



AALBORG UNIVERSITET

"If I bring someone, it needs to be one  
that can shut their mouth"  
- A qualitative study on Danish  
birdwatchers' motivations.

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## Abstract

The subject for this thesis project is birdwatching, with specific focus on birdwatchers' motivation to conduct this activity. The search on literature and my own interest in the research area contributed to the formation and the focus area for this thesis. Therefore, the following problem statement is investigated through this thesis:

***What are Danish birdwatchers' motivations for conducting this activity and what does the motivations entail?***

The aim for this thesis is to find clarity and understanding of the problem statement. Further, to contribute to the existing research within the field by understanding the individual perspectives in birdwatchers' motivation, as the existing literature on the topic is narrow. The empirical material is collected through eight semi-structured in-depth interviews with Danish birdwatchers situated in Zealand, Denmark. The collected data were transcribed and coded to create a purposeful structure of the analysis and connect the empirical material to the theories from the literature review.

Main findings include wide variety within the five categories, *Photography, Relaxation and inner peace, Social community and relationships, Knowledge and learning* and *Experience nature and aesthetics*, of the birdwatchers motives. These perspectives were backed up by the motivation theories and former research on birdwatchers presented in the literature review. In addition, a *Human-animal connection* was identified through the interviews and was analysed with relevant literature.

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## Introduction

Nature-based tourism and ecotourism have quickly grown to be one of the larger categories in the tourism industry (Carvache-Franco, 2019; Fredman and Tyrväinen 2010), where tourists find it important to have little negative impact on the environment and the local community (Gössling and Hultman, 2006; Metin, 2019). The awareness and consideration of nature and humans have become more important for tourist's travel and experiences, which reflects the tourist's motivation. The variety of tourists' experience through both free and bought nature-based tourism activities are diverse (Tangeland, 2011). Demands for nature-based experiences are growing and particular interests for activities are expanding through the term of niche-tourism. Birdwatching is one such niche (Connel, 2009).

The varied preferences of tourists across the world are often categorised into groups, or segments, consisting of individual traits to distinguish some tourists from others (Carvache-Franco, 2019). This is a common tool to use among actors in the tourism industry to attract the segment of tourists the actors believe will enjoy the experience they offer. In larger segments the individuality of each person's preferences and motivations can vary from the next and within a segment the variations can be broad. Researchers have looked at tourists' motives to travel in different areas of nature-based tourism, such as birdwatching (Chan and Baum, 2007; Chen and Chen, 2015; Guimarães et.al., 2015; Lee et.al., 2014; McFarlane, 1994; Metin, 2019). The variety within motivational categories of birdwatchers have not been fully explored in Scandinavia and Denmark. Therefore, this thesis is set out to explore the variety of aspects within birdwatchers' motives to conduct this activity. For this thesis, birdwatchers are defined as the people which observe and identify birds in their native habitats (Chen and Chen, 2015). The Danish birdwatchers' opinions is drawn from eight in-depth interviews with birdwatchers in Zealand, Denmark.

From the above aspects and curiosity on nature-based activities in the tourism industry, I found it interesting for the research questions to revolve around:

- What are the opinions and motivations for Danish birdwatchers?
- How does Danish birdwatchers' motivations vary and how is this expressed?

These questions have shaped this thesis project as they were important to steer me in the exploration of birdwatchers' preferences and motives. By working with existing literature, the

empirical material collected for this thesis and in analysing and discussing the findings, I have created the following problem statement:

***What are Danish birdwatchers' motivations for conducting this activity and what does the motivations entail?***

To find clarity of this problem statement I have collected empirical material through semi-structured interviews from eight Danish birdwatchers. Understanding the depth and variety of tourists motivation to interact and explore the activity of birdwatching, will contribute to understanding the Danish birdwatchers. Further, this can contribute to decision making in marketing towards birdwatchers and contribute to the existing literature of the theme.

The structure of this project is as follows. A short context section of the projects research area is established to create an understanding of the research's frame and limitations. Next, the literature review provides definitions and outline the theoretical framework used in the chapter of analysis in this thesis. In the chapter of method, the elaborations of researcher position, collecting of the empirical material and coding of the material are explained. The chapter of analysis explores and interprets the participants' elaborations from the interviews in light of the theories. Thereafter, as motivation have shown to be closely connected to identity, social communities and capital, wellbeing, and nature ethics, these perspectives will be broadened and investigated in the discussion chapter of this thesis. Lastly, conclusions are summarised from the main findings of the thesis and how this contributed to clarity of the problem statement.

### Context and limitations of project

The interest and curiosity of birdwatchers as a study area within niche tourism was developed during the internship period at the destination marketing organisation VisitFjordlandet. By getting to know the organisations area of Lejre, Frederikssund and Roskilde municipality numerous conversations of challenges, possibilities, and considerations regarding strategies for marketing and destination development took place. Among themes of cycling, hiking, fishing and more, birdwatching as a tourism activity was one of the themes discussed. I did some research of birdwatching internationally and in Denmark, where I found there were few studies conducted in Europe. It was first when a white-headed duck for the first time were spotted in Frederikssund which made 150 birdwatchers travel to see it within 24 hours

(Bernholm, 2022), a fascination of understanding this behaviour was sparked. This led to focusing the research of this thesis to understanding the birdwatchers' motivations for conducting this activity.

Additionally, my own interest and motive for spending time in nature was important for deciding to understand this niche of birdwatchers in tourism. Some reasons for conducting birdwatching I could understand to some degree, rooted in my own motives and interest in nature. However, I became curious as to understand birdwatchers' motives more comprehensively. Further elaborations of context are provided in the Method chapter of this thesis, as well as a map to place the participants experiences and the researched area.

There are some considerations and limitations made to focus the research for this project. I decided to use my contacts from VisitFjordlandet to establish communication to individuals in the local birdwatching community of Lejre, where most of the participants have a connection to. This facilitated important access to varied participants which made it possible to conduct longer in-depth interviews which resulted in rich data for the analysis. Initially, the empirical material collected from participants was aimed to be collected through participating in organised birdwatching trips at different locations in Zealand, Denmark. This could have contributed with observations for this thesis, however few birdwatching trips were identified to being within a sensible reach. In addition, it was decided that conducting interviews during birdwatching would steal focus and result in shorter interviews, only scratching the surface of understanding birdwatchers' motivation.

Through literature search and formation of the literature review for the thesis, a gap in motivation for birdwatchers in the literature was identified. Specifically, understanding motivation deeper than categories of push- and pull factors which some researchers have identified (Chen and Chen, 2015; Guimarães et.al., 2015; Li, 2018; Liu, 2021; MacFarlane, 1994). This contributed to narrowing down the research field and focus which is important to understand the theme thoroughly.

From this overview of the section on context and limitations of the thesis project, the theme is elaborated. The next chapter of Literature review will contribute to the further understanding of the subject birdwatching and motivation as relevant theory.

## Literature review

This literature review firstly introduces nature-based tourism and ecotourism, which birdwatching is categorised under. This is done to create an overview and understanding of the context of birdwatching tourism, as ecotourism is a broader research field and thus is more researched. Second, tourist motivation is elaborated with a presentation of relevant motivational factors which will be used in the analysis of the paper. Third, an overview of research perspectives of birdwatching tourism is presented to create clarity and understanding for the sub-categories which are complex and intertwined. Fourth, birdwatching is explored with focus on definitions and the meaning of this niche tourism segment. Lastly, a short description of the theoretical framework and how it will be used to analyse the data is presented.

### Nature-based tourism and Ecotourism

Nature-based tourism is often associated with experiencing the nature in its “true form”, this is referred to as natural and not constructed nature (Fredman and Tyrväinen, 2010). Whether this is in nature- or cultural landscapes, which will vary from different countries (Fredman and Tyrväinen, 2010). Through my research, I have found that a common agreement on what nature-based tourism entails is lacking, which may be since it is challenging to identify and segment some tourists from others (Fredman and Tyrväinen, 2010).

One definition of Nature-based tourism in Scandinavia is:

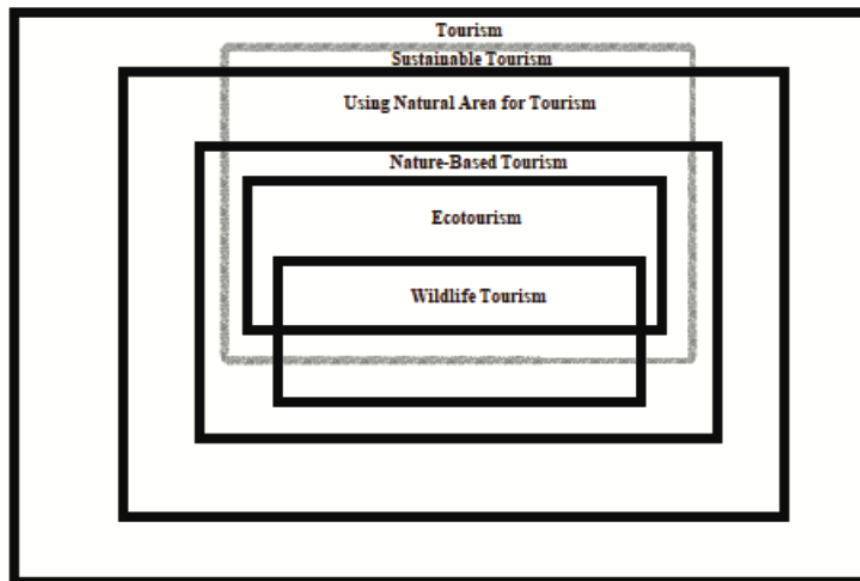
*“nature-based tourism has been defined to cover activities that people do while on holiday and which focus on engagement with nature and usually includes an over-night stay”* (Fredman and Tyrväinen, 2010, p. 179)

In addition, local communities are commonly an integrated part of tourists supply at destinations. The natural resources tourists use locally is a piece of the local community and usually unified with locals’ culture and traditions (Fredman and Tyrväinen, 2010).

Nature-based tourism can be divided into sub-categories, where ecotourism is one who are heavily studied and can further be split in categories where birdwatching tourism is a part of wildlife tourism (Fredman and Tyrväinen, 2010 and Guimarães et. al.,2015). Although, a definition is not universally agreed upon in research and the industry, characteristics of



Nature-based tourism and ecotourism include; based in nature, preservative, educational, sustainable, responsible and ethical (Fredman and Tyrväinen, 2010).



A visualisation of the above-mentioned tourism branches has been made by Metin, 2019.

*Figure 1: Placement of Nature-based tourism, ecotourism and wildlife*

*tourism in a tourism context. (Metin, 2019).*

Ecotourism has been promoted to secure conservation of nature through economic benefits according to Guimarães et. al. (2015). As category of travel and tourism segments, ecotourism and sustainability have grown rapidly over the last decades to become important for tourists in their choice of destination and through their tourist behavior while traveling (Roseta et.al 2020, Fredman and Tyrväinen, 2010). Various definitions of ecotourism have been made, many of which have in common that they include aspect of where ecotourism take place (Gössling and Hultman, 2006).

Liu et al. have defined Ecotourism and eco-birdwatching:

*“The essence of general ecotourism and eco-birdwatching tourism is the consumption of ecological products, such as a good ecological environment and abundant bird resources, by tourists. Ecological products are a kind of public good whose value cannot be determined by market transaction prices.” (Liu et al. 2021, p.3)*

The above definition emphasizes ecotourism and birdwatching as products of natural resources and that the value cannot be determined by transaction prizes in the tourism market. However, the natural recourses in ecotourism are in fact subject to market value and transaction prices as birdwatching and natural resources are sold as guided tour experiences

and the like in travel and tourism industry. Further, the economic benefits are often considered in various studies on birdwatching and ecotourism (Maldonado et. al., 2018; Liu et. al., 2021; Gössling and Hultman, 2006): Therefore, the definition of Liu et al. is not always applicable.

In Scandinavia and Denmark, several studies of market segments have shown that main motivation factors for travel is nature experiences (Gössling and Hultman, 2006). In fact, Danes has created an understanding regarding the tourism industry in which correlate to ecotourism (ibid.). Such general understanding can be challenging, because all forms of tourism are not sustainable or environmentally friendly, even in Denmark.

From the above definitions and categories of Nature-based tourism, in the next sub-chapter motivation theories are presented, as this is the theories and concepts focused on and utilized in the analysis later in the project.

### Motivation theory

Motivation is one of the subjects in tourism research which is regarded as important to understand tourist and travel behaviour (Hsu and Huang, 2007, p. 14). This is a challenging subject to study, as it is attempting to understand the inquiry of *why* (Hsu and Huang, 2007, p. 14). In tourism motivation both components of *seeking* intrinsic rewards and *escaping* everyday environments are present in tourists' motivation to travel, moreover the seeking and escaping perspectives are dynamic and subject to develop and change (Iso-Ahola, 1982). The internal factors of birdwatchers' motives are focused upon in this thesis.

A motive has been generally agreed by social psychologists to include:

*“a motive is an internal factor that arouses, directs and integrates a person's behavior”* (Murray 1964:7 in Iso-Ahola, 1982, p. 257).

Researchers have additionally defined motivation in tourism:

*“the psychological needs and desires that provoke, direct, and integrate behavior and activity. ... Tourist motivation is the set of needs that influence a person to participate in a tourist activity ...”*. (Caravache-Franco et. al. 2019, p. 2)

The above definitions are leading in the work of this thesis to understand birdwatchers needs and desires which provoke them to engage in birdwatching activities.

### Maslow's theory- "pyramid of needs" and Pearce's travel career ladder (TCL)

The hierarchy of needs theory by Maslow is in academic research in Tourism among the leading motivation theories, with origin in sociology and psychology (Hsu and Huang, 2007, p. 14). As seen in the figure, the hierarchy of needs theory express five stages of needs, where each of the lower stage must be satisfied of

a person needs, before moving on to the next stage (Maslow, 1970; Hsu and Huang, 2007). However, there are some exceptions of the use and implementation order of the higher levels (Hsu and Huang, 2007). Maslow further explained: "*A more realistic description of the hierarchy would be in terms of decreasing percentages of satisfaction as we go up the hierarchy of prepotency*" (Maslow, 1970 in Hsu and Huang, 2007, p.15).

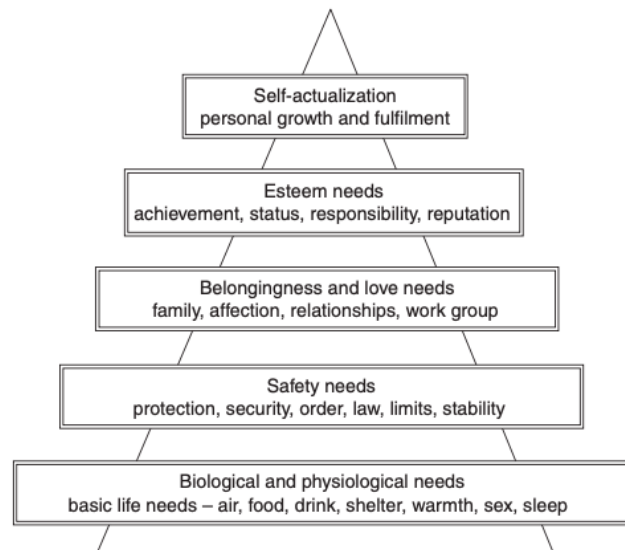


Figure 2: Hierarchy of needs pyramid by Maslow (in Hsu and Huang, 2007).

Although the directness and simple form of the hierarchy is also what makes it understandable and attractive, a comprehensive use is limited. Much lesser known regarding the hierarchy of needs is Maslow's discussion of two additional human needs, namely the *aesthetic need* and a *need to know and understand* (Hsu and Huang, 2007, p.16). These two aspects might be more important in tourism than the hierarchy of needs pyramid, because humans travel to gain new experiences, knowledge and see beautiful places (Hsu and Huang, 2007). The additional two aspects were not included in Maslow's final hierarchy of needs pyramid, but it could be argued the two aspects could be a part of self-actualisation because knowledge and aesthetic can be seen as personal growth and fulfilment.

In 1982 Maslow's hierarchy was used by Pearce to study tourist motivation and behaviour. Through his analysis of travel experiences, Pearce express that:

“tourists are attracted to holi- day destinations because of the possibility of fulfilling self-actualization, love and belongingness and physiological needs in that order of impor- tance.” (Hsu andHuang, 2007, p. 15).

Pearce propose that motivation to travel have characteristics of being an “approach-avoidance paradigm” (Hsu and Huang, 2007). This emphasize tourist’s reasons to travel is to understand or find answers to the travel or journey through; phycological needs, love and belongingness, or self-actualization (Hsu and Huang, 2007).

Inspired and developed from Maslow’s theory, Pearce constructed the conceptual framework of *the Travel Career Ladder* (TCL) to further investigate travel motivation (Hsu and Huang, 2007). A premise for TCL is human’s agenda for travel will develop over a lifetime, thus humans travel patterns, experience and “travel career” change and develop as time go by (Pearce, 2005; Hsu and Huang, 2007). As the hierarchy of needs pyramid, the TCL is a framework which are hierarchical constructed and propose that travellers escalate or linger at a level (Pearce, 2005; Hsu and Huang, 2007). However, multiple studies have found motivation to travel to be multidimensional which can be a challenge through the TCL as it is defined (Hsu and Huang, 2007).

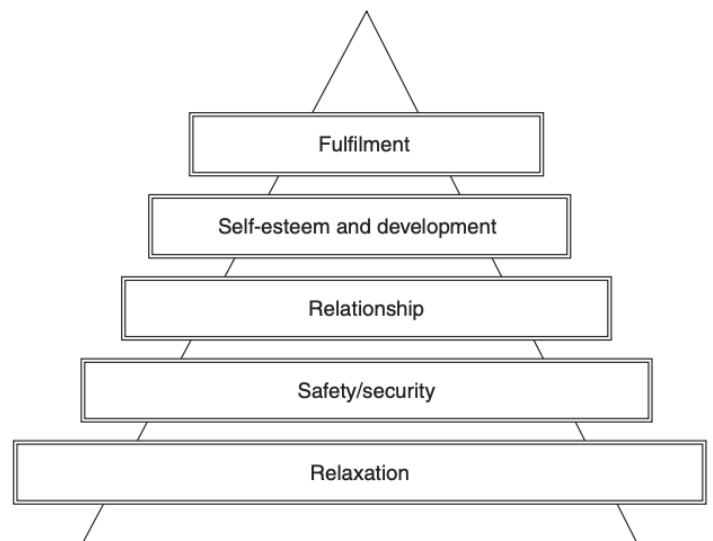


Figure 3: Model of Travel career ladder (in Hsu and Huang, 2007).

Following both Maslow and Pearce’s frameworks, Crompton identifies nine desires or factors to travel in leisure tourism who are divided in two categories: *socio-psychological category* and *cultural category* (Crompton, 1979). The *socio-psychological category*, consists of motives: escape from a perceived mundane environment, exploration and evaluation of self, relaxation, prestige, regression, enhancement of kinship relationships and facilitation of social interaction (Crompton, 1979). The *cultural category* includes the motives of novelty and education (Crompton, 1979).

The above theories contribute to understanding and categorising the aspects of motivation found through the empirical material, and further to answer the problem statement by exploring psychological factors and opinions of the participants. These categories and models of motivation, can additionally be segmented and have been used in market communication and tourism, as will be described next.

### Segmentation of motivations

Katz suggested, in 1960, four functions or categories of motivation from former research and literature on sociology. This functional theory includes the categories of; *knowledge function*, *ego-defensive function*, *self-defence function* and an *adjustment function* (Katz, 1960). *The knowledge function* is about people's devotion to gain knowledge and includes learning, interact with new people, and enjoy nature. *The ego-defensive function* is about the operation where people protect their own ego from their instincts and how one reduces anxieties developed by these problems. *The self-defence function* is possible to achieve by committing and be a part of a community and their exchange of information to fulfil a goal. *The adjustment function* is about maximize reward and minimize a punishment, and can consist of enjoying experiences, growing independence and self-confidence, avoid stress and see new places and culture (Katz, 1960; Caravache-Franco et. al. 2019). Later Smith et al. supplemented the above functions with a fifth: *social adjustment*, which is about a norm that are accepted for co-workers, friends, and relatives. (Caravache-Franco et. al. 2019)

Katz expressed:

*“Stated simply, the functional approach is the attempt to understand the reasons people hold the attitudes they do... Unless we know the psy-chological need which is met by the holding of an attitude we are in a poor position to predict when and how it will change.”* (Katz, 1960, p. 170)

As Katz divide motivations into four categories and identify specific traits, market segmentation in tourism has been used to understand specifics about smaller groups of people and tourists. Empirical investigations have treated motivation as a component of tourism research of market segmentation (Caravache-Franco et. al. 2019). By segmenting people into smaller groups, benefits can emerge by identifying and provide better experiences for tourists, benefits to the destination and increasing planning for marketing and for tourism policies (Caravache-Franco et. al. 2019).

From the above definitions and categories of Nature-based tourism and motivation theory, in the next sub-chapter a short presentation of research perspectives of birdwatching tourism is presented to create an overview over this research projects topic.

### Birdwatching tourism: a review of existing research

Research on birdwatching tourism with varied perspectives continue to grow. Tourism has many branches of large and smaller niches, where these can further be split in categories of research perspectives to differentiate and diversify the markets (Robinson et.al. 2011). To create an overview of birdwatching tourism in this project I have categorised the existing research perspectives into three groups: 1. *Social*; consists of collaboration dynamics and power issues, 2. *Economy*; focus on birdwatching tourism as an economic industry and 3. *Consumer*; consists of motivation and consumer analysis.

The first research perspective, *Social*, incorporates tensions and views of interest groups which can be involved in birdwatching.

A study on birdwatching tourism as potential for bird diversity and conservation in Peru explored the potential for conservation through birdwatching tourism in the country. This study and analysis by Puhakka et.al. (2011) found multiple areas which had such potential and includes conservation and ecotourism grants, conservation easement and private conservation areas. Niche tourism, such as birdwatching, can work towards practical solutions for protecting biodiversity and be a solution for environmental and social sustainable form of tourism (Puhakka et.al. 2011). Although the study has found it possible to conserve biodiversity through tourism and is optimistic of this development, one must be critical of the research by Puhakka et.al. because power relations and conflicting interests (economic, nature and animal conservation, impacts on humans and sustainability) of private and public actors is often challenging to navigate (Wearing, Wearing and MacDonald, 2010; Blichfeldt and Kvistgaard, 2014).

Guimarães et.al. (2015) research found that creating new water bodies in order to improve birds' quality of habitat and biodiversity were of birdwatchers' interest. Moreover, their study found highly dedicated birdwatchers were not very concerned about the area's infrastructure, contrary they were interested in great, almost untouched landscapes and the opportunities to see a variety of birds (Guimarães et.al., 2015). Although the findings in Guimarães et.al. are

quantitative and drawn from a larger sample, there is challenges of collecting adequate data or information on birdwatchers because as other tourists, they often organize their own trips. This can make it challenging for researchers and others with interest in such information to understand these birdwatchers and the communities (Guimarães et.al. 2015). Additionally, the study focuses on potential conflict between birdwatchers and managers, and thereby do not consider the perspectives, interests, and outcome of the area. This thesis project contributes to fill this gap by understanding birdwatchers perspectives and interests.

The second research perspective, *Economy*, includes the aspects of income and cost variables of birdwatchers contrary to general tourists.

Liu et. al. found birdwatching tourists to have a higher marginal value compared to eco-tourism in their study on birdwatching destinations in China (2021). In addition, birdwatching tourism had greater ecological and social benefits, increasing development in the tourism industry locally (Liu et. al., 2021). A study on US tourists in Colombia as a birdwatching destination showed tourists would pay 58 dollars individually extra per day for being in Colombia, rather than the well-know birdwatching destination Costa Rica (Maldonado et. al., 2018). This is interesting because if these groups can create the same marginal value and jobs to specific areas, on fewer tourists, then the birds and nature will be less disturbed.

The third research perspective, *Consumer*, incorporates birdwatchers' interests, motivational factors for travel and choice of destination.

A report for the Wadden sea national park investigated birdwatchers' motivation and demands from suppliers which they categorised in six target groups, from beginners to experts (Pagenkopf and Kämpfer, 2015). The findings further concluded that many potential birdwatchers were interested in sustainable tours in the Wadden sea national park, however few offers were certified as sustainable (Pagenkopf and Kämpfer, 2015).

A quantitative study on international bird tourist's travels through push- and pull factors to explore motivation among the tourist were conducted by Chen and Chen (2015). The research findings consisted of 4 motivation constructs, known as internal or push-factors and 7 destination attribute constructs, known as external or pull-factors (Chen and Chen, 2015). Of these factors, the ones who are bird-related were found to be most important for the birdwatching tourists (Chen and Chen, 2015). Quantitative research and categories for consumers can be valuable for marketing purposes as it is more destination oriented and

segmentation is often used to attract new groups of consumers. However, to understand consumers motivations and their specific interests, which will vary from one consumer till the next, qualitative research is needed to understand the composition of the motivation factors. Therefore, this qualitative study aims to elaborate on and explore birdwatchers' motives for conducting their hobby.

Birdwatchers' characteristics and its close connection to environmental factors, the birds' interest and economic factors was researched by Connell (2009). The findings included substantial impact when finding a nonfamiliar bird species, and growth of companies providing services and products of birdwatching, along with information and events. Moreover, the birdwatching activity has grown and increased with people's awareness of environment, more healthy lifestyles and an activity which can increase knowledge and competitiveness (Connell, 2007).

In spite of the former research, there is a very limited knowledge of characteristics, motivation and travel behaviour of birdwatching tourists (Chen and Chen, 2015).

Birdwatching tourism has been researched in large parts of the world, especially in Asia, America, and the UK. Scandinavia and Denmark have yet not been extensively researched on this topic and therefore the Danish birdwatchers are of interest for the researcher of this study. The next subchapter elaborates further on birdwatching and definitions to the subject.

### Birdwatching tourism

From the first sections of this literature review, birdwatching tourism has been categorised as a part of both nature-based tourism and ecotourism (Fredman and Tyrvaïnen, 2010, Liu et. al. 2021, Guimarães, 2015). This category of birdwatchers is among the largest and most rapidly expanding groups in the last few decades in ecotourism (Chen and Chen, 2015).

Sekercioglu (2002) defined birdwatching as:

*“the act of observing and identifying birds in their native habitats.”* (Sekercioglu, 2002 in Chen and Chen, 2015, p.1)

Further Liu et.al. describes ecological birdwatching:

*“Ecological birdwatching is a kind of tourism behavior that takes birdwatching as the main purpose and takes the activities or habitats of wild birds to “watch” or “shoot”*



*or both without affecting their normal life and minimizing the impact on their habitats... ” (Liu et. al., 2021, p. 2)*

These definitions are the background for the definition of birdwatchers used throughout of this thesis, as explained in the chapter of introduction.

As mentioned in the previous sub-chapter, birdwatching is considered to have less costs of investment than ecotourism, less side-effects on the local environment, high dependency and tourists attached to the activity and also produce natural empathy (Liu et. al., 2021). Ecologic birdwatching is therefore marked as a crucial manifestation in ecotourism (Liu et. al., 2021). In addition, dedicated birdwatchers travel abroad and over longer distances to see new birds and “check” them off their species-list (Chen and Chen, 2015).

The following and last sub-chapter of this literature review shortly present how the theoretical framework presented will be used in the analysis.

### **The use of theory in the analysis**

From the above theories, I have coded and analysed the collected data from the interviews by dividing the theories into Crompton’s two desires to travel, namely *Socio-psychological* and *Cultural* (Crompton, 1979) which will be the two themes for this research. The analysis is built on the interesting information collected from the interviews, which are interpreted to find deeper meanings and understand the varied content within motivation factors. The meanings from the interviews are then compared and seen in accordance with the above theoretical framework.

The coding will be explained in detail in the Method-chapter. Shortly this consist of an overarching theme which is Birdwatchers motivation. Central for the coding are the quotes from the interviews which are condensed to find the most important content. One quote can be one sentence or a short paragraph. Next, a code is made to describe the quote. The codes are a short description to sum up the quotes from interviews and connect the information from the interviews to the categories and theories in the literature review. Different codes will then be grouped together and categorized to a group category of where they fit best.

Meaning unit	Condensed meaning unit	Code	Category
These are the original transcribed phrases from the participants.	Are shortened meaning unit from the interviews.	These are made to label the meaning units (or interview quotes).	The codes are placed in one of the five categories: Photography, Relaxation and inner peace, Social community and relationships, Knowledge and learning or Experience nature and aesthetics.

The overarching theme for this project is split into themes, where the two themes are *Socio-psychological aspects* and *Cultural aspects*, as mentioned. The categories are a sub-group of the two main themes for this project (Daymon and Holloway, 2011). This will all be further clarified in the method chapter.

<i>Theme 1:</i> Socio-psychological category			<i>Theme 2:</i> Cultural category	
<i>Category 1:</i> Photography	<i>Category 2:</i> Relaxation and inner peace	<i>Category 3:</i> Social community and relationships	<i>Category 1:</i> Knowledge and learning	<i>Category 2:</i> Experience nature and aesthetics

Through this literature review chapter relevant former knowledge of nature-based tourism, birdwatchers and motivation forces and factors have been presented. In the continuation of this research project this literature, with focus on the motivation theories, will be used to analyse and discuss the emerged findings from the interviews. The next chapter of Method elaborates on research position, strategy and approach, the data collected, and the considerations made throughout of this thesis.

## Method

This chapter describes the method and approaches used throughout of the thesis. I explain what considerations and steps have been taken in finding precision of the problem statement. In the first part of this chapter the research position is presented, including theory of science, perspective, and position of researcher. Next, in the second section a case description provides additional information to the context section in the introduction. The third part describe the qualitative method and approaches of the study, as well as interview guide and participant sample. The fourth section include the data, its design and collection and the coding of the material. Fifth, researcher trustworthiness is discussed. Fifth, the ethical considerations and strategies are elaborated. Sixth and last, the structure of the analysis is presented.

## Researcher position

As researcher one is impacted by different opinions regarding the topic which can implicate the research (Clark et al., 2021). Different experiences and viewpoints can influence researcher positions and approach to the research, therefore reflections and considerations regarding the researchers established believes, as well as researcher trustworthiness are useful to understand the researchers position in relation to the research.

Ontological considerations describe the nature of social sciences and how there are different realities of the world (Clark et al., 2021). Social constructionism is established on the views that meaning and learning are constantly created by social actors (Clark et al., 2021; McLeod, 2019) New social phenomenon are products of interactions between people and are constantly developed, therefore not fixed or definite (Clark et al., 2021). By creating new knowledge based on and inspired from the former knowledge presented in the literature review, this thesis presents and analyses new data as a contribution of knowledge to the existing research. This thesis aims to explore and understand people's inner motivations as a part of a socially constructed culture, which continuously changes. The knowledge gathered from the birdwatchers, established on this approach, are coming from interactions the respondents have with their social circle, culture, and society therefore it is subjective (McLeod, 2019).

Epistemological perspective involves what can or should be regarded as accepted knowledge within a discipline (Clark et al., 2021). Interpretivism is a term which can include multiple perspectives who have in common that research on the social world can not be researched or studied by using one specific scientific model or approach, as it it the quality of interpretation

of the empirical material which is interesting (Clark et al., 2021). There are multiple ways of conducting research on social science and for this research I have decided upon a method which I see fit as the researcher. Hermeneutics is one of these perspectives of interpretivism, which are used in the analysis of this thesis. Hermeneutics give “a theoretical framework for interpretive understanding, or meaning, with special attention to context and original purpose” (Patton, 2015, p.136, in Liamputtong, 2020). As will be described further later in the method chapter, this perspective gives room for searching for deeper meanings of the collected data while ensuring initial meaning is preserved, which I strive for in this thesis. This means the initial meaning of the exact statements and phrases used by the participants are explored and preserved, while an analysis of understandings of participants expressions between their exact phrasings are included as the deeper meaning of the empirical material.

### Case description

Case study is the selected approach chosen to facilitate an in-depth focus of the research of Danish birdwatchers in the area of Destination Fjordlandet (Daymon and Holloway, 2011). The interest and background for deciding to examine Danish birdwatchers’ motivations were developed from conversations with my colleagues at the destination marketing organisation VisitFjordlandet (Destination Fjordlandet). I spent the 9<sup>th</sup> semester of the master’s program for this thesis in an internship with the organisation where I were introduced to Lejre, Roskilde and Frederikssund municipality. Among talk of development of tourism activities and events to make the area more known and used for local, national, and international guests were the themes fishing, birdwatching, hiking, and cycling discussed. Birdwatching was the theme in which VisitFjordlandet had little or no experience with as a strategic focus area, and therefore I found it interesting to know more about. Further, studies have shown birdwatching to be more environmentally friendly and economic giving to the local community than other forms of ecotourism (Liu et. al., 2021; Maldonado, 2018), which I found interesting. Moreover, through the focus and development of sustainability in tourism and promotions of



Figure 3: Map of Lejre, Roskilde and Frederikssund municipality in relation to city of Copenhagen and Zealand. (Source: Visitfjordlandet.dk).

varied nature-based tourism activities, it is important to investigate the motivation behind the opportunities and challenges the tourism industry entail.

This introduction led to a curiosity of birdwatchers and later I explored the existing research and reports of the literature on birdwatchers. Much of the existing research on birdwatchers' motivation and birdwatching destinations were conducted in South America, Asia, and Australia, which additionally were qualitative studies as mentioned in the literature review chapter. Many factors of tourist motivation and birdwatchers' motivation have previously been researched, however I was not able to find qualitative studies on birdwatchers' motivation and the variety which the motivation factors can entail.

The knowledge and connections to the destination through colleagues at VisitFjordlandet have contributed to a broad understanding of birdwatching in the destination area and Denmark. Further, this made it possible to connect to many birdwatchers with different focus and motives to watch birds, this is described further in the section of *Participant sample* in the below sub-chapter of *Research strategy and approaches*. By choosing a narrow case and research aim of Danish birdwatchers' motivations to conduct this activity, I have undertaken a deep and narrow examination of this particular case (Daymon and Holloway, 2011).

In the following, research strategy and approaches used are elaborated to give a further description of the research and case.

## Research strategy and approaches

### Qualitative method

Data collection in Tourism, as other research areas, have contributed to paradigms between qualitative and quantitative method of research (Bryman, 2012). From the literature review section *Birdwatching tourism: a review of existing research*, scholars have previously focused on mixed-method or qualitative research of birdwatching tourism (Chen and chen, 2015; Guimarães, 2015; Li, 2018; Maldonado et. al., 2018; Pagenkopf and Kämpfer, 2015.) In contrast, and as explained in the introduction to this study, the aim for this social research is to understand the underlying motivation and internal thoughts behind the respondent's tourism and birdwatching behaviour.

Hereby, the research is focusing on drawing on the previously outlined theoretical framework in the literature review chapter of this thesis, to understand and identify the diversified opinions to find aspects of motivation of the Danish birdwatcher. Qualitative method is used to embrace diversity, complexity, and depth of the unique psychological components of the empirical data (Daymon and Holloway, 2011). This contributes to generating knowledge in cooperation with the participants, in addition to flexibility through interpretation of the data (Daymon and Holloway, 2011). The data gained through interviews of participants will contribute to understand the research questions and aims of what Danish birdwatchers' motives consist of.

#### Interview guide and semi-structured interviews

The qualitative data of this project have been collected through a qualitative interview guide which are found in appendix 1. The initial research on birdwatching tourism and the thesis's literature review was used as background and inspiration for constructing the interview guide. This facilitated a deductive approach initially to this research, which included some assumptions of what birdwatchers' motivations could consist of and parts of the theory used to analyse the empirical material (Daymon and Holloway, 2011). However, qualitative research contain flexibility which were used by altering throughout the research process, which were done to the interview guide. Moreover, having an open mind to the research process and the findings emerging were practised (Daymon and Holloway, 2011; Bryman, 2012). This enabled me, as researcher to gather in-depth knowledge of the participants and their motivations and why they enjoy their hobby. The conversations emerging through the interviews will vary from one participant to the next, depending on their specific interests and can take the interview in minor different directions, although guided by the same structure and questions (Damon and Holloway, 2011).

The method is used to make me able to understand the participants and their perceptions and motives well. However, one cannot argue to understand others completely (Seidman, 1998). Seidman stated:

*“At the root of in-depth interviewing is an interest in understanding the experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience.”* (Seidman, 1998, p.3).

Therefore, I use in-depth interviewing for this thesis. In qualitative research, semi-structured in-depth interviews are much used (Daymon and Holloway, 2011). The aim for using this data

collecting method is to gain an understanding of the participants view which is clear, through individual dialogue. Individual interviewing give opportunity to understand the participants perspectives, through their specific opinions, attitudes, and values. Additionally, it enables the participants to both react honestly and spontaneously to asked question and reflect upon their views more slowly (Daymon and Holloway, 2011). The collected data from the interviews are placed in the participants social context, meaning the participants understanding of their context shapes their views. The participants subjective views are expressed through their particular words, with their vocabulary and speech style (Daymon and Holloway, 2011).

The interview guide has followed Seidman (1998) and Bryman (2012) setup for the interviews to establish an environment for open conversation. Establishing a connection between interviewer and interviewee is essential and was done by introducing the research and in using open-ended questions. I, as researcher, was able then to better reflect and follow up on missing information by having the participants elaborate on their reflections and answers throughout of the interview. To learn about the participants motives, there was a focus on the inquiry of *what*, *how* and *why*, throughout of the interview (Seidman, 1998).

Structure of the interview guide was split into two topic areas to create order and flow in accordance with Daymon and Holloway (2011) and Bryman (2012). The first part of the interview, *General questions*, aim to understand the experience and background of the participants. Some of the questions were: "How much time do you use to look at and study birds?" and "Do you travel far watch birds?". The second part, *Birdwatching motivation*, aim to understand the participants opinions, values, and feelings. This were inspired from former research by Chen and Chen (2015), Connell (2009), Collins-Kreiner (2013), Iso-Aloah (1982), Guimarães (2015) and McFarlane (1994). Some of the questions asked for this part were: "Why are you interested in birdwatching?" and "How are social networks, both physical and and digital important for you in conducting your interest?". From the main eleven questions in the interview guide, multiple follow up questions have created deeper understandings of each participants individual views. This was often elaborated with questions of *why?* or by the researcher summarizing the views, whereas the participant has further explained and elaborated their views with examples (Interview guide, Appendix 1).

### Participant sample

The sampling of this thesis is drawn to investigate and elaborate on the problem formulation (Bryman, 2012), through the next main chapter of analysis. The former literature on birdwatching brought forward a gap in research on European and Danish birdwatchers' motivations and considerations regarding this activity. As the qualitative research strive towards gaining an understanding of detailed and contextualized data of the studied phenomenon, the sampling is small to find diversity of the study field and explore the issues in-depth (Bryman, 2012; Daymon and Holloway, 2011; Hennink, Hutter and Bailey, 2020). I, as researcher chose to investigate native Danish citizens, who conduct birdwatching at all skill levels to consist of this research sample. This consisted of birdwatchers in the age of 50 to 80 years of age, which are in accordance with previous research on birdwatchers where the average age is between 55-65 (Maldonado et al., 2018; Connell, 2009; Liu et al., 2021; Guimarães, 2015). Additionally, one fourth of birdwatchers were retired in Chen and Chen's study (2015). The data of participants are presented on the next page in table *Data overview chart*.

I have use purposive sampling because this include choosing participants with distinct characteristics which provides the study with rich data (Hennink, Hutter and Bailey, 2020). The participants were recruited through formal network and thereafter snowballing (Daymon and Holloway, 2011; Hennink, Hutter and Bailey, 2020). As mentioned in the sub-chapter Case description, through my colleague at the DMO I work part-time at, I managed to get in touch with two birdwatchers whom I interviewed. Both these interviewees were a part of an online community, a Facebook group for birds `Fugle i Lejre`. One of the participants had many connections to the birdwatching community, in which I asked if it was possible to connect me to his network. This was possible and resulted in the five last interviews of this study.

There is none specific sample size which determine the quality of the qualitative study, generally they are small and reflect the time resources and how many researchers conducting the study (Daymon and Holloway, 2011).

*“Smaller samples are valuable for the deep, rich data they provide but should not be so small that saturation cannot be achieved”* (Daymon and Holloway, 2011, p.217).

When there are no new data which come from the data collection, saturation take place (Daymon and Holloway, 2011). After considering the collected data, I have therefore decided



the material consist of enough similarities and opposite views to be sufficient to answer the thesis problem statement.

The collected data for this thesis come from eight in-depth interviews with Danish birdwatchers. Initially the aim was to interview birdwatchers situated in all of Zealand, Denmark, however it proved difficult to connect to people from large part of this area. The participants are all from middle of Zealand, most with some connection to Lejre municipality, which have rich areas for bird and have bird diversity. Information on the participant sample is summarised in the below table.

*Data overview chart:*

	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Birdwatching experience: Beginner, intermediate or expert.</b>	<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Interview conducted in person or online.</b>
Participant 1	Male	60's	Beginner- focus on experiences in nature	Consultant	In person
Participant 2	Female	50's	Intermediate	Pensioneer	In person
Participant 3	Male	60's	Intermediate	Between jobs	In person
Participant 4	Male	70's	Expert- photographer	Pensioneer	Online
Participant 5	Female	70's	Intermediate	Pensioneer	In person
Participant 6	Female	60's	Intermediate	Teacher and researcher	Online
Participant 7	Male	50's	Intermediate- photographer	IT-manager	Online
Participant 8	Male	70's	Intermediate	Pensioneer	In person

## Data

### Design and collection

At the early stages of this thesis project, in order to gain information and knowledge of the theme birdwatching and nature-based tourism, I started by exploring and reading some news articles and former research. This has later become a part of the literature review to place the

field of study and to understand what research have been conducted earlier of the theme. The fundamental reason for this were to gain a wide perspective and information in the field of birdwatching and motivation research, as have been described in the introduction and literature review. This inspired the further research and interviews for this thesis.

Interviews were conducted from April to August 2022. Five out of eight interviews were conducted in person, which were both the researcher and these participants preference. The 5 interviews in-person were either held at the participants home, a quiet and neutral café or at the participants highly used birdwatching spot. The last three interviews were conducted through videocall, due to time limitations as two participants found time in their work schedule to participate in the study. The interview context was individually adapted to ensure the participants felt confident and had a good experience.

It was important to create an honest environment for the participants with mutual trust throughout of the conversation. Therefore, I as researcher, began the interview by introducing myself, the thesis project and my own connection to nature-based tourism and birdwatching. Continuing, by thanking the participants for their voluntary participation and asking for permission to use the information they provide through recording and transcribing for the thesis. Lastly of the introduction for the interview, I informed the participants would be anonymous in the study and that they were welcome to not answer questions if they found it uncomfortable, as it is important to minimize potential harm the interview could impose (Hennink, Hutter and Bailey, 2020). Throughout of the interviews I worked to making the participants feel secure and be openminded to their opinions, by ensuring no disapproval to their answers and conducting the interviews in their own language, Danish (Bryman, 2012). In doing so, the respondents extended their elaborations further into the interview. Moreover, my language as interviewer were adapted to some extend to each individual as I found to be more suitable and needed to create flow and mutual understanding during the conversation.

The questions were asked approximately the same way and in the same order for all interviews, however the follow-up questions have differed because of the different responses and specific topics each respondent were passionate about. Additionally, to audio-recording, notes were taken to have a written summary of main information and to ask follow-up questions to be able inquire further and redirect the participant, if required (Daymon and Holloway, 2011).

Following the interview, the recordings were listened to and transcribed as they were expressed, because these have meaning and the recording ensure no information is forgot (Daymon and Holloway, 2011). The original data and meanings have therefore been ensured (Seidman, 1998). Furthermore, by listening to the information again, I have re-examined and got another perspective of the participants expressions. Simultaneously beginning to identify categories and differences of the participants opinions, by being close to the data will be useful in the analysis (Bryman, 2012).

A narrative analysis of the content from the transcripts have been conducted because it examines the nature of the `stories` from the interviews to understand how the participants describe their experiences (Hennink, Hutter and Bailey, 2020), also known as thematic analysis (Vaismoradi, Turunen, and Bondas, 2013). Further, these “*Narratives reflect a persons subjective and social constructions of their lived experience*” (Hennink, Hutter and Bailey, 2020, p.209). Each section of text transcribed from the interviews are looked at as a whole, in accordance with narrative analysis.

The coding and themes created to connect the information in the collected data and the theories are described next, as this are helpful in the coming analysis.

### Thematising findings

As shortly introduced lastly in the chapter of literature review, the themes from the collected data have been coded to best match the categories in the literature review. Qualitative data and research are nuanced and composed, which makes it important to thematising the transcript to understand and highlight themes and categories. Then, the data can be presented, understood, and interpreted (Seidman, 1998). The narrative analysis ends up by describing the essence of the transcribed sections by summarising the essential meaning (Hennink, Hutter and Bailey, 2020). The transcripts from interviews in this thesis was coded to find structures and common meaning of the data to analyse and find clarity of the problem statement. To do this the structure from coding guide by Erlingson and Brysiewicz (2017) and Stoffelen (2019) were used.

This work began by reading the interviews through to gain a thorough understanding and overview of the material (Erlingson and Brysiewicz, 2017; Stoffelen, 2019; Daymon and

Holloway, 2011). The interviews guided and inspired the use of and choice of theoretical concepts, who were shortly introduced lastly in the literature review. The participant's information was split into two themes, and thereby two tables, which make up the coding for this thesis: *Theme 1- Socio-psychological aspects* and *Theme 2- Cultural aspects*. The two tables were made to clarify the data material. Then all section of quotes from the transcripts were placed in the table they suited, *Theme 1- Socio-psychological aspects* or *Theme 2- Cultural aspects*. The two tables framework are the same and consist of 5 columns which consist of Participant number, Meaning unit (former information section or quotes), Condensed meaning unit, Codes and Categories. Two extracts of the tables are provided as examples:

Example table 1 (Appendix 2): Theme1 - Socio-psychological aspects.

<b>Partici- pant number</b>	<b>Meaning unit</b>	<b>Condensed meaning unit</b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>Category</b>
6	It gives so much peace of mind. Ten years ago, the first pair of sea eagles arrived and settled on the Bognes peninsula. My husband cycled out there every day to see them and he was the first to see it hatch. I went along and I remember the calmness that came. It is a particularly meditative calm to look at birds. You just stand there and watch, then something will happen. It is a proximity of excitement and calmness. It is a special condition in the body that bird watchers have.	Tranquility. Sea eagle pair resident, Bognes. Cycled out, every day. Calm that came. Meditative calm, bird watching. Standing and looking. Proximity, tension, calm. Special condition body, bird watchers.	Meditative calmness	Inner peace and relaxation

(Own translation)

Example table 2 (Appendix 2): Theme 2- Cultural aspects.

<b>Partici- pant number</b>	<b>Meaning unit</b>	<b>Condensed meaning unit</b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>Category</b>
4	Yes, I would like to develop the knowledge I have. I have been watching birds since I was young. You can always get better at knowing the birds. I spend a lot of time taking pictures and then look at them when I get home to see who it is and then something.	Develop knowledge. Watched birds since youth. Get better, get to know. Take pictures and look at them, home.	Develop knowledge	Knowledge and learning

(Own translation)

The tables above firstly contain a column to identify which participants expression is presented. Then, I separated the quotes or information section to Meaning units which are quotations with similar or same meaning. These are condensed and narrowed down to entail the particular meaning of the quotes. Thereafter, codes were given to the condensed meaning unit, which is a short label who describe what the quote incorporate. Now, I looked at wider meaning for the codes and grouped them into categories (Erlingson and Brysiewicz, 2017). There are five categories divided over the two themes.

*Theme 1:* Socio-psychological aspects are split into three categories; 1- *Photography*, 2- *Relaxation and inner peace* and 3- *Social community and relationships*.

*Theme 2:* Cultural aspects are divided into two categories; 1- *Knowledge and learning* and 2- *Experience nature and aesthetics*.

The coded data for this thesis consist of 84 meaning units in total, made from the transcribed quotes from the respondents, with attached condensed meaning unit, codes, and categories.

The themes and categories were made from both the theory in the chapter Literature review of this thesis and from the emerging subject themes in the interviews. The two tables of coded data are found in appendix 2.

### Research trustworthiness

Qualitative research has been criticized for not being objective or neutral, therefore it cannot be valid (Seidman, 1998). Contrary, qualitative research are subjective by nature as it is affected by humans studied and the researcher itself (Daymon and Holloway, 2011). As researcher of this project, I acknowledge my own bias, in the values, experiences, emotional engagement and research preferences I have, can influence the analysis and perspectives brought forward of the study.

The trustworthiness of this project have I worked to ensure through Lincoln and Guba's (1984) four criteria for judging and demonstrating the research quality (Daymon and Holloway, 2011). They are *transferability*, *dependability*, *confirmability*, and *credibility* (Clark, 2021; Daymon and Holloway, 2011; Seidman, 1998).

*Transferability* has been pursued to ensure throughout of the research through providing detailed explanations of considerations and applied methods (Daymon and Holloway, 2011).

*Dependability* is ensured in the thesis by being consistent as well as working stable in the collecting, describing, and analysing of the data material (Daymon and Holloway, 2011). This was done by asking all questions in the interview guide and asking the participants to elaborate on their answers. The coding was done in the same week to ensure consistency, and in the analysis, I strategically used the literature review throughout to consider relevant theories for the interpretations made.

*Confirmability* is ensured by showing how the collected data are linked to the interpretations made in the analysis and later, the conclusions drawn (Daymon and Holloway, 2011).

*Credibility* has been the most challenging to ensure for this study. I have sought to ensure this by giving you, as readers, detailed information about the thesis process to make it recognizable in your social context (Daymon and Holloway, 2011). Moreover, my position as researcher and the familiarity to the research area and topic, has contributed to the credibility of this thesis.

In addition to trustworthiness, authenticity is a used criteria to ensure quality of research. It involves fairness and knowledge sharing regarding the research (Daymon and Holloway, 2011; Clark, 2021). When presenting and analysing the collected data for this thesis I have worked to bring forward the true meaning of the participants. In the interviewing process, the questions asked were open, to not lead the participants answers in any particular direction. Moreover, follow-up questions were asked to ensure understanding of participants

elaborations. This has been central of the work conducted for this thesis to ensure authenticity.

### Ethical strategies

As participant information is the centre for the research conducted in this thesis, ethical considerations made and how to handle the situations and information gathered are essential. The ethical principles include:

*“the right to free and informed choice, protection from harm to individuals and equipment, and principle of privacy, autonomy and honesty”* (Daymon and Holloway, 2011, p.65).

Ethical practice must be implemented throughout of the research, not only in relation to the interviews of participants. This study aims to create a better understanding of the Danish birdwatchers and their motivations for engaging in their hobby. It was done to benefit the research field in Denmark and Scandinavia and further research and development on niche tourism in the future. Throughout of the thesis the data materiel has been carefully referenced to enhance power to the rightful source, through the former research drawn upon in the literature review and the collected material from participants in this study.

As have been mentioned, in the interviewing process the anonymity of participants were promised, the project and intended use of data were explained to the participants, the vulnerability of information and participants choice to skip any questions and the voluntary participation were enhanced (Seidman, 1998). In processing the collected data, any personal information has been removed, such as names used in the interview, to protect the privacy of participants and ensure confidentiality. In recruiting participants and at the start of each interview the duration and form of the interview have been stated, as well as a short introduction of researcher, associated institution and research field.

### Structure of analysis

The next chapter, Analysis, will drawn upon the described method and literature review to clarify, understand and interpret the interviews. As mentioned at the end of the literature review the analysis will follow the coding of the interviews and therefore be split in two main sections: *Socio-psychological aspects* and *Cultural aspects*.

In the section of *Socio-psychological aspects* an analysis of the categories *Photography*, *Relaxation and inner peace* and *Social community and relationships* be presented. Of the section *Cultural aspects*, the categories *Knowledge and learning* and *Experience nature and aesthetics* are analysed. Throughout of the sections several meaning units, or participants quotes, are analysed and compared to the theoretical aspects are provided.



## Analysis

This chapter investigates key findings from the collected data, the interviews, to reflect upon and answer the research question “*What are Danish birdwatchers’ motivations for conducting this activity and what does the motivations entail?*”. The following chapter aims to analyse, by the three sub-chapters of *Socio-psychological aspects*, *Cultural aspects* and *Human-animal connection*, the views of the participants voices to reveal their thoughts and motives of being birdwatchers.

First, the categories of *Photography*, *Relaxation and inner peace* and *Social community and relationships* explore and analyse participants views as a part of the theme *Socio-psychological aspects*. Second, in theme *Cultural aspects*, some interesting quotes are suggested and explored through the categories *Knowledge and learning* and *Experience nature and aesthetics*. Third, the aspect of *human-animal connection* emerged through the interviews to become an interesting motive for birdwatchers. This last theme has not been explored through the literature review of this thesis, because the former research did not steer me or included towards this aspect.

### 1. Socio-psychological aspects

This theme of socio-psychological aspects entails aspects of relaxing, explore oneself, change of environment and social interactions. The theme is built on Crompton’s (1979) *socio-psychological category*. Three categories emerged for this theme from re-reading the transcripts and coding the material, as explained in the previous method chapter. These categories are *Photography*, *Relaxation and inner peace* and *Social community and relationships*. Of this theme the participants explain their interest and feelings regarding photography as a part of their birdwatching experience. Further, the effect birdwatching has on their ability to relax and find a sense of calmness in their lives. Additionally, relationship to other people by sharing experiences of birdwatching is one important part to connect to friends and birdwatching as their hobby. In the following I explore and interpret these findings of the empirical material.

<b>Socio-psychological aspects</b>		
<i>Category 1:</i> Photography	<i>Category 2:</i> Relaxation and inner peace	<i>Category 3:</i> Social community and relationships

### 1.1 Photography

Participants explained birdwatching in combination of photographing to be difficult. An element of sport and competition with oneself or other birdwatchers to become better at their photography skills were expressed to be important by watching and photographing birds. The photos had the ability to start conversations in online chat groups, where bird groups on Facebook were much used. Additionally, they were happy to look at the same birds' multiple times and continued to strive for better quality photos of the birds.

Participant 5 expresses her attentiveness of her surroundings:

*“Yes, I always pay attention. I have a good little camera and would like to learn how to use it well.”* (Appendix 7, Own translation)

From the above quote I understand the participant is alert regarding her surroundings in nature and find it exciting to watch and photograph birds. Interpreted from the quote is a wanting, satisfaction, and happiness of capturing good photos of birds by learning to use the camera well, as participant 5 express. The attentiveness can be a result of her desire to capture nice photographs. By taking photos a feeling of achievement through *esteem needs* (Maslow, 1970) and *development and self esteem* (Pearce, 2005) are heightened. The satisfaction of capturing a good photo of birds is further described by another participant below.

*“No, I do not know. I am happy if I succeed and I get good pictures, but it is almost always a feeling that I can do better next time. That's the difference between birdwatchers and photographers, is that birdwatchers only must see the bird, but I have to get close to take a good picture.”* (Appendix 9, Own translation)

Explained in the quote above is the participants perception of birdwatchers who photograph and birdwatchers who do not. Birdwatchers have different goals of watching birds and thus appreciate different events taking place in nature while looking at birds. Participant 7 describe his happiness and satisfaction of being successful in his mission of photographing birds, however he is critical of his accomplishment and will always strive for improvement. Self confidence can both be built, downcasted and strived for, as interpreted from the two quotes above, incorporated in the *adjustment function* (Katz, 1960). Participant 7 strive for fulfilment and growth through photographing, which are aspects of *self-actualisation* (Maslow, 1970).

However, by pushing himself and his goal further as he improves his skills, he is critical and might not find a fulfilment (Pearce, 2005) or the satisfaction he strives for.

After the action of photographing and birdwatching takes place, some photographers use their time on the computer to improve their images.

*“I can see the same birds several times. I want to see and take pictures. Then, I want to work with the images and see if I can get a harmonious and beautiful image. I work on the computer cropping and giving them certain lights and highlighting colours. It should not be exaggerated, it should look like the bird in nature, but you can emphasize the colours. Help a little.”* (Appendix 7, Own translation)

Above, participant 5 describes her joy of birdwatching which she makes last longer than the specific time spent in nature because she works on improving the pictures afterwards. In this way she extends her experience to a longer period. Interpreted are a satisfaction of being able to capture good photos, as well as improving them technically with photoshop. This can be improving the participants esteem needs and self actualisation (Maslow, 1970) as well as the *adjustment function* (Katz, 1960). Additionally, by stating she can watch the same birds’ multiple times, an enjoyment of the native birds are interpreted. She does not find it necessary to compete in taking photos or watch species first as previous studies have found (Chen and Chen, 2015). However, some birdwatchers in the area are quite competition driven as described below.

*“You should also know that those who take photos also have some competition. ‘Who sees the young or baby grebe first?’ and ‘Who photographs them?’. It is a strong competitive element. I am not that skilled. I want to be better when I retire. The knowledge matters and knowing what I see. The competition is not that important.”* (Appendix 8, Own translation)

In the above quote participant 6 express she is not currently skilled enough to participate in the competition of birdwatching and photographing. She wants to increase her knowledge and with this, competition element of birdwatching could increase as motivation. Competing in birdwatching can both grow and decrease self esteem (Maslow, 1970; Pearce, 1960), depending on what one’s goals are and whether they are reached. The competition element of

birdwatching has also been found in previous studies to be a motivation to watch birds (McFarlane, 1994; Chen and Chen, 2015). In being able to take good photos, share them and present knowledge about the experience can be seen as prestige in the birdwatching environment, as is an aspect of Crompton's *socio-psychological category* (1979).

Participant 8 describes what can occur when he tries to take photos of birds he could share with others:

*“It is annoying when you come driving and have your camera lying next to you, as soon as you roll down the window the bird is gone. One would like to have a picture of them. When the window is down, they are gone. It happens every time. You can take the picture through the window, but then it will not be a proper picture that you can share anywhere. Then you also become more and more of a perfectionist when taking pictures.”* (Appendix 10, Own translation)

The annoyance expressed above when the participant is not successful in taking pictures of birds can be understood as this activity being important to him. The participant find excitement, playful engagement with the birds and a competition with other birdwatchers. It means something for him to be successful in his mission of see and photograph birds so he can share them with others. He describes himself as becoming a perfectionist and this can contribute to being critical to oneself and the skills, he possess. This has influence on his *self esteem* (Maslow, 1979; Pearce, 2005), thus can further impact if he is able to fulfil his goals (Pearce, 2005). Moreover, the *adjustment function* entails growing independence and self-confidence by maximising rewards and minimising punishments (Katz, 1960), which can be challenging to achieve without striving for good pictures as participant 8 does.

### *Summary of Photography*

The category of *Photography* has shown how the focus of the participants differ in practice and what they find is important with photography in birdwatching. Some participants experienced a heightened attention to their surroundings and a closeness to the birds. Other participants were self critical and focused on how they could improve their skills.

Competition was also an element which made photographers critical of sharing photos and wanting to watch birds to show their findings to others.

In the next category I explore how some birdwatchers find it calming to be in nature.

## 1.2 Relaxation and inner peace

This second category of theme socio-psychological aspects, *relaxation and inner peace*, includes different ways the participants find it relaxing to be in nature and watch birds. By shifting focus from oneself to the birds, birdwatchers are present and attentive, which can contribute to forget problems and tasks emerging in daily life, as are found in the following. Birdwatching can be a way to come out in nature and take a break, to find enjoyment at positivity through birds. Relaxation can also be a calmness and meditative state. The different factors of relaxation and calmness are explored and analysed next.

Participant 6 describes her memory of experiencing a sense of peace while watching birds:

*“It gives so much peace of mind. Ten years ago, the first pair of sea eagles arrived and settled on the Bognes peninsula. My husband cycled out there every day to see them and he was the first to see it hatch. I went along and I remember the calmness that came. It is a particularly meditative calm to look at birds. You just stand there and watch, then something will happen. It is a proximity of excitement and calmness. It is a special condition in the body that bird watchers have.”* (Appendix 8, Own translation)

Described in the above quote two perspectives of relaxation and peace is described. Being in nature and focusing on something the participant finds exiting and interesting helped her calm down. The particular crossing of excitement and calmness birdwatchers experience can be connected to the patience they practice. The excitement and thrill of not knowing what to experience can make the discoveries of birdwatching experience more delightful. The calmness and focus participant 6 experience by watching birds contribute to her avoiding stress, *adjustment function* (Katz, 1960), and feel safe (Maslow, 1970) in the space she is. The meditative aspect mentioned above is further described by participant 2 next.

*“What makes me happy about birds is that you focus on something outside yourself, there is some self-forgetfulness. It is healthy I think, a kind of meditation and mindfulness. There are not as many disturbing stressful thoughts when I am in nature. Being in nature is very healing. There are some studies that show it is good to get out in nature and be active.”* (Appendix 4, Own translation)

In the above quote participant 2 reflects over how watching birds contribute to her shifting focus and forget her own problems or things she needs to do. By focusing on birds, a mindfulness by enjoying the surroundings in nature is experienced. *Relaxation* (Pearce, 2005) is experienced through the birdwatching and being in nature. Interpreted are the participants enhanced life enjoyment and being content in other aspects of her life because she is able to experience mindfulness and meditation through birdwatching, which can contribute to feeling balanced. Linked to this is the *ego-defensive function* to reduce anxieties and the adjustment function to avoid stress (Katz, 1960). The need to have a break and forget about everyday life is further expressed below.

*“It happened that my wife fell ill for many years, I looked after her at home. Thus, I needed to get out into nature. It became my therapy. I took a 'break' of a few hours, to divert the thoughts a bit. Speculate and look at birds, meet some other people and get out.”* (Appendix 10, Own translation)

In the above quote participant 8 expresses his life situation and how this attracted him to go out in nature to watch birds and meet other people. Participant 8 found he needed birdwatching because he needed a break in his everyday life. It took a toll on him to care for his wife and to be able to do this in a good way he watched birds to get new energy, a kind of therapy to tackle and contribute better when he was home. This self-forgetfulness and shift of focus, as participant 2 also explained, is a way to take care of his own mind. *Relaxation*, as can be what participant 8 needs and finds through birdwatching, is one of the motivational factors Pearce (2005) include in his framework. By resetting and relaxing he can avoid unhappy thoughts and worries (Katz, 1960) and find new strength. Finding a sense of calmness have also been important for participant 7:

*“It is very different. I started with it because I had a break between jobs. I took a year off, took some courses and spent a lot of time in nature. It was good for me, to calm down, to slow down”* (Appendix 9, Own translation)

Participant 7 express it was good for him to slow down, which can be because his busy life consisted of multiple factors which led to a constant high pace and stress. He expresses he found a calmness, which he did not have until he began spending more time in nature and look at birds. Further the break between jobs can have contributed to participant 7 being less

critical and learning to enjoy and relax through experiences in nature. This connects to Pearce's motivation stage *Relaxation and development* (2005) because the participant learned to improve this aspect of his life which was good for him. Additionally, this corresponds to what people work towards of Katz *adjustment function* and *ego-defence function* (2005).

#### *Summary of relaxation and inner peace*

Through this category of relaxation and inner peace varied aspects has shown the participants perceptions of birdwatching and nature to be a calming experience. Some participants described it to be calming, as a meditative way to relax oneself. To be patient mixed with excitement to be able to see and experience birds at any moment trained a particular alert calmness and excitement. Further, birdwatching as a way to distract oneself and divert the thoughts were experienced among some birdwatchers.

The next category of this theme explores what effect relationships has on birdwatchers and how they find them useful.

#### 1.3 Social community and relationships

Social community was the category described most throughout of the interviews, which bring many perspectives and descriptions of what this category entails and how it is important for the participants. The respondents found relationships to family, friends, and acquaintances in larger groups to be important, however not always at the specific time of watching the birds. Some found community important because one could discuss pictures, sounds and experiences after watching the birds both in-person and online. The views the 8 participants express has widely differed through the emerged categories, however social communities and relationships were expressed to be important for all of them. In the following, I analyse how this were expressed.

Participant 8 shortly expresses why he finds it nice to share his experiences and photos with others:

*“More specifically, it is cool to take some photos and share them. An experience alone is always better when shared with others.”* (Appendix 10, Own translation)

The second sentence of the quote above is found to be descriptive of humans as social beings. Relationships are important to the participant and can be developed through sharing experiences (Pearce, 1960). Interpreted from the quote is a joy and excitement of sharing his

own experiences and photos with others. This is also covered by Maslow's *belongingness and love needs* (1970). Further, shared experiences are described by participant 1:

*"I like to share holiday experiences with others and the "Sort sol" ("Black sun") in the North Sea is a phenomenon that several people experience at the same time. In Australia we were on a large river with a group and there will be some stories you hear from the experienced bird watchers and there will be some stories you can tell yourself. It is fun to hear about special birds, but the conversation can run out quickly when you do not know much about birds."* (Appendix 3, Own translation)

Above participant 1 describes two instances of birdwatching experiences shared with others which gave him new stories and information. He expressed this to be fun. Interpreted is an acceptance of seek out birdwatching experiences as others also do, it is bound to be more people. Additionally, a joy over connecting with others, appreciate the experience and learning from more experienced birdwatchers are interesting for the participant. This relates strongly to the *self defence function* and the *knowledge function* (Katz, 1960) because by committing to the groups the goal of experiencing and learning about birds by joining groups are fulfilled. Moreover, *relationships* (Katz, 1960) can be made and strengthened, which is also important for peoples needs for *love and belongingness* (Maslow, 1970). In contrast of participant 1 who enjoy sharing experiences of nature phenomenon with others, participant 5 prefers to go birdwatching alone in her own neighbourhood:

*"I'm not too keen on going on walks with so many people. I would best like to just go alone. Possibly bring a single person who can keep their mouth shut. I can do that best. (...) I am social, but not in that context."* (Appendix 7, Own translation)

Participant 5 describes above her preference of enjoying birdwatching alone or with very few people. Interpreted are the enjoyment of nature, the birds and being able to fully focus on the experience, without anyone to interrupt. It is her own way of enjoying herself and the birds fully, where she can be independent and perhaps somewhat selfish. This meets Katz's *adjustment function* (1960) which include independence, self-confidence, new experiences and avoiding stress. Further, the *knowledge function* (Katz, 1960) entails the aspects of learning something new and enjoy nature, which participant 5 prefers to do alone which can



grow her self-confidence and independence. Participant 2 often go birdwatching alone, like participant 5. However, she is interested in talking to people she meets while birdwatching.

*“I usually go out birdwatching alone and therefore I try to talk to someone when I meet others in such a place. Some people want to talk, but some are reserved and might want the birds to themselves. I once experienced that I went up to someone who was looking and asked if they had seen anything, and they answered somewhat no, not really. Then I say I've seen some Shore larks down here. It was almost as if I had said a magic word, because then they wanted to talk to me when they understood that I knew something about birds. They wanted to talk to someone who knows a bit, not just any amateurs. ... I like to learn something to some amateurs if they are interested.”*  
(Appendix 4, Own translation)

Participant 2 expresses her perception of their encounter to become a conversation because she expressed her knowledge and interest in the other birdwatchers. Interpreted is participant 2's interest in being social while birdwatching when the opportunity arises. She would like to engage in conversation because she usually goes birdwatching alone. Peoples needs can vary with time and life stages (Pearce, 2005; Hsu and Huang, 2007), which is showed through the encounter between participant 5 and the other birdwatchers in the above quote. The *relationship* aspect (Pearce, 2005) for some birdwatchers can be important if knowledge can be exchanged both ways, but some also find it interesting to interact with others even though they can only provide information.

From the above conversations in person, there are birdwatchers who find interest in sharing experiences and converse online. Participant 6 expresses:

*“One is also inspired by, for example websites and Facebook page ‘Fugle I Lejre’.*  
*There are many that like to post observations of birds, so others can go there to watch birds. Denmark's ornithological association also have a page where one get inspired and can go to the locations. The associational life that connects is priceless.”*  
(Appendix 8, Own translation)

Expressed above are the benefits of sharing knowledge in communities which makes more people able to experience birdwatching because they access information regarding birds

shortly after they have been spotted. This can act through relationships and community can help fulfil a goal for birdwatchers, a part of *self-defence function* (Katz, 1960). Sharing the experiences inspire other, as participant 6 states and refer to the life of being a part of an association to being “priceless”. This demonstrate how important this is for some birdwatchers. Communities online and in person can contribute to connection to others which is important for humans according to Maslow’s hierarchical stage of *belongingness and love* (1970), as well as Pearce’s *relationship* stage (2005). Moreover, the *knowledge function* and *adjustment function* (Katz, 1960) are connected to communities because information sharing and gain new experiences can take place through relationships. Potential impact of sharing information with the birdwatching community is described next.

*“I am part of quite a few Facebook groups for birds and have gotten to know quite a few people through them. In those birdwatcher communities there are some locations you share and some you do not share. If you share locations, some people will go crazy and take off. I think that is a bit exaggerated. If there are too many people at a location, I just drive further. Some people are happy as long as they get to look or take the picture they want, I would rather have a little more respect for the situations. I want to take care of nature; I rather not watch birds, than doing something wrong”*  
(Appendix 9, Own translation)

In the above quote participant 7 describes his experience of people quickly being influenced to watch birds at a location and how he finds this behaviour exaggerated. He is concerned of what impact this can have on the nature and the birds, as he finds it important to respect their habitat and not disturb too much. The participant reflects upon what negative impact they can have of being many birdwatchers or being too close. As explained in the literature review the *adjustment function* (Katz, 1960) focus on people wanting to maximise reward, however in the above quote the reward of watching or photographing can have a too large prize. Therefore, being able to enjoy nature experiences and avoid stress can be done by not watch birds with many other people. Social interaction and community are important, however participant 7 express he will not participate in birdwatching with others if it can negatively affect the natural habitat.

### *Summary of social community and relationships*

Through the category of *social community and relationships* I have shown varied aspects of the participants relationships and the birdwatching community. Some participants expressed they liked to share their own experiences, and this could make the experiences better. To share and gain old stories and information with others enhanced the birdwatching experiences because the content of the experience was richer. Many enjoyed watching birds alone to not be disturbed in the process, however they shared their experiences with others afterwards both in person and online.

Next, the *cultural aspects* of the findings emerging from the interviews are analysed in the second part of the analysis.

## 2. Cultural aspects

This theme of cultural aspects is built on Crompton's (1979) *cultural category* which includes motives of novelty and education, as were explained in the literature review.

From the re-reading of the transcribed interviews, the following coding of the empirical material and former research from the literature review, two categories emerged of the theme Cultural aspects. *Knowledge and learning* include the participants interest and want for knowledge about birds and nature, as well as their interest and the fun of learning new things. *Experience nature and aesthetics* consist of the participants perspectives on enjoying the scenery and sounds that is experienced in nature. In the following two sections I explore and interpret how this emerge and impact the participants.

<b>Cultural aspects</b>	
<i>Category 1:</i> Knowledge and learning	<i>Category 2:</i> Experience nature and aesthetics

### 2.1 Knowledge and learning

This category was explained by the respondents to be important in their birdwatching as it gave them information and experience beyond the specific moment they are in nature and enjoy watching the birds. Respondents thought this were both fun and important as mental training. Knowledge and learning are factors which are implemented and trained as people grow up and continue to be important in different ways throughout of life, as is explored in through the following quotations.

*“I also go on birdwatching trips because I learn something new every time. It is exciting. And then it is pointed out that you may not be as talented as you think, because there are others who are just fantastically talented. I think it's pretty good training to remember and learn how the birds behave. Force the brain to remember and repeat how the birds sounds.”* (Appendix 4, Own translation)

Understood from the above quote is the participant referring to experiences she has had where she expressed her own knowledge and discovered she was not right, or another person were able to explain more on the subject. She finds it exiting to learn something new, alone or through interactions with others. This is in accordance with Katz *Knowledge function* (1960), Maslow's personal growth of *Self actualisation* (1970) and Pearce's *Self esteem and development* (2005) which are important human needs. Moreover, *the Self-defence function* of Katz (1960) can be realised if one exchange information as a part of a community to fulfil a goal. The goal of participant 2 are interpreted to gain more knowledge, and further remember it and thereby train her brain for her own development. Some of the participants find it important to learn new information for themselves, others would like to quickly share what new information or experiences they have gained, as stated below.

*“... I do not take particularly good pictures, I focus on looking at birds, but I also share in the Facebook group. My interest has probably gone from watching birds to convey. I would like to share the experiences with others and inspire and spread information to others. They become happy. ...”* (Appendix 5, Own translation)

The participant expresses his own birdwatcher journey from finding it important to learn and watch birds to share the information he has with others. To provide knowledge, to be a part of educating others and inspire to birdwatching experiences in nature can be a part of the participants motives as Katz *knowledge function* include (1960). Interpreted from the quote is a satisfaction participant 3 gains from sharing his knowledge and information with others through social media and in person. There is *self esteem* (Pearce, 2005) and *self actualisation* (Maslow, 1970) that develops in doing something good by making other people happy, as is the participants own perception of the knowledge he shares. Further, *the adjustment function* by Katz (1960) includes growing self-confidence and enjoying experience, as described in the literature review. As participant 2 found it interesting to learn new information about birds for herself, participant 6 follows this.

*“Yes, well, I think. I have always been interested in nature. What I find exciting about looking at birds is to gain some knowledge, something cognitive that is perpetuated.”*

(Appendix 8, Own translation)

Participant 6 expresses above her satisfaction of learning something new that she will remember. According to Crompton, *novelty* and *education* are important desires to travel in leisure tourism (1979), which are confirmed through the above quotes. Further, interpreted from participant 6's quote is an enhancement of oneself and one's mind, a satisfaction over gained knowledge and an achievement or personal growth (Pearce, 2005; Maslow, 1970). Participant 6 further describes what knowledge she finds interesting to learn through birdwatching.

*“It is exciting to look at birds. Right in our garden, we have set up a lot of starling boxes, so we can see how they work together, how the young birds get bigger and bigger. It is a fantastic connection with other species. I watch birds, but I also try to create good growth conditions for birds. It is a combination of looking at them and helping them. I also go on birdwatching trips still, with DOF.”* (Appendix 8, Own translation)

The participant is describing her interest in the bird's collaboration to thrive and growth of the young birds. With this a fascination over other life and species is found to be interesting for participant 6. Moreover, she finds a connection in both watching and helping them by giving them shelter. Further interpretation of this quote is the understanding of the participants feeling of being useful for the birds, a responsibility she takes to enhance her own self-esteem, belongingness, and development (Pearce, 2005; Maslow, 1970). The connection to the birds which participant 6 describes in the above quote, are not particularly covered by the theory presented in the literature review and therefore this will be analysed and discussed through the third part of this analysis, 3. *Human-animal connection*.

### *Summary of knowledge and learning*

The category of *Knowledge and learning* has shown different aspects with variety of the participants view of knowledge. Some participants found a strong joy of learning about birds. Others found the learning to be important to maintain and increase cognitive abilities. The

opportunity to share knowledge with others and contribute to others increase in knowledge about birds were for some participants to be meaningful.

The following section will continue with the experience of nature and the aesthetic in animal and plant-life one can experience in nature, as a part of the theme *Cultural aspects*.

## 2.2 Experience nature and aesthetics

The Experience nature and aesthetics category were expressed by the participants to entail different perspectives of specific or general birdwatching experiences. The specific moments they spent in nature made them calm and connected to the sounds and what they could see. Spending time in nature which can include unpredicted nature experiences can affect the birdwatcher's entire day. Relaxing and enjoying the nature alone can also contribute to a growing independence and enjoying one's own company. In the following, I explore the meaning of the quotes from the empirical material in relation to the theoretical framework and aim to understand the birdwatchers' perspectives.

From the sub-chapter, 2.3 *Social community and relationships*, regarding the sharing knowledge of when and where to watch birds, the impact of this have been expressed to not necessary only being positive. The experience of being with other birdwatchers to enjoy the nature are expressed by participant 4:

*"I find it very difficult to be many people because when I walk alone, I can hear and see everything that moves in nature. It is very difficult to do with others. It is not lonely to do, I think it is difficult to be many because you do not want to disturb the birds so much. Well, when I look at birds and nature, it is difficult to experience with many people."* (Appendix 6, Own translation)

Participant 4 expresses in the quote above his strained feelings regarding experiencing the nature if there are others around. He enjoys being alone because it gives him room to focus on sounds and what he sees, without many distractions. He expresses the experiences are not lonely. This can mean he find a deeper connection to birdwatching and nature, further a state of peace while birdwatching. A state of *relaxation* (Pearce, 2005), avoid stress and enjoy experiences as *adjustment function* (Katz, 1960) describes, must be important for participant 4. Additionally, interpreted from the quote is a respect for nature as he finds it important to

not disturb the birdlife too much, simultaneously by his phrasing he acknowledges it is not easy to not affect the birds at all.

The aspect above is also found to be important to participant 7, which states shortly:

*“It is the tranquility, it is new experiences. Getting out and relaxing.”* (Appendix 9, Own translation)

The novelty (Crompton, 1979) experienced can be important for the participant to continue getting out in nature and reflects the curiosity of the participant. The aspect of relaxing can be interpreted as a way to experience safety (Maslow, 1970) because people relax when they feel safe and secure. Further, seeing new places and enjoy them, as well as avoiding stress from everyday life by “getting out and relaxing”, as the participant states, reflects the need of `maximising reward and minimize punishment` of *adjustment function* (Katz, 1960) as described in the literature review.

New experiences and sharing of information regarding exiting experiences can lead to higher density of birdwatchers. A description of development of a birdwatching area:

*“There are some fantastic areas and bird life from Roskilde to Hvalsoe, with the wetlands there. After Tempelkroen was protected and the water rose out there, bird watchers come from all over Zealand to see birds out there.”* (Appendix 10, Own translation)

The participant expresses in the above quote his excitement for birdwatching and the possibilities and variety of birds one can watch around the area Tempelkrogen. He is happy to have this rich area close to his neighbourhood and a sense of pride to the area are interpreted. Further, the quote can demonstrate the importance of variety of birds, through wetlands or living conditions, to attract birdwatchers. This have also been demonstrated to be of birdwatcher’s interest by Guimarães et.al. (2015) research. Further Guimarães et.al.’s research suggest birdwatching tourism can improve biodiversity. Participant 8 suggest more people visit the area to enjoy nature and the variety of birds, part of *adjustment function* (Katz, 1960). Why this can be, is described by another participant next.

*“It is fun to get out. It is an overall impression. It's wonderful with nature and the seasons. Experience and try to place the birds at the different times of the year. It is fun. And why do I think so? I get a joy out of it. I have never experienced spring as intensely as this year.”* (Participant 5, Own translation)

In the above quote participant 5 express her excitement for birdwatching as important by experiencing nature as a unity. Interpreted are her interest in seeing the nature and birds change and develop with the seasons. Her senses and impressions she experiences are sharpened and intensified, which can be understood as a powerful joy to live. Through this she is fulfilled (Pearce, 2005) and enjoys her experiences of new things (Katz, 1960).

Participant 2 states the importance of aesthetics while enjoying nature:

*“Sometimes I get very fascinated by the colours and the beautiful birds. It has a lot to do with aesthetics, the beauty of nature.”* (Appendix 4, Own translation)

In the above quote the participant says she can be very focused on what she can see while being in nature. Interpreted is the interplay between her senses and nature which is intensified with her focus. By shifting focus to the nature's aesthetics from other pressing thoughts participant 2's focus can contribute to relaxation (Pearce, 2005) and avoid stress (Katz, 1960). Enjoying the natural beauty in nature is important for participant 2 and further participant 4 described his views of how he thinks more people should think the same.

*“It is... I think it is exciting to be in nature and I think that perhaps others should think that when they are in nature. It is not Tivoli (amusement park) that you walk around in, someone think that a whole lot of set up is needed for it to be interesting. There is absolutely no reason for that. They create some exhibition things to attract tourists, but I think that's a shame because one should come because the natural wildlife and insects are exciting”* (Appendix 6, Own translation)

Through the above quote participant 4 expresses his dissatisfaction of activities or “set up” which are used to attract people to spend more time in nature. Interpreted is his perception of such activities can interfere with nature and nature's inhabitants. Staging of activities can interfere with people's ability to enjoy and explore the exiting aspects of nature. The interest in nature is important for the participant and is strongly connected to the *knowledge function*



(Katz, 1960). Additionally, the participant can feel a sense of responsibility of learning others and protecting nature, which links to his *esteem needs* (Maslow, 1970).

### *Summary of experience nature and aesthetics*

As shown in the above, the category Experience nature and aesthetics has included how the participants enjoy and find beauty in nature and the birds. Some participants enjoyed the change in seasons because the colours develop, and the birds' behaviour and attitudes change. Birdwatchers were also concerned of the wildlife and did not like to disturb them by making noise and being too close to the area they are staying; hence many enjoys birdwatching alone. Moreover, participants found nature to be beautiful and exiting because it is dynamic and wished for others to enjoy it in its natural form.

In an extension of the above two themes of the analysis with the focus on new experiences, knowledge, community and personal preferences and skills, a third theme emerged as important for the participants in this thesis. In the third theme of the analysis, the participants deeper connection to the birds and the experiences they gain from watching them are explored and interpreted from the empirical material.

### 3. Human-animal connection

Emerging from the interviews and the above two themes of this analysis, is an aspect of motivation for watching birds which the applied motivational theoretics Maslow, Pearce, Katz, and Crompton, does not include. This is regarding the connection between animals and humans. Some participants found a connection to the birds by finding it interesting and enjoying following the bird's development and behaviour over time. As I have been working mainly deductively and been inspired by existing knowledge, it was exiting to find an aspect of birdwatching I had not been specifically introduced to through my literature search. In the following I explore some quotes closer which represent a connection between humans and the birds which can contribute to enrich the motivation theories.

In sub-chapter 2.3 *Knowledge and learning* I presented and analysed a quote from participant 6:

*“It is exciting to look at birds. Right in our garden, we have set up a lot of starling boxes, so we can see how they work together, how the young birds get bigger and*

*bigger. It is a fantastic connection with other species... ” (Appendix 8, Own translation)*

Additionally, to the excitement participant 6 express of learning by looking at birds, she expresses in this quote is her feeling of connection to other species. This extends further than the theories mainly used in this analysis which focus on peoples own wellbeing and happiness regarding motivation for birdwatching as their experienced tourism activity (Maslow, 1970; Hsu and Huang, 2007; Pearce, 2005; Crompton, 1979; Katz, 1960). The connection to the birds which participant 6 describes in the above quote, indicates that she finds herself useful and gives her a sense of fulfilment by contributing to the bird’s development. The relationship to other species can be interpreted as being a fascination, respect, and connection that both humans and birds are important parts of this world and somewhat dependent on each other.

Research on relationship between humans and animals from the last decade have found interactions between humans and animals to be prevent health issues (Rock et.al., 2009). Maurstad, Davis and Cowels (2013) found horseback riders to express an expectational connection through felt, voiced and expressed interactions between a person and horse. A sense of co-being and co-creation through the connection were expressed to be important and almost addictive in the study. Such interactions are also expressed by the birdwatchers, although they do not get as physically close to the birds as one can horses.

Participant 2 further expresses her enjoying her relations to birds in her area.

*“The last few years, it has been fun to follow them a little, the birds. I have had time and read about them. After that I was able to recognize much of the behaviour in nature. I have seen them give food in the air and some other things.” (Appendix 4, Own translation)*

In the above quote participant 2 expresses she has enjoyed following birds more closely and learn about them over longer periods of time. This can be interpreted as a fascination of the bird’s behaviour and an attachment to them. Moreover, it seems important for participant 2 to learn and follow them, in which she can have developed a deep interest and connection to the birds. The knowledge both participant 2 and 6 expresses, can be seen as extending their relationship or connection to the birds they follow over a longer time.

Humans' attachment to other species, particularly dogs and horses, have been found to have the same effect as between humans (Törmälehto and Korkiamäki, 2020). Companionship between humans and dogs or horses have been found to be psychologically and physically beneficial in different contexts (Crawford et.al., 2006). Reduction of stress level and improvement of self-esteem were some of the benefits in Crawford et.al. (2006) study, which has also been analysed in the two former section of this analysis. Attachment to animals is not bound by species as former research have shown. Therefore, and through the empirical material of this thesis there is possible for birdwatchers to become motivated to continue this activity because the connection and attachment one can experience.

Participant 5 expresses she thinks it is fun to learn about the birds and getting to know them:

*“It is fun to learn. In other words, what I have learned from getting to know birds, it is fun to learn about birds. It is fun to experiment with the sounds, I can do some. Nightingale. I do not know the special ones.”* (Appendix 7, Own translation)

In the above quote the participant expresses her knowledge of birds and how she finds it entertaining and pleasant to understand them. Through knowledge and learning more about the birds sounds and patterns, the participant get closer to animals, which she enjoys and finds interesting. A positive relationship to nature and birds can also contribute to enjoyment of the learning process and thus connection to the birds. Emotion have been identified as an aspect in a study by Scasta (2019) where trust and respect facilitated bonding and relationship between horses and humans.

Another perspective on humans being able to connect with birds are stated by Rock et.al.:

*“Changes in transportation options, agriculture, climate, urbanization, and so on all connect people with animals in new ways, and are altering established animal–human connections.”* (Rock et.al., 2009, p.993)

The development and globalisation of the world contribute to new connections between people, animals, and nature. Nature-based tourism can be one of the forces which contribute to the alteration in human-animal connections.

#### *Summary of human-animal connection*

The focus of motivation in the early research and theoretical perspectives were human centered and emerging from sociology. This is the case of Maslow (1970), Pearce (2005),

Crompton (1979), Katz (1960) and IsoAhola (1982), which have mainly been used in this thesis. However, they are widely used in Tourism research on motivation although tourism activities are closely connected to nature and animals. As tourism contains a strong connection between nature and plant life, animal-life and humans, the theories could need a renewed look and a human-animal connection aspect in use for tourism studies. As shown through this sub-chapter of Human-animal connections, an understanding of birdwatchers' motivations is therefore lost by missing this important aspect of motivation, where there is a shift in humans as being the definite centre of interactions and research.

In the following chapter of Discussion, I look at motivation of the broader perspectives of *Lifestyle Tourism* and the trend *Slow tourism*.

## Discussion

This discussion is built on the analysis to broaden the perspectives which have been explored, elaborated, and analysed through this thesis to a wider context in tourism and society.

Tourism activities can be a part of people's lifestyle, where activities conducted regularly become a part of people's daily life as showed through the analysis. In the following discussion, communities and people's identity are elaborated upon, which closely correlates to motivation. Identity and motivation will be presented in a wider social context, where how tourists present themselves in different contexts and communities, influence social capital and social hierarchy. In addition, the growing phenomenon of slow tourism is explored to see how people's wellbeing and local area are affected by more "responsible" tourists. Further, how nature, responsibility and sustainability can contribute to a new phenomenon in tourism as nature ethics.

The discussion includes some news articles to emphasize the current relevance and engagement communities and identity, and slow tourism have today.

### Birdwatching, communities and identities

Throughout of the previous chapter of analysis, motivation factors showed to have great impact of how the participants chose to conduct birdwatching and interact with social communities. In general, others perception of how one is as a person are more important to an individual than one like to admit (Douglas, 1986 in Smed, 2012). The participants perception of their experiences and knowledge, further how they choose to present themselves impact their own perception and identity in the birdwatching community (Smed, 2012). Presentation of oneself, through experiences and knowledge can create identities in different relationships and social contexts. Both unconscious and conscious decisions made to present oneself are affecting one's identity in different social settings and situations.

Constructed identity in tourism can be a reflection of underlying motivation (Smed, 2012). Actions through consumption of activities or use of nature in tourism, can represent various traits of people and their behaviour to create an identity. Ecotourists are interested in observing, learning, discover and appreciate diversity of cultural and biological experiences while having a responsible attitude toward protecting the ecosystem and the local community (World Tourism Organisation, 2019). For tourists, to be associated and identified as a person who value these aspects and can be met with a sense of achievement and satisfaction of being in a certain position in a community.

The social identity of being a birdwatcher can create an image of being considerate of nature and other species, which correlate with the analysed data. Certain knowledge and behaviour can contribute to high standing in some communities and relationships thus the person can increase or perceive a position in the community (Bourdieu, 2010). Additionally, dedication in exploring and watching a wide variety of birds by travelling often and over longer distances can be perceived as having high social standing in a community, with this, social hierarchies play a significant role in people's motivations, identity, and relationships. In mid-February 2022, for the first time in Denmark the white-headed duck was spotted on Hornsherred, in Frederikssund, Zealand, which drew large numbers of Danish birdwatchers to the area with expectation of seeing it. In approximately 24 hours 160 people from all over Denmark had seen the bird with numbers rising the following days (Bernholm, 2022), which express dedication flexibility and interest of Danish birdwatchers. Moreover, it reflects the importance of and expectation from the community that dedicated birdwatchers should not miss the opportunity to see rare birds which can influence individual birdwatchers standing in the community.

Bordieu (1986) is known for theorising capital in other forms than in the economic aspects. He theorised the four forms of *economic, cultural, social* and *symbolic capital* (Macbeth et.al. 2004). *Social capital* was identified as recognition of resources, such as knowledge and social interactions that comes from connections and relationships. To gain recognition of the social capital or resources one has as a tourist, one must be perceived as having the "right" or fitting identity in the social community by forming durable relationships through birdwatching. As explored in the analysis, the continuous development of photography skills was important to multiple of the participants because these skills framed the participants motivation, identity, and further social capital in the community of birdwatchers and nature photographers. The social capital gained through knowledge and social interactions can create opportunities and standing in the community, however it can lead to high pressure and critique towards oneself because one is never satisfied with what one has, as were expressed by participant 7 in sub-chapter *1.1 Photography* of the analysis.

Motivation in traditional psychology and in this thesis have been defined and limited to individual and personal human aspects. Tajfel and Turner (1979) defined social identity theory to incorporate larger social aspects and dynamics (Smed, 2012). Humans are social beings, with strong individual traits and need to have a place in social groups where they

share interests and therefore, can adapt behaviour to the social community one finds interesting (Smed, 2012). In tourism there are a wide variety of themes(niches) and special interest tourism to accommodate tourists' motivation and identity in communities. This perspective goes beyond the conclusions and insights offered in the analysis of this thesis and suggests that birdwatching can also be understood as a community activity, and a strong identity-constructing activity for individuals as well as the society of birdwatchers.

The next sub-chapter of discussion, explore the Slow tourism phenomenon and how nature-based tourism have aspects which are important in this movement.

### Slow tourism

The phenomenon of slow tourism has developed and become important for people's wellbeing (Smith and Diekmann, 2017). Slow tourism has been difficult to define, however it has developed from `slow movement` and the practice of not being bound to a schedule or time (Moirá et.al., 2017). Enjoying experiences by taking the amount of time that oneself believe is required in the moment and not at a pre-planned pace, can enhance the enjoyment of the experience and contribute to wellbeing. Two main forces of slow tourism are *environmental sustainability* and *wellbeing*, both in a personal and social perspective (Moore 2012 in Oh et.al. 2016).

Oh et.al. (2016) identified six motivational factors in slow tourism: *relaxation, self-reflection, escape, novelty-seeking, engagement, and discovery*. These overlaps with motivational factors found in studies outside of the slow tourism trend, as well as in this thesis. A wider adaptation or influence of these factors can change the demands for experiences and activities in tourism for the future.

Dickinson and Lumsdon (2010) point towards three principles of a new tourism system, 1. reduction of tourism trips, 2. Development of low-carbon tourism and 3. Enrichment of the tourist experience. These principles can contribute to a wider adaption of slow tourism as implementation in people's life and travel patterns. Although, implementation and adaptation of practical solutions for slow tourism are ongoing, the pace is moderate as people's mindset, motivation and identity impact tourists' behaviour and travel choices.

The theme "Rethinking tourism" are the focus for World Tourism Day 2022 (UNWTO, 2022). A new ethical standard for tourism and how people consider nature and wellbeing could be influenced by the concept of slow tourism and experiences. Specific categories in

nature-based tourism, such as birdwatching could be leading forces to contribute to a development of modern nature ethics in tourism as a new phenomenon. As tourism is one of the largest industries that have negative impacts on the environment, a change in tourists' behaviour, motivations and identity through responsible choices and slow tourism might be factors to help reduce the impacts tourism has on the current climate crisis.

Moreover, people's wellbeing has become more important over the last decade and have also grown to be important in travel and tourism. People tend to be more drawn towards tourism and special tourism activities which give them local and authentic experiences when travelling, but also to find a suitable work-life balance. Tourists want to explore as locals and the wellbeing of oneself, the local community and environment are becoming more important to tourists (Phukka et.al.; Oh et.al., 2016). Being considerate of oneself and experiences through the tourism resources and activities one utilises have therefore become more important over the last years under the trend slow tourism (Maira, 2017).

The construction of identity from motivation in the previous sub-chapter are also connected to wellbeing. Tourism can through gaining new experiences and perspectives influence development and growth:

*“Constructing and re-defining the self may be an integral part of wellbeing. ... Travel can offer physical, psychological, cognitive affective and spiritual experiences that can change one's assumptions, expectations, world views and fundamental structures of the self.”* (Smith and Diekmann, 2017, p. 7).

Tourism can consist of activities that will enhance wellbeing in people's life. This can consist of varied aspects and activities for different people, depending on individual factors and interests. Especially research on spending time by water (ocean, waterfalls and lakes) and forests have showed health benefits and increase in wellbeing (Smith and Diekmann, 2017). Additionally, Smith and Dikeman's research suggest sustainable ecotourism and ethical indigenous tourism to be more optimal in enhancing wellbeing, quality of life and authentic happiness for tourists (2017). This relates to birdwatching as an activity in nature-based and ecotourism which can be more sustainable and conscious choice of tourism experiences, because birdwatching is inherently *slow* and considerate of nature, as also expressed by some participants.



The quite common term “quality over quantity” are referred to in many different aspects of life. It entails the view of striving for experiences or producing something in large numbers often does not equals it being better than fewer samples or experiences. Tourists becoming more aware of the meaning and joy of rare experiences can have greater meaning, influence and contribute to wellbeing than large number of experiences. Quality experiences can contribute to fewer tourists at a destination, while maintaining or increasing economic and social benefits to the community (Gilmore, 2017; Liu et. al. 2021). This have also been expressed through the empirical material of this thesis, where many of the participants can spend longer periods in nature to have relatively short encounters with birds.

Birdwatching has, through the empirical material of this thesis, shown to be an activity which people like to implement as much in their daily life as possible because it helps to slow down the pace and expectations one might experience in life. However, birdwatchers also experience some pressure of wanting to capture great photos of the birds and therefore set high expectations and goals to themselves. Some birdwatchers can sit or walk for hours because they are interested in the process of gaining or experiencing the special moments of watching birds. In extension, tourism can be a tool for peoples mental and physical well-being for some people in certain situations, but simultaneously at the same time contribute to higher demands and pressure.

### *Summary of Discussion*

The section of *Birdwatching, communities and identities* and *Slow tourism* in this discussion have broadened the perspectives of motivation and how it is relevant in the tourism industry. This have shown how interconnected motivation is to identity and social capital in communities. The broadened perspective of *birdwatching, communities and identities* explain how birdwatching can be a community activity and construct both individual and community identity. The *slow tourism* phenomenon is constructed on the factor's environmental sustainability and wellbeing. Motivational factors researched in slow tourism, correspond to the analysed birdwatchers' elaborations of the motivational factors. Tourists want quality experiences which are meaningful and have little impact on nature, this can improve wellbeing and sustainability.

In the next main chapter of Conclusion, the findings from the empirical material are summarized and conclusion for the problem statement is presented.

## Conclusion

This project aimed to explore and understand the depth of birdwatcher's motivations. Relevant theoretical concepts and methods were used to provide clarity of the problem statement. In this final part of the thesis, I summarise and draw conclusions to the problem statement:

*What are Danish birdwatchers' motives for conducting this activity and what does the motives entail?*

The following sections consist of the main findings from the analysis, in addition to the wider perspectives from the discussion which are relevant for birdwatching.

The first part of the analysis *Socio-psychological aspects* showed how social community and time alone in nature were equally important, in different ways. The category of *Photography* contributed for some birdwatchers to enhanced focus and attention to their surroundings. In addition, self-critical thoughts of photos taken, focus on improving photography skills and competition in taking great photos influenced how the participants watched birds and shared their photos. The category *Relaxation and inner peace* showed how both a patience and excitement of birdwatching contributed to relaxation, which for some were a meditative state. An alert calmness to one's surroundings when birdwatching contributed to relaxation, which also were wanted for some participants to distract themselves. *Social community and relationship* category was the category which engaged most participants through expressing their views. Sharing the birdwatching experience during or after the activity by participating in online community groups, could make the birdwatching experience better for some participants. This could also contribute to a richer experience because one gained more impressions because there were more eyes to spot interesting birds and more information and tips were exchanged.

The second part of the analysis *Cultural aspects* entailed the motives of novelty and education, and how this were motivation for, and experienced by the participants. The *Knowledge and learning* category showed participants joy of learning new facts or behaviour from the birds and many found it giving to share this knowledge to contribute to other birdwatchers increased knowledge. Moreover, a few participants found learning of birdwatching to be great to increase and maintain their cognitive abilities. The *experience nature and aesthetics* category included the participants perspectives of enjoying the beauty in

birds' colours and nature, they were fascinated by change in season of nature and the shift in birds' behaviour and attitudes. Moreover, they did not wish to disturb the birds and the natural environment, which is why many participants watch birds alone or in very small groups.

The last and third part of the analysis, *human-animal connection* contributed to an understanding of birdwatching motivation to be broadened from the human centred aspects. As mentioned, the early research and exploration of existing literature for this thesis, in the field of motivation of birdwatching as nature-based tourism, did not guide me in the direction of a connection or relationship between birdwatchers and birds. The participants explained their relationship to birdwatching and the connection to birds, some participants were more direct and reflected in expressing a connection to the birds than others. Participants found a connection through keeping up with how the birds collaborate, the growth of new baby birds and their sharing of food. A thorough understanding of birdwatchers' motivations are missed without this aspect.

Through the discussion for this thesis, birdwatching as a part of *Birdwatching, communities and identities* and conscious behaviour in nature through the *Slow tourism* phenomenon were elaborated upon. Motivation is closely connected to identity and the construction of identity from one's own perception and presentation to others. Dedication and knowledge are factors of the social capital people have and can contribute to certain hierarchical standing in relationships and communities. The factors environmental sustainability and wellbeing can contribute to a further shift in the tourism industry, where tourists engage in quality experiences over quantity in a larger extent than current practices. The identified motivational factors of this thesis correspond to identified motivational factors of slow tourism and can be seen as expanding focus points of tourists.

The research has shown great variety of peoples motivations of why they enjoy birdwatching. Birdwatching, with other categories in nature-based tourism and slow tourism can contribute to further development of modern nature ethics as a new phenomenon in tourism. With the background of tourists being respectable and considerate of nature, through environmental sustainability and wellbeing.

There is a need for more research on the topic and specifically the aspect of human-animal connection. It would be interesting to look further into birdwatchers' motivations, specifically

the connection to other species, to understand people and why they have the attitudes they do, as this is a research field which is not extensively explored in Europe. Looking further into theories or former research which include connection between humans and animals will contribute to understanding this motive.

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## Appendix

See the separate appendix document.