

## 7.1. Summary

The present study about the development of a man – animal relationship starts with a survey of literature. After a historical and subject related survey of human- animal relationship, the school literature in Mecklenburg - Vorpommern was focussed.

The main part analyses the lessons in biology in an elementary school of the country – district.

32 school - books were tested for reports on animals and the influence of the development of a child – animal relationship.

The results show that animals were mentioned 5923 times. 2426 of them were local wild animals, 1402 livestock animals, 1155 domestic pets and 940 exotic wild animals.

Most of the mentioned local wild animals were birds followed by mouse, hare, fox and frog. Among livestock species, poultry, horse, swine and cattle, among domestic pets dog, cat and fish, and among exotic animals the lion, elephant, ape and bear were most frequently mentioned.

The animals appeared mainly in stories, rhymes, pictures and riddles. 49 pupils interviewed in classes 1 to 4 named the following animals as their favourites in a descending order: squirrel, dog, hare, rabbit guinea pig. This was closely related to the most frequently mentioned animals in schoolbooks. There was no discrepancy between the findings in school – books and the favourite animals of the children. This might be responsible for a good development of child – animal relationship.

The animals were described biologically in the books, but also an emotional aspect was found in animal stories and rhymes. Of class one to three in school – books from class one onward a more rational presentation was dominating, especially focussed on livestock animals but a critical confrontation with large - scale - husbandry was sufficient, animal protection and ethic questions have completely been missing.

A different view resulted by occasion of our at hospitation project: „The animal“ and by interviewing eight teachers. I was able to attend 26 school - lessons in which many animal related subjects were taught beyond the normal school schemes including school - books as well as newspapers, lexika, editorials and special literature.

With this kind of teaching the children seemed to be more interested in the subject and large - scale - husbandry was demonstrated in chicken; cattle and swine were also mentioned in this respect.

Animal protection was demonstrated with close regard to animal welfare.

The children showed great interest in projects as bird feeding in winter, building aviaries and observation of animals in the forest. The teachers explained the correct care, husbandry and handling with close regard to animal welfare, being the first step in animal protection.

The interviewed teachers stated that school- books are not suitable for the concept of the animal protection, but with individual and more animated instructions this task can be fulfilled.

It was also shown that in younger pupils the emotional binding to animals has to be respected, whereas in older ones the more rational approach is better.

Especially with pets could be demonstrated that children will develop responsibility and a close relationship with animals.

The high motivation leads to a natural attitude to care for the animals, which is the first step for an ethic relationship with animals. Handling the pet as a toy or torturing it could not be observed in the school.

Considering previous studies it can be stated that a child – animal- relationship will develop during school - and parental education.

The aspect of animal protection has to be more and more emphasized in teaching and scientific.

With this present study it could be stated that:

1. animal protection is hardly mentioned in school books
2. including animal protection in education is a basic aspect, where veterinarians are specially asked for
3. school - books help to develop a positive man – animal relationship
4. animal protection has to be applied beyond the regular school scheme
5. instructions for animal protection have to be developed on a state or federal level
6. animal protection has to be integrated into teacher's education
7. children have to treat animals as co - creature
8. man as a superior being has to respect animal rights
9. school books and seminars have to be planned globally.

Therefore it could be stated that school - books play a certain role in development of a man – animal relationship. But only in combination with education, animal observation and personal care the children will recognize the individuality of an animal.

As a personal partner the child is on the same level with the animal and can compare similarity and dissimilarity.

By the refusal of large scale husbandry a kind of responsibility will result in better animal care and protection. A special perplexity could be observed in children watching chicken husbandry on limited space in the cage.

As I understand teachers feel themselves overcharged in teaching animal protection. In this respect veterinarians could give help as experts. I think that a cooperation of psychologists, pedagogics and veterinarians might be useful.

An important step to teach animal protection in schools, will be is the training of teachers by the support of veterinarians.

It is necessary to question critically the profitableness of animals and the way of their handling there will never be an ideal concept in creating a man – animal relationship in our days.

Not only individuals but also representatives of state organisations like schools and veterinarian institutes should respect the ethical concepts. It is an urgent task to see the animal as a co - creature.

The basis for this is set in parental and school education. Right handling and care of animals could help to develop a feeling for animal protection in our children.