

# The development of tourism

Sport & Tourism



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

9. The development of tourism around certain key wildlife species can be problematic. Evaluate strategies which are used, around the world, to seek a working balance in the Nature-People relationship? Tourism is the world's largest industry with nature-based ecotourism seeing rapid growth since its initial arrival in the 1980s. It is estimated by the World Tourism Organisation that nature tourism generates 7% of all international travel expenditure (Lindberg, 1997) and this figure will have increased rapidly over recent years.

It's increase in popularity is due to a number of factors; tourists becoming increasingly bored of the typical sun, sea and sand holiday's, the increase in global awareness or environmental issues such as global warming, deforestation and conservation efforts. Ecotourism has the ability through its economic benefits to increase conservation, improve the economic well-being of local communities and national governments and educate people on the threats facing fragile environments around the world. However, ecotourism is not without its drawbacks and ill-managed and uncontrolled tourism can impact badly on wildlife and protected areas.

In this assignment I will aim to look at the relationship between people and ecotourism and analyse the benefits and weaknesses that they both have on each other. The most prominent thing which springs to mind with regard to nature tourism for most people would be safaris in Africa aiming at spotting the ' Big 5' (African Elephant, Black Rhinoceros, Cape Buffalo, Lion & Leopard). The term was originally coined by hunters but now it is applied widely in tourism. ' Africans safaris are one of the fastest growing segments of the travel market' (Wildlife Travel, 2006).

Approximately 8% of Kenya is protected National Parks and reserves and these areas are responsible for generating millions of pounds annually for the treasury, and literally thousands of Kenyans are employed in the wildlife-based tourism industry throughout the country (Sindiga, 1999). This means that many parts of Africa have been able to develop a sustainable part of the economy based around protecting and conserving the animals which they have for tourists benefit as opposed to in the past, where the predominant form of tourism was in hunting these animals.

However now the money received from tourism can be used to increase conservation efforts and aid breeding programs and the rehabilitation of neglected animals. However, in some instances the companies which run the safaris have their headquarters located in other more economically developed countries therefore the money raised by the African land leaves the host country to other countries and therefore it is not helping Africa become more economically developed.

The most distinguished nature reserve in Africa is the Masai Mara Nature Reserve in Kenya. Tourist accommodation first started being developed after the reserve was gazetted in 1963. The initial effort enforced by the reserve to ensure the animals are not disturbed and parks preserved whilst tourists visit them is issuing all visitors and guides with a printed leaflet outlining the regulations which must be abided by whilst in the reserve and these are listed in figure 1.

Infringement of these regulations carries a \$25 fine, although it is rarely applied (Wildlife and People, 1999) • No off-road driving. • No following of animals. • Minimum approach distance of 20m to an animal. • Limit of five

vehicles at any one viewing. • Limit of 10 minutes viewing when other vehicles are waiting to view. • Maximum speed limit of 50km/hr. • No deliberate use of noise to distract wildlife. • No leaning out of vehicles (except roof hatches) and no getting out of vehicles. • No dropping litter. • No pets. • No starting fires. Figure 1

A study conducted to see how many visitors broke these rules suggested that regulations were broken in over 90% of cases, with the main infringement being too many vehicles around animals and driving too close to the animals (Wildlife and people, 2003). Obviously, it is very hard to enforce these rules as guides and tourists want to get the closest possible encounter due to them having to forgo large amounts of financial expenditure for the experience and in the guides opinion the happier a visitor is the more likely they are to receive repeat business in the future or positive word of outh advertising. Also the increasing number of vehicles in safari parks increases pollution and can cause a distraction for hunting animals and disturb the prey which they are stalking as these animals have adapted their hunting tactics over thousands of years and they now have a relatively new factor to adapt to. However, in some instances the vehicles can be beneficial as for the cheetah who have been known to jump up on the roofs of vehicles in order to get a better view of where there prey is. Big Cat Week, 2010) Construction of tourist facilities may increase the amount of jobs available to local people however it does also mean that more land is lost for natural habitats and although it is a necessary harm which is needed to increase economic activity there are few regulations on how much land

can be used for new buildings and the removal of vegetation can increase soil erosion (Safariholidays 2011).

Africa has a very delicate eco system which is highly vulnerable to drought and famine so although the benefits of tourism mean increasing sustainability in the long run it must be ensured that the locals receive some of the benefits because it is their land which is being developed for the benefits of tourists.

This is heightened by the fact about the large amounts of water is used during tourism activities whether it be for regular showers which westerners are accustomed to or filling numerous swimming pools up continuously to counter the effects of evaporation due to the fact that water is a scarce commodity in many parts of Africa and tourists are consuming large amounts of it taking it away from the animals and people who depend on it.

The safari industry also helps to improve the relationship between local farmers and big cats such as cheetahs due to the fact that farmers will kill animals which prey on the herds, normally out of desperation due to the fact that they are considered a pest however increasing awareness of how other local residents depend on the survival of the big cats for tourism has lead more farmers to report incidents of attacks to reserves and safaris as opposed to laying out meat laced with poison.

On a different side of things which focuses more on the illegal benefits made from poaching animals eco-tourism now exists in Madagascar where adventurers pay local guides to lead tour groups through reserves, finding and pointing out the rare and hard-to-spot species of wildlife which the

tourists have come to see. The guides track the animals every day and therefore have a better understanding of where to find them at different times.

This is a very effective tourism as it puts money directly into the locals peoples pockets and there is no middle men in the process so much so that it can worth while to prevent other local residents from hunting the animals concerned or cutting trees for firewood. (Ralf Buckley, 2010 page 50). This is a perfect job for many local residents who have extensive knowledge of the jungle through growing up their with many people getting a large amount of their meat through before hunting in the jungle can now receive an alternate way to make money through hosting guides.

However, it could be suggested that the money received from tourism is not enough to sustain locals due to the fact that one individual involved in wild life tourism in Madagascar was involved in poaching wildlife for the black market and also claimed to be able to guide tourist groups to sightings of two rare Madagascar endemic species; the tomato frog and the aye-aye lemur. In which it is reported that suspicion that the animals were captive animals placed in sports shortly before tourists arrival and then recaptured afterwards (Ralf Buckley, 2010, page 51).

This is obviously very stressful for the animals involved and the tourists are unknowingly funding a harmful form of tourism however without the proper regulation in place to ensure tour guides are responsible there is no easy way of stopping this as tourists are always going to be attracted to guides who promise to show tourists guaranteed sightings of rare species of

animals. As at the moment it would seem some ' guides' are taking advantage of the animals they are suppose to help to protect.

In conclusion I would say that eco-tourism is constantly moving forward, having switched from mainly hunting in Africa in the 1960's to now numerous sustainable Safaris all over Africa and with completely new eco-tourism destinations, such as Madagascar becoming more and more popular helping the country develop a whole new economy through the emergence of eco-tourism. There are obviously faults in the industry, just like most other industries.

The main one in Africa would be the fact that much of the money raised by the host countries leaves to western countries and the local people see little benefit from having their land developed for tourism and preserved for the safety of animals as if this land was not used in this way it would most likely be used by the local people for some form of farming. The main thing which needs to change now is for the distribution of wealth to be more fair and even between the companies and the local people.

And it would seem the main disadvantage for Madagascar being the lack of regulation, which enables corruption within the industry. 1505 words

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