

# Biodiversity, Recreation and Tourism: A one night stand or something more?

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C. Michael Hall

University of Canterbury, New Zealand; Docent, University of Oulu,  
Visiting Professor, Linnaeus University

<https://scholar.google.co.nz/citations?user=d5GFhXYAAAAJ&hl=en>

michael.hall@canterbury.ac.nz

# Contributions and issues

- The real contribution of tourism and recreation to biodiversity conservation has been over-hyped and romanticized. Not least because of the idea of ecotourism.
- Scale is a poorly dealt with issue in tourism and recreation related studies of biodiversity in terms of our understandings and recognition of
  - Biodiversity: ecosystem, species, genetic & recognition that tourism and recreation related biodiversity conservation occurs not just in 'natural' areas but must also be assessed in agricultural, modified landscapes and urban areas.
  - Spatial scale: individuals, specific locations/populations, regions/destinations, global
  - Temporal scale: over what time scale are we assessing the role that tourism plays?
- Fundamentally, what is the strategy? As it may even be appropriate to have some sacrifice areas is it fulfills wider biodiversity conservation goals.

# Tourism and recreation in relation to major strategies of biodiversity conservation

| Strategy                            | Element  | Role of Tourism and Recreation  |
|-------------------------------------|--|---|
| In situ conservation<br>(On site)   | Establish protected area network, with appropriate management practices, corridors to link fragments; restore degraded habitats within and outside protected areas | Tourism economic justification for protected area framework given their role as attractions; volunteer tourism may also assist. Tourism also important for development of environmental knowledge |
| Ex situ conservation<br>(Off site)  | Establish botanical and zoological gardens, conservation stands; banks of germplasm, pollen, seed, seedlings, tissue culture, gene and DNA                         | Botanical and zoological gardens are significant tourism attractions; volunteer tourism also significant; significant educational tourism function  |
| Reduction of anthropogenic pressure | Reduce anthropogenic (human) pressure on natural species populations by altering human activities and behaviours. May also include cultivating species elsewhere   | Species populations may have role as tourism attractions; some species which can be sustainably harvested may also be used for hunting and fishing  |
| Reduction of biotic pressure        | Removal or reduction of invasive exotic species and pests that compete with indigenous species   | Ensure good biosecurity practice; interpretation programmes to support eradication of invasive species and pests  |
| Rehabilitation / Restoration        | Identify and rehabilitate threatened species and environments; launch augmentation, reintroduction or introduction programmes; rewilding                           | Species can become tourism attractions; volunteers also significant   |

# Positive and negative contributions of tourism and recreation to biodiversity conservation

| Positive  | Negative  |
|---|---|
| An economic justification for biodiversity conservation practices, including the establishment of protected areas, national parks and reserves (public and private) and conservation of refugia | Contributes to changes in ecosystem conditions, particularly ecosystems in high value amenity areas such as coastal and alpine areas, as well as more localized effects such as trampling                                   |
| A source of financial and political support for biodiversity maintenance and conservation   | Outside of protected areas contributes to the fragmentation of natural areas and a reduction in their size  |
| An economic alternative to other forms of development that be negatively impact biodiversity and to inappropriate exploitation or harvesting of wildlife, such as poaching                      | Is a major vector for the introduction of exotic species and diseases. In some cases introductions may be deliberate, e.g. for hunting, fishing or aesthetic reasons.   |
| A mechanism for educating people about the benefits of biodiversity conservation  | Is a significant contributor to climate change  |
| Potentially involves local people in the maintenance of biodiversity and incorporating local ecological knowledge in biodiversity management practices  | Tourist and recreational activities can lead to changes in animal behavior and affect evolutionary processes, while consumptive activities such as hunting, fishing and foraging if poorly managed can lead to species loss |

# Are Tourism and Recreation Trade-Offs?: Short-term gain or long-term pain?

- Short-term conservation benefits *must* be traded off against the long-term implications of tourism development and related mobility
- Green growth is a dangerous myth
- Despite the downsides of tourism the harsh reality is that because of the capacity of humans to over breed, over consume and over tour, together with a narrow economic approach to political decision-making, the economic justification of tourism to 'save' a charismatic species, variety, environment, landscape is a valuable stop gap measure.
- But such a stop gap is only useful if there is a wholesale change with respect to the nature of tourism as well as humanity's actions – which, let's be honest, is not exactly an optimistic finishing point.

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