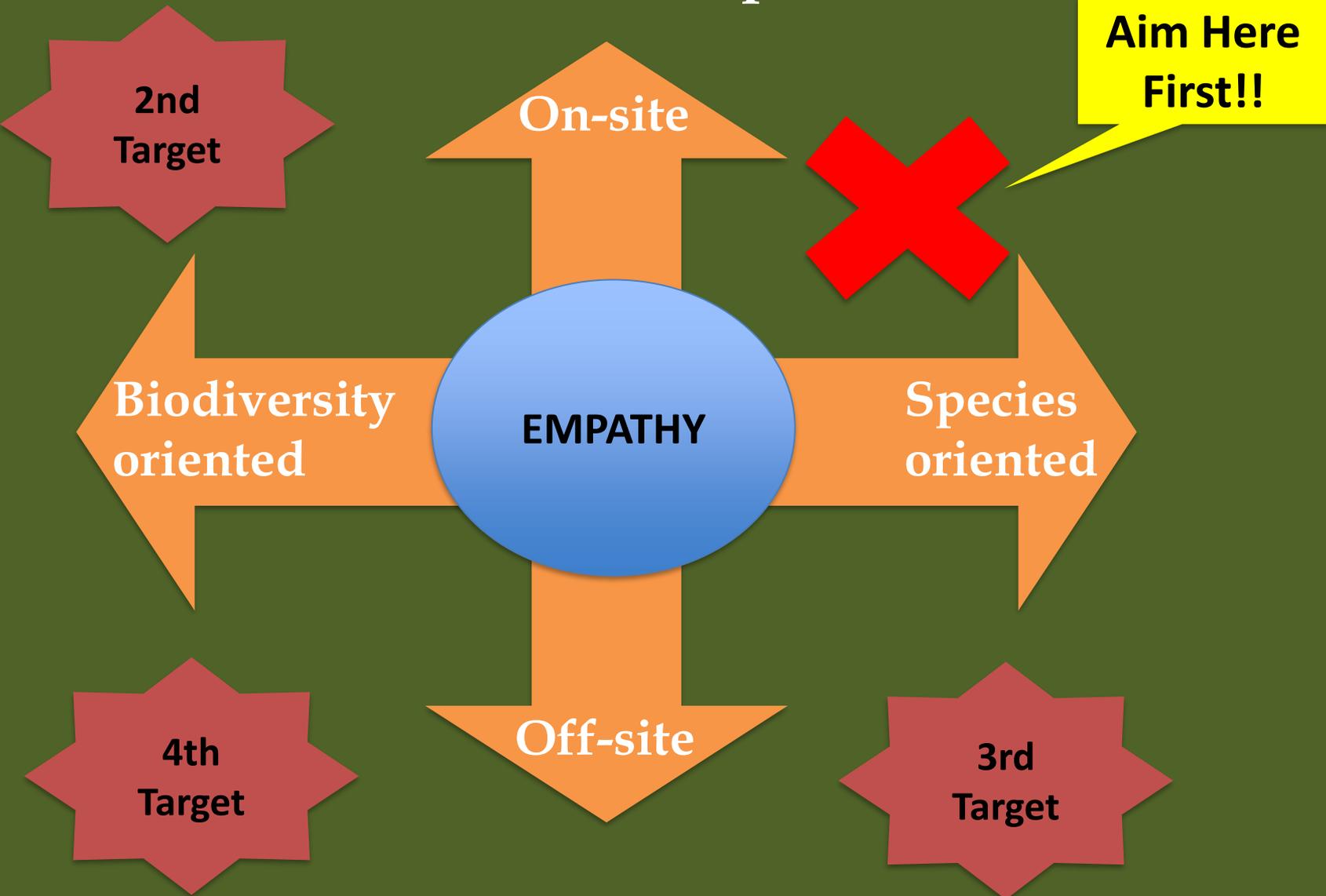
## Behaviors

- ❖ Empathy/emotional connection is single biggest factor for influencing pro-conservation behaviors
- ❖ Provides greater clarity to visitor behaviors. Visitors prefer:
  - ✓ Species specific options
  - ✓ Targeted philanthropy
  - ✓ Volunteering
  - ✓ Shopping



# CREATING ACTION

## Visitor Behavior Spectrum



# CREATING ACTION

- ✓ Visitors are NOT pre-disposed to action.
- ✓ Need to develop empathy FIRST.
- ✓ In most models, emotional connection ONLY predictor of behavior.
- ✓ Provide opportunities on-site.
- ✓ Make species specific.
- ✓ Demonstrate how to perform behavior beyond visit.



**#RHINOLOOKOUT**  
Do more than see rhinos. Look out for them.

*The rhino population of India's Manas National Park was once poached to extinction.*

**NOW, RHINOS ARE GETTING A SECOND CHANCE... AND, SO ARE WE.**

Woodland Park Zoo and International Rhino Foundation are supporting a rhino repopulation effort in Assam's Manas National Park. Working with the Indian government, we are moving rhinos from nearby parks to Manas to create a new, stable population there. As rhinos return, so does hope for the habitat and the many animals that call it home.

In this gallery of photographs, meet the rhinos of Manas, their wildlife neighbors and the people dedicated to protecting them.

**WE CAN ALL LOOK OUT FOR RHINOS**

Stand together for wildlife. Your visit today supports this effort and more than 30 other zoo conservation projects dedicated to saving species in the Pacific Northwest and around the world.

**HOW TO DO MORE FOR RHINOS**

**Make a gift of any size to help us save wildlife**

- Use the donation box to your left or give online at [zoo.org/donate](http://zoo.org/donate)

**Speak up to protect the Endangered Species Act**

- Learn how to use your voice at [zoo.org/esa](http://zoo.org/esa)

**Share your love of rhinos**

- Post photos and stories using [#rhinolookout](https://twitter.com/rhinolookout)

# CREATING ACTION - INTERPRETATION

Interpretation: an educational activity that aims to reveal meanings about cultural and natural resources. Through various media (e.g., talks, guided tours, and exhibits) interpretation enhances our understanding, appreciation, and therefore, protection of historic sites and natural wonders. (Beck & Cable 2011)

empathy

action



## Best Practices:

- ✓ Know your audience
- ✓ Link tangibles to intangibles
- ✓ Use universals
- ✓ Be thematic



# CREATING ACTION - INTERPRETATION

## Species Characteristics Known to Stimulate Empathy

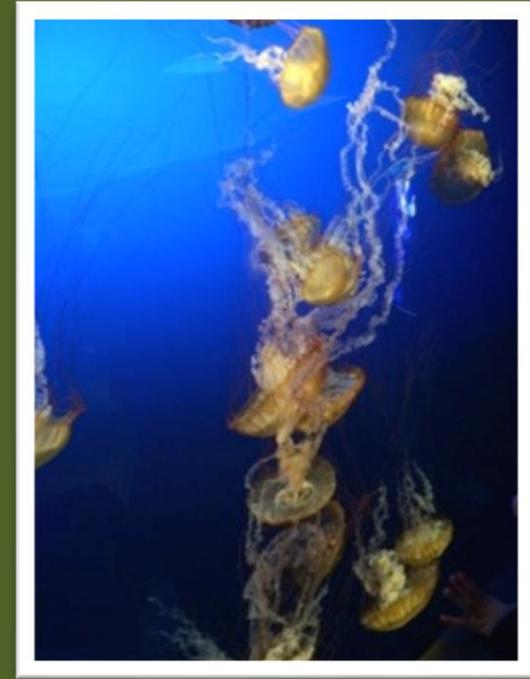
### Cultural relationships with species

- Geographical distribution
- Ecological role
- Cultural associations
- National symbols

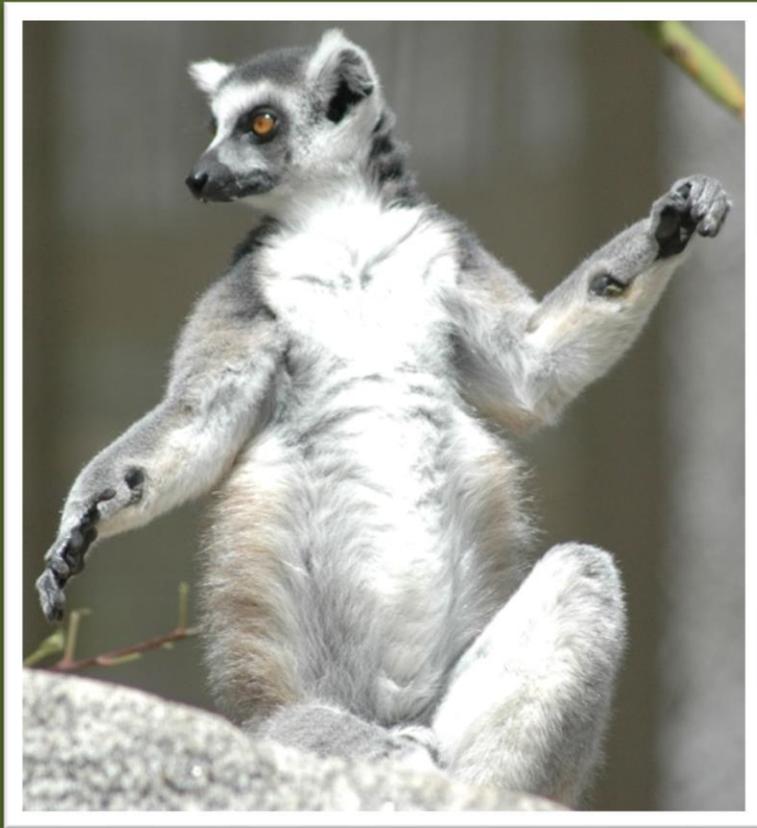
### Overall relatability

- Cute & cuddly
- Attractiveness
- Body size
- **Anthropomorphic elements**
- Disgust

### Conservation status



# QUESTIONS



Jeffrey Skibins

[skibinsj18@ecu.edu](mailto:skibinsj18@ecu.edu)

Phone: 252-737-1374

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