

# Managing the Wildlife Tourism Experience: Protecting of Wild Animals and Safeguarding of the Tourists

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**Abstract:** In recent years there has been growing interest in nature tourism defined as wildlife tourism, which focuses on the tours giving the opportunity to observe wild animals in their natural environment. The aim of this paper is to show the impact negative and positive of wildlife tourism. This paper also intends to present opportunities for different kind of wildlife tourism management for nature conservation (including the regulations of the so-called Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) and management for wildlife tourism observers—which takes into account the possibility of tourists' satisfaction as well as the protection of animals in their natural habitats. The analysis is going to show the possibility of such innovative management, which would make possible the satisfaction of tourists, as well as protection of wild animals in their natural environment at the same time, so that the observance. The focus of this paper is therefore on the restrictions that have been made by managers and decision-making persons for the safety of tourists and the protection of animals.

**Key words:** wildlife tourism; management; nature conservation

**JEL codes:** D63, H11, K22

A place where animals are protected in their natural habitat is called wildlife sanctuaries

## 1. Introduction

Wildlife tourism is an important part of the tourism industry in many countries, including many in Africa (especially South Africa, Kenya, Tanzania and Botswana), South American countries (particularly in Ecuador—Galapagos), Australia, India, Canada, Indonesia, Bangladesh, Malaysia and many other countries (Wildlife tourism: Facts, Discussion Forum and Encyclopedia Article, 2012).

This type of tourism has experienced rapid growth in recent years around the world, and is closely tailored to the eco-tourism and sustainable tourism. Wildlife tourism is usually animal friendly tourism (Higginbottom, 2004; Sparrow, 2011). The opportunity to see animals in their natural habitat rewarding visitors, and may even have positive impact on the improvement of their mental state (Barnes, 2007). The issue of wildlife tourism is still relatively new and requires further studies in this area. Usually wildlife tourism is defined as tourism related to the ability to see animals in their natural habitat (Curtin, 2010). Many authors emphasized development of wildlife tourism (Higginbottom, 2004; Sparrow, 2011).

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An estimated 12 million tourists choose wildlife trips (Wildlife tourism—Caribbean Tourism Organization, 2012) which are already currently about 10 percent of all tourism (Sparrow, 2011). Looking at the definition of wildlife in many of today's regulations on environmental protection such as the United States (Endangered Species Act of 1973 ESA) and in Australia (The Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999, EPBC Act) it should be noted that the observation of the living fish are separated from the wildlife.

Wildlife Tourism concept can be defined as tourism based on encounters with animals (not domestic) in their natural habitat (Tourism and the environment, 2012). In practice, this tourism offers the opportunity to watch the wild mammals (land—for example, in Africa, the so-called Big 5, bears in Canada or the U.S., Bengal tigers in India, etc.) and sea-mammals (such as whales, dolphins and sea-lions). Whose so-called bird-watching tourism sector as part of nature has its own growing market, but the definitions of tourism wildlife are reserved for tourist trips, whose main objective is to observe the local fauna excluding bird-watching (Wildlife tourism—Caribbean Tourism Organization, 2012). This paper aims is to show the impact of wildlife tourism on natural environment. This paper also intends to present opportunities for both wildlife tourism management and for nature conservation (including regulations for tourism) and management for wildlife tourism observers—which takes into account the possibility of satisfaction of tourists as well as the protection of animals in their natural habitat.

## **2. Negative and Positive Impact on Natural Environment of Wildlife Tourism**

Having regard to the regulations (as well proper planning and preparation) wildlife tourism should provide both conservation and the protection of possible contact between wild animals and observers (Schanzel & McIntosh, 2000). Managing wildlife tourism should always balance the needs of wildlife with the needs of people using its observations.

Most of the research on tourism related to watching of wildlife is concentrated in the countries listed in the introduction. In addition, areas of research seem to be carried out in the tourist destinations around the world, offering opportunities to observe wildlife and are related mainly to the impact of tourism endangered species. Some indigenous species are synonyms of a tourism destination. For example, kangaroos—Australia, Everglades (USA)—alligators, polar bears synonym of Arctic, lions, giraffes and elephants—Africa and India—Bengal tigers, whales Kaikoura, New Zealand (Cloke & Perkins, 2005) and Puerto Piraminde in Argentine Patagonia (Tremblay, 2001; Wildlife tourism—Caribbean Tourism Organization, 2012). Wildlife tourism can also be driven by part of the “last chance to see the” endangered species such as polar bears, tigers, gorillas and pandas.

The development of wildlife tourism can cause serious disruption to the animals in their natural environment. (The natural environment encompasses all living and non-living things occurring naturally on Earth or some region thereof. It is an environment that encompasses the interaction of all living species including wild animals (Johnson et al., 1997). Watching wildlife can scare animals, disrupt their feeding and nesting sites, or acclimate them to the presence of humans.

This is how a negative effect on the natural wildlife tourism will be dependent on the scale of the development of tourism and tourists behavior.

Feeding wild animals for tourists can have serious consequences for the lives of animals. Artificial feeding by tourists was caused the breakdown of the system of territorial breeding land iguanas on South Plaza in Galapagos Islands (Roe, Leader-Williams & Barry Dalal-Clayton, 1997). On the Galapagos Islands, overfeeding animals by tourists was so strong that, when stopped, some of the animals were not able to locate their natural

food sources. Another example of negative tourism influence refers to the grizzly bears. The diet of some grizzly bears in Yellowstone National Park consisted, to a large extent, of food wastes left by visitors at park refuse sites. When these sites were closed, bears have shown a significant reduction in body size, reproductive rate and litter size (Proposal to Remove Yellowstone Area Population of Grizzly Bears from List of Threatened and Endangered Wildlife., 2005). Wildlife tourism can also cause interference with other disturbances in the habits of life of the animals. Female harp seals ceased to occupy their pups when tourists were present in the Gulf of St Lawrence Canada (Wildlife Tourism Wikipedia, 2012). Those females that remained with their offspring spent significantly less time to nurture children more time watching tourists. Similar situations occurred during the whale watching by tourists. Whale calves typically remained constant physical contact with the mother, but separated from her, had attached more to the side of the ship (Laurie Murison's top ten quirky whale facts, 2011). It should be noted as well that watching some species of wildlife by tourists increasing exposure caused some species to predation.

Wildlife tourism brings as well positive results, referring to the lives of animals in natural conditions. These positive impacts include (Pradesh, 2005):

- the animal habitat restoration and supporting research, are also considered in order to achieve conservation objectives,
- the use of income from tourism to finance initiatives in the field of nature conservation,
- the local communities hosting tourists interested in observing animals have benefited from the influence of tourists and the motivation to act in a manner that promotes the conservation of nature,
- the education visitors will also that they act to promote or enhance the protection of wild animals living in their natural habitat.

### **3. Regulations for the Protection of Biodiversity in the Management of Wildlife**

Animal rights referring to the issue of their protection are before all things. It is necessary to know the regulations of the so-called biodiversity action plan (BAP), which is an internationally recognized program of solving the problems of endangered species and habitats so it is designed to protect and restore natural biological systems. The original impetus for these plans results from the 1992 Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). In 2009, 191 countries have ratified the CBD, but only a fraction of these have developed substantive BAP documents.

The main elements of the BAP typically include: preparing inventories of biological information for selected species or habitats, assessment of the conservation status of the species in particular ecosystems, creating targets for conservation and restoration, and establishing budgets, timelines and institutional partnerships for the implementation of the BAP. In the UK, was developed in 1992 Biodiversity Action Plan UK (UK BAP), 1992-2012. In 2007 in the UK, there was a new action plan for biodiversity (BAP) which identified 1,149 species and habitats in need of protection and protection. United States launched a national program for the protection of endangered species as the endangered species act in 1976. So, while the U.S. is not a signatory to the agreement ratified, they have probably the longest and most comprehensive program to protect species than in any other country. In 2009, 1,132 species in the U.S. have received active recovery plan. Australia has developed a detailed and rigorous action plan on biodiversity in 2005 (Commonwealth of Australia, Department of Environment and Heritage). The plan estimates that the total number of native species could reach 560,000, much of which is endemic.

In May 2011 the European Commission adopted a new strategy to stop the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services in the EU by 2020, in line with the commitments made at the tenth meeting of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) held in Nagoya, Japan in 2010 years. The European Charter for Sustainable Tourism similarly emphasizes not only the need to ensure the protection and preservation of the environment but the importance of broad cooperation in this regard. (For example, for the protection of dolphins and whales) Cooperation may create favorable conditions for the creation and improvement of laws for the protection of wildlife management but it can also create more difficulties for the emergency management practices required for the habitat of animals.

These acts of biological biodiversity plans are reflected in the management of wild animal populations and their habitats for the benefit of both humans and wildlife.

There are two general types of wildlife management:

(1) Manipulative management acts on a population, either changing its numbers by direct means or influencing numbers by the indirect means of altering food supply, habitat, density of predators, or prevalence of disease. This is appropriate when a population is to be harvested, or when it slides to an unacceptably low density or increases to an unacceptably high level. Controlling the population of wild animals can be one of the following forms:

- Managing entire animal habitats,
- Management “different animals” that cause changes in living population today (National Parks and Wildlife Regulation, 2009).

(2) Care management is preventive or protective. The purpose is to minimize external influences the population and its habitat. It is appropriate in a national park where one of the stated goals is to protect ecological processes. It is also proper for conservation of a threatened species where the threat is of external origin rather than being intrinsic to the system (Groom, Meff & Carroll, 2006).

It should be emphasized that we are living in the “Age of Restoration” where we are seeking to create sustainable cultural landscape for humans and wildlife (Wildlife Tourism Australia Politics, 2009).

Analyzing the relationship of tourism wildlife conservation issues show, that a key issue for the protection of wildlife habitat are the limitations in the form of the creation of special protection zones, viewing platforms, walkways special called board walk paths, etc. These restrictions are being made to ensure safe by looking at nature visitors or tourists for both security and for the protection of animals. Without them, wildlife tourism is simply a short-term resource extraction and has no role in modern sustainable society. In all countries where there is a lot of interest in watching wildlife, both to ensure its continued survival and development as well as securing the sustainability of such tourism is a difficult task. While governments have a very special role in ensuring the protection and proper legislative measures for the protection (often acting as the central authority), other actors involved in the management of wildlife tourism are also important including: habitat managers, tour operators, private landowners. All of them have an important responsibility to protect animals living in the wild. Finally, the tourists are the key to financial success, and if properly managed and informed can be valuable promoters of conservation.

It should be noted the importance of access charges and license fees earmarked for conservation. These fees are set wildlife tourism management as the price for access to wildlife (Higginbottom et al., 2004).

The final aspect of the future on the opportunity to observe nature is the role of technology (Higginbottom et al., 2004). Enthusiasm for the proximity of nature and the impact of wildlife tourism relating to various species of

wild animals can sometimes be solved by technology through virtual access in many areas of their natural habitat (e.g., penguins).

If modern technology to facilitate observation of the animals is combined with physical proximity to their place of habitat, tourists can have a really interesting opportunity to observe the wildlife living in comfort and safety, with little or no impact on the flora and fauna. Advanced video image transmission can bring visitors to experience an extremely space-related data animal habitat although it is unlikely that in this way a substitute for a real tourism. Management of wildlife tourism requires both relating to the protection of wildlife and safeguarding of the tourists presence. Management of tourists presence requires information on many aspects referring to the tourists. Different users also have the requirements or expectations of the restrictions resulting from management actions taken to protect wildlife.

#### **4. Managing of Wildlife Tourism Business**

The appropriate management of tourism business require: estimate the impact of spending by tourists determined to see wild animals in their habitats, analysis of the economic value of wildlife to meet tourism and other purposes and examining the implications of these values for the optimal economic management of natural resources, the use of economic policy instruments in order to achieve better results with nature tourism.

The proper management of wildlife tourism include knowledge referring to different expectations or forecasts of demand for this kind of tourism which can be used to assess changes in the environment (Tisdell & Wilson, 2004) and to examine the question of its sustainability. Compounds of sustainable development of wildlife tourism are complex and may jeopardize the conservation of biodiversity. Sometimes “commercial” character of wildlife tourism development contributes to adverse outcomes from the point of view of nature conservation.

Understanding the level of demand for visitors to experience wildlife tourism is important for two main reasons. First, managers of private tourism sectors use estimates of demand for different types of wildlife tourism (or other aspects of tourism activities) in order to develop services and facilities. Second, managers of protected areas covered by the estimates utilize the knowledge of the demand to develop plans which include the development of infrastructure of the permitted activities and levels of its use. For both of these reasons it is important to appropriately estimate of accurate requirements. If the available data overestimate the demand than managers can develop wildlife tourism in large sizes and this inaccurate estimation of demand may indirectly contribute to adverse effects. Revaluation of demand can also cause unnecessary pressure on managers of protected areas to allocate funds to increase infrastructure and facilities, at the expense of reducing the funds available for other purposes needed local.

The suitable management of wildlife tourism require business plan, balance sheets, cash flow forecast I which are the absolute minimum that is required for any successful tourism business. Specialized wildlife travel and tourism companies offer most often for tourists so-called package tours organized within the mass tourism, with hardly allow to get “taste” of places associated with the observation of wild animal and their habitats. Top in this field wildlife tour companies organizing small groups of tourists and there are trying to use the so-called Triple Bottom Line strategies (TBL) which are the best from sustainability of wildlife tourism point of view. Originally TBL was coined by John Elkington (1997) (Brown, Dillard & Marshall, 2006). The mentioned concept assumes that there are three basics pillars of business, i.e., social, environmental and financial. TBL allows for

sustainable tourism development and long-term activities. Tourism enterprises operating in the field of wildlife tourism should be balanced, profitable, have easy access to markets and lead management in a strategic way.

## 5. Managing the Presence of Tourists Visiting Animal Habitats

Understanding the nature of tourists choosing to spend their free time in contact with the animals living in the wild is important, but little studied in terms of their relationship with wildlife tourism are limited (Moscardo & Saltzer, 2004).

Analysis of the nature of tourism marketing allows (Dolciner & Lee, 2008; also *A Good Practice Guide, Tourism for Nature and Development*, 2010) to determine:

- Which customers are interested in wildlife tourism?
- What are their needs?
- What are the expectations and motivations?
- How tourists can respond to the recommendations arising from the management of wildlife sustainable tourism requirements?

Understanding how to manage the presence of tourists visiting animal habitats requires the knowledge of the impact on human behavior. There are four sets of functions related to the behavior of the people located in the wild (Kuenzi & Mc Nelly, 2006):

- Interaction-activities that visitors can take and which have an impact on fauna;
- The forces that generate the actions described above and have an influence on the management and planning;
- Values-defined as meaning, the sense, the priority of which form are the basis of human thought, behavior and culture;
- Perception—Perception is based in part on experience, but also on culture, education and communication and in turn impact on attitudes and behavior.

The success and sustainability management should be guided by wildlife tourism following information about visitors:

- The level of demand based on their experience of the natural;
- Characteristics of the desired experience nature;
- Characteristics of visitors, which can affect their behavior and satisfaction;
- Visitor's satisfaction and perception of quality of service;
- Guests reactions for management actions.

Wildlife tourism attracted usually tourists, equally men and women, aged 50-65 years old in most high-income tourists (Wildlife tourism—Caribbean Tourism Organization, 2012).

Reasonable theory of sightseeing and wildlife observation suggests a reasonable tourism (Mindfull Tourism, 2012), coming from the obvious fact that the process by which, a tourist is in contact with nature and never acted deliberately reckless, bearing in mind that the state of mindfulness is the most active cognitive processing.

Effects associated with mindfulness include perceptions of personal control, emotions, learning and satisfaction. By contrast, thoughtless visitors are more likely to report boredom, lack of control and interest in and experience dissatisfaction. Tourists—visitors should therefore be more likely to engage in contact with nature while doing it so as not to leave a trace. Managers and tour operators of wildlife tourism should seek ways to prepare for such a management strategy to encourage the tourists to a positive interpretation making them

satisfying their experiences (Mindfull Tourism, 2012).

Tourists to achieve satisfaction referred to most frequently involved in the wildlife tourism would like to:

- be closer to the rare and unique specimens of wildlife,
- get closer to pristine environment,
- see the wide variety of animals,
- listen to the knowledgeable tour guide,
- find new interesting information about wildlife.

There is a general opinion among experts on wildlife tourism that tourists always prefer to watch wild animals in natural environments (Fredline & Faulkner, 2001). In addition to more accurate estimates of the overall level of demand for tourism-related wildlife observation necessary to measure the demand to know the profile of wildlife tourism segment of the market and the type of tourists who may be primarily motivated by the same stimulus, eg to observe wild animals (Fredline & Faulkner, 2001). Basically, in order to determine what types of visitors we have to do, would be to check whether they are more interested in education for wildlife tourism, and are more interested in the general observation of nature or rare species or represent a greater or weaker normal level of physical activity. It would also examine the reactions of visitors to the management strategy that affects the nature tourism, natural environment and includes attempts to change the behavior of tourists, often by restricting access to nature. When the restrictions referred are supported by the appropriate interpretation, the guests follow the prescribed limit (Reynolds & Braithwaite, 2001).

The wildlife tourism management pay attention to the planning and organization of the so-called tour package that allow you to better impose and maintain order in the group of tourists who have better protection for their close intercourse associated with wild and dangerous animals, agree to submit to the rigors of the rules under management. (In particular example relating to Grizzly bears in Denali Park in Alaska “A hiker in Alaska’s Denali National Park photographed a grizzly bear for at least eight minutes before the bear mauled and killed him in the first fatal attack in the park’s history)

The analysis of a number of recommendations and the provisions relating to direct management behavior of tourists during the observation of animals in close proximity in their natural habitat most important seems to emphasize the following rules:

- Observe animals from a safe distance.
  - Follow the rules for the management and stay in the sanctuary areas—trails.
  - Avoid areas that are important to the rest of nature, feeding and parenting.
  - Do not block the line of animals to move or escape route.
  - Do not chase or harass the animals.
  - Do not bring food in order to attract wildlife.
  - Limit the time you spend watching an animal.
  - Avoid animals that behave aggressively.
  - Keep calm-animals approach very slowly and quietly. When they begin to show obvious signs of alarm, stop.
  - Always speak softly and stay as still. Loud noises and sudden movements can scare animals that will go away quickly.
  - Avoid touching the animals, because it causes them to be “stressed” and can get away from you if you do.
- Viruses can also be supplied to them.
- Avoid hand feeding animals live in natural areas as a natural food may harm them (Wildlife Tourism

Australia Politics, 2009 also Newsome et. al., 2005).

It should be noted that is hard to find the correct answer in a wide-ranging discussion referring animal feeding. Regarding the feeding of animals living in the wild scientific opinion is divided. The whole issue is clouded by the philosophical views and personal preferences intertwined with real environmental concern or caring. It seems, however, that should be accepted in this regard to the opinion expressed by the WTA (Wildlife Tourism Australia Politics, 2009) stating that “the feeding of wildlife by tourists and tour operators can cause serious damage to people, individual animals, populations or ecosystems, especially in arid areas or other relatively intact natural areas”.

Tourists who understand wildlife tourism usually follow the above rules. Tourists choosing wildlife tourism not only as a one-day trip may be admitted to the “serious” nature tourists (Mintel, 2008).

## 6. Conclusion

In recent years, a growing number of travel companies offering wildlife tourism throughout the world, as well increasing the number of tourists for whom contact with animals becomes in them a primary motivation to travel.

The analysis points to the fact that the Wildlife Tourism has a positive impact on the protection of wild animals by taking care of the maintenance and improvement of animal habitats

The growing tendency to use tourism as a tool of protection was reflected in the initiatives and increased commitment to promote wildlife viewing.

In summary of the analysis must be emphasized again that: the management of wildlife tourism include protecting of wild animals and safeguarding the tourists. Management of tourists requires information on the many aspects of specific visitors. Effective management requires a good understanding of the level of demand for different forms of tourism wildlife experience. It is also important to calculate the amount of infrastructure required to manage the wildlife tourism in different places in order to make appropriate decisions concerning the management of tourists and awareness of their potential impacts on the environment. Knowing all these facts should be used in carefully planning and preparing the observation of wild animals in their natural habitat called wildlife sanctuary.

The above-mentioned goals and objectives in the field of environmental protection can be achieved in particular through the creation of wildlife tourism guides including rules of behavior expressed in the imperative form indicating what not to do (see rule shown above). The right path leading to the conservation of nature understand the user behavior thus effectively preventing of the negative impact of tourism on wildlife habitat and at the same time taking into account the possibility of giving satisfaction to tourists.

Watching wildlife has a deep emotional impact on people. This experience is crucial for human mental health and prosper. The very existence of nature can actually improve the quality of our lives. Proper management of wildlife tourism can be beneficial to tourists and most of all the animals living in their habitat to be protected from man.

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