

Eco-tourism

Sport & Tourism, Ecotourism



Eco-Tourism Introduction The article reviewed in this paper is d ' Trouble in Paradise' and was written by Adam Piore. Published in the July 2nd, 2002 edition of the Newsweek magazine, the article discusses some of the issues and effects resulting from the introduction and spread of the concept of ' eco-tourism' to several parts of the world. The article cites several examples to warn that eco-tourism is currently being exploited in several ways resulting in serious damage to the environment. Thus, the article notes the importance on the part of organizations and governments to take steps to implement the concepts of eco-tourism in an efficient and sustainable manner.

Major issues The article begins with the startling case of John Gray, a tour operator in Thailand, who discovered a number of tidal sea caves. His efforts to promote the location as an eco-tourism destination, albeit without upsetting the local fragile eco-system, proved ineffective over the years as he met with stiff competition, received threats from local gangs and eventually could not do anything to control the influx of tourists. In the end, the unabated activities of operators, tourists and the local government have severely distorted the delicate ecological balance existing in the area. The article also discusses the evolution of the concept of co-tourism as a way to protect fragile eco-systems and deliver some long-term benefits to the local populations. The power of marketing and the widespread acceptance of the concept have resulted in an explosive growth in the eco-tourism industry the world over. This has not only resulted in a severe harm to the environment due to the activities of tourists (like cutting trees for campfires or collecting stalactite fragments as souvenirs), but has also displaced local tribes and natives. These people complain a lack of inclusion in the decision-making

framework within any related initiatives. Conclusion The article describes the historical evolution of eco-tourism through the efforts of a young Mexican architect who succeeded in providing an alternative source of livelihood for local fishermen as tour guides. Eco-tourism has indeed succeeded in transforming former poachers as saviors of these habitats. Nevertheless, the article warns that eco-tourism may end up becoming a victim of its own success. There needs to be some careful thought towards enacting laws that can contain the negative effects of eco-tourism without which the impact on ecosystems will be unimaginable. The article also hints towards the possibility of using cases like that of John Gray to publish similar stories so that environmentalists around the world can learn from past mistakes and take effective steps to protect the local environment in every possible way.