

Presentation 1836 IPY Oslo Science Conference 2010

Guide ethics and Polar tourism impact



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1

Goals of presentation:

Pilot-study to address guide practice and guide ethics.

Only preliminary data – still under analysis



2

Background:




Tourism is growing and diversifying in both the Arctic and Antarctic.

Polar Regions are remote, environmentally vulnerable and extreme regarding climate.

These characteristics pose particular safety risks, risk of environmental damage, and risk of disturbance for both wildlife and other human activities in these areas.

This leaves sustainable practice and management of tourism in the Polar Regions largely in the hands of the guides that accompany visiting groups of tourists.


3

Background:

Little scientific knowledge is available about guide-tourist-environmental interactions

or the role of the guide on tourist behaviour and environmental impact, tourist experience, value transformations and take-away experiences from the visit





Pinguiluit NP, Nunavik

4

The Guide context:

Codes of Conduct ↔ Ethics ↔ Morality



Information ↔ Interpretation



Memories ← Transformations → Ambassadors



5

What is Ethics and Morality?

Ethics (Greek *ethos*) is about intellectual and rational reflection about right/wrong and good/bad

Morality (Latin *moralis*) is how ethics is expressed in our actions and practical behaviors – my actions, my way to be

⇒ ethical theory & morale action



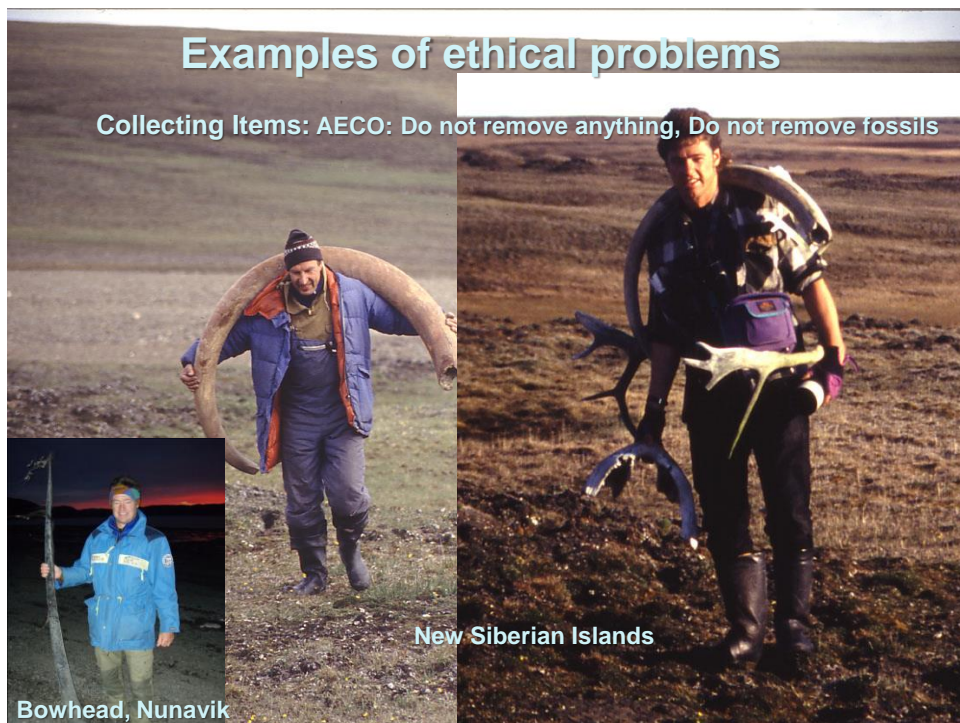
Ethical tools:

- Responsibility
 - Honesty
 - Justice
 - Respect
- “Walk Your Talk”*

6



7



8

Examples of ethical problems

Disturbance People: AECO:Be considerate to other people or activities



Kangiqsujaq, Nunavik



9

Examples of ethical problems

Disturbing Wildlife

Whalers Bay, Deception Island



10



11



12



13

Ethical Guidelines for Guides

general
Ethics

↑

- National & International laws
- WTO: Global Code of Ethics for Tourism
- WWF: Code of Conduct for Arctic Tourists
- Code of Ethics for Tourism by Ecumenical Coalition on Third World Tourism
- National Codes of Ethics & Guidelines for Sustainable Tourism
- Destination Codes Svalbard Environmental Protection Act
- Wildlife interaction Codes
- Professional Codes of Ethics and Conduct (Guide Associations)
- EACO's Guidelines for Expedition Cruise Operations in the Arctic
- AECO's Guidelines for Visitors to the Arctic
- Company Codes
- Personal Codes

↓

Morality
specific

Personal Actions




14

Aim:

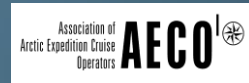
The aim of this study was to address the attitude, ethics, practice and methodology of polar guides in relation to management of guest experience and behaviour and environmental impact.



Solovesky Island, White Sea

15

Study:



This pilot study was conducted in collaboration with AECO on their Expedition leader conference on Svalbard 2008.

In addition the survey was given to

- 15 UNIS Svalbard Nature Guide students
- 16 Nature Guide students in Kiruna, Sweden

The student - in practice comparison will not be presented here.

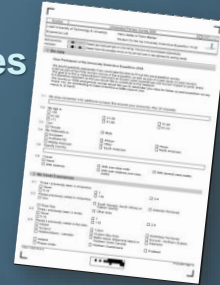
16

Study:

A questionnaire addressing the guides

- background and education
- certification
- professional experience
- personal views & values
- guiding practise

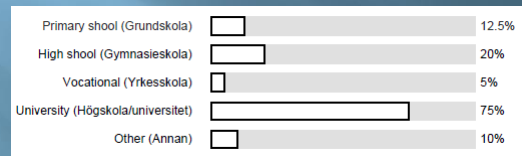
was given to 43 AECO polar guides.



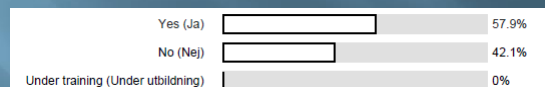
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Results:

The survey showed that the educational background among the AECO guides was very high



- 57% had a formal Guide education



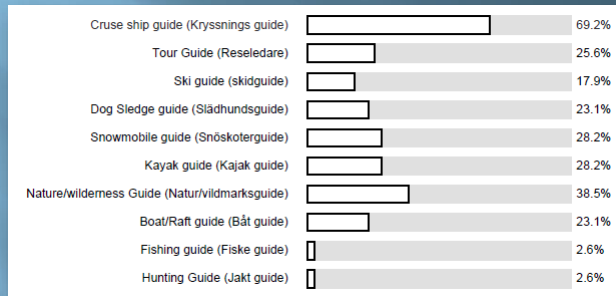
- 47% had a Guide certification



18

Results:

- Most guides, 69%, were working as cruise ship guides

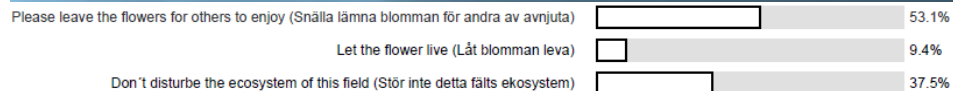


Piteå, Sweden

19

Results:

- Interestingly, a majority were oriented towards an anthropomorphic view on nature

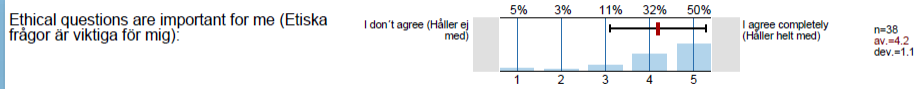


Iceland

20

Results:

- The majority agreed that ethical questions are important



- Most had not reflected over their ethics & practice

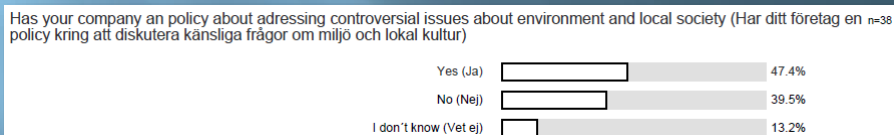
- Most guides (70%) had a personal ethical code of conduct



21

Results:

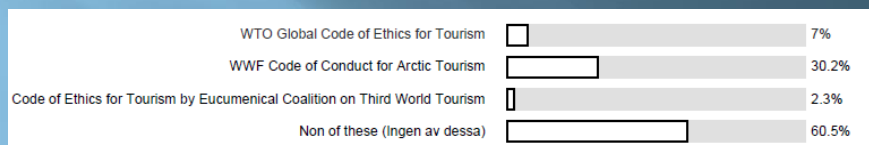
- About half of the guides had tour operator with ethical guidelines or were aware of such guidelines



22

Results:

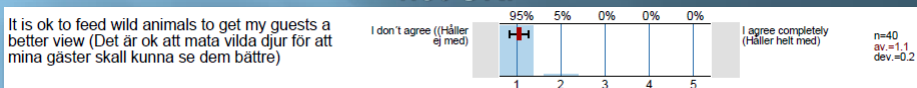
➤ Most guides had not read International Codes of Conduct



23

Results:

➤ The majority agreed that feeding wild animals was not OK.

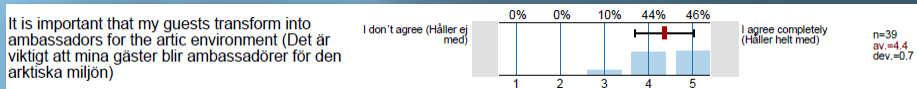


Steward Island, NZ

24

Results:

- The majority agreed that transforming tourists into ambassadors for the Arctic was important



New Siberian Islands, Russia

25

Conclusions:

Most of the guides see their main goal as guides to be:

- the guest safety and experience
- the importance to transform tourists into ambassadors for Polar environments.

Most guides had an unreflected ethical codes, but were unaware of international and business codes of conduct

It is important that Guides have personal reflected ethics and high morality based on international and business codes of conduct for the tourist management in polar environments!

26

Implications:

1. Existing code of conduct must be communicated better
2. Ethical discourse introduced among guides by tour operators
3. Educational programs for in practice-guides
4. Ethical discourse in Guide Education Programs such as UNIS Svalbard Nature Guide Program



Longyearbyen, Svalbard



27

Thanks for Your attention!



North Cape

28