

All About Ecotourism

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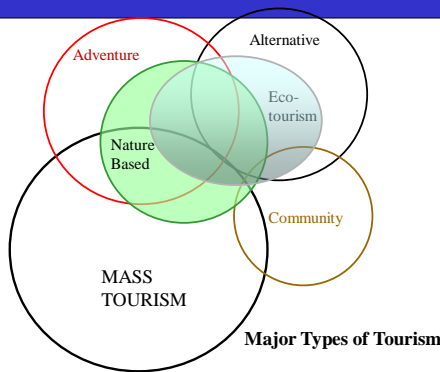
Tourism—largest business sector in the world economy



Impact

- Directly Employs 98 million & Generates \$2 trillion economic activity or 9.2% of global GDP
- Total 255 million jobs & \$6.3 trillion
- Accounts for 1 in every 12 (8%) of jobs worldwide
- In 4 out of 5 countries (150) tourism is one of 5 top export earners
- In 60 countries it is number 1 export

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What is Ecotourism?

Definitions

Even though there are many definitions, vary most agree that the main components of ecotourism are:

- Ecotourism features interpretation and education
- Ecotourism is ecologically sustainable
- Ecotourism incorporates cultural considerations
- There is net return/benefit to the local community

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THE INTERNATIONAL ecotourism SOCIETY
Uniting Conservation, Communities and Sustainable Travel

Promoting responsible travel that unites conservation and communities since 1990.

TIES is a global network of industry practitioners, institutions and individuals helping to integrate environmental and socially responsible principles into practice.

Ecotourism is: "Responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people."

Ecotourism is about connecting conservation, communities, and sustainable travel.

THE INTERNATIONAL ecotourism SOCIETY
Uniting Conservation, Communities and Sustainable Travel

520 Organizations and 1,100 Individual Members in 120 countries

6 Principles:

- Minimize impact
- Build environmental and cultural awareness and respect
- Provide positive experiences for both visitors and hosts
- Provide direct financial benefits for conservation
- Provide financial benefits and empowerment for local people
- Raise sensitivity to host countries' political, environmental, and social climate

The Benefits of Ecotourism

Economic development and diversification, particularly in rural areas.

The tendency for greater expenditure and length of stay by ecotourists (compared to tourists generally).

The generation of income for conservation and management of national parks and other public land.

Quality employment opportunities utilizing local knowledge. Countrywide foreign exchange earnings.

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Photo safaris have replaced trophy hunting since 1953



What is Ecotourism?

The 8 Principles of Ecotourism

Ecotourism:

- #1 focuses on personally experiencing natural areas in ways that lead to greater understanding and appreciation
eg. guided walks through surrounding natural areas with informative and entertaining commentary that focuses on the natural values of the area
- #2 integrates opportunities to understand natural areas into each experience
eg. availability of reference material, interpretive signage along walking trails

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Ecotourism:

- #3 represents best practice for ecologically sustainable tourism
eg. minimal disruption to wildlife and native vegetation, smaller, less-consumptive lodging
- #4 positively contributes to the ongoing conservation of natural areas
eg. assistance with fauna and flora surveys

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What is Ecotourism?

The 8 Principles of Ecotourism

Ecotourism:

- #5 provides constructive ongoing contributions to local communities
eg. purchase of local goods, hiring local staff, contributions to local conservation groups
- #6 is sensitive to, interprets and involves different cultures, particularly indigenous culture
eg. traditional custodians are consulted about planning the nature and scope of the operation

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The 8 Principles of Ecotourism

Ecotourism:

- #7 consistently meets client expectations
eg. informal feedback on client satisfaction is sought through surveys and indicates that the majority of clients are satisfied with this experience
- #8 marketing is accurate and leads to realistic expectations
eg. Whales on the cover of an East-coast sea-kayak tour brochure are not likely to lead to realistic expectations!

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Profile of an Ecotourist

What are they looking for?

Ecotourists generally seek out travel experiences that involve:

Areas or attractions of natural beauty.

Small group sizes and away from crowds.

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Profile of an Ecotourist

What are they looking for?

Interaction with other people who are preferably like-minded and compatible.

Some level of interaction with the environment

Some degree of information and learning.

Fun and enjoyment.

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Profile of an Ecotourist

The three broad market segments

BTR's research suggests that there are 3 broad ecotourism market segments. These are:

Impulse

Characterized by nature based day trips away from the main tourist destinations and mainly booked locally by domestic and international tourists

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Profile of an Ecotourist

The three broad market segments

Active

Characterized by younger and middle-aged professionals who generally book in advance. In Australia these are primarily domestic tourists – potential exists for growth through international marketing, infrastructure and product development.

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Profile of an Ecotourist


The three broad market segments

Personalised

Essentially older professionals (or retired) who expect to be well looked after by the operator. This segment is skewed to international tourists who book overnight ecotours before arriving in Australia, and want to interact with native people



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Profile of an Ecotourist

How do they choose their eco-experience?

The main points that came out of the BTR research indicate that ecotourists :

- Value personalised service coupled with high quality natural resources
- Often select their tours once they are in the area and level of interpretation provided is one of the major considerations
- Word of mouth and local information are important sources of influence.

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Ecotourism Implications for Natural Resource Managers

Conveying the conservation message:

Ecotourism operators are more likely to seek information from local natural resource managers and subject experts

- Clients value learning about the natural resources
- Tours are often adapted to accommodate local conditions and cultural practices
- Operators seek high quality, informative information material for their customers
- Operators frequently volunteer to support local conservation efforts

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Ecotourism Implications for Natural Resource Managers

Concerns about ecotourism

How do you tell the genuine ecotourism operations from shoddy operators just using the name to promote business?

- Certification: regional, national and international
- Economically stable or rapid turnover?
- Unintended consequences (e.g. people returning to spearfish or explore caves, etc. on their own...)
- Elitism: do ecotourism operators & clients enjoy special treatment or privileges?

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Ecotourism Implications for Natural Resource Managers

Concerns about ecotourism

How do you do you keep the money ecotourism brings from changing the "authentic" culture that was the original attraction?

- Community collaboration to identify values & customs they do NOT want to be changed by outside visitors.
- Consensus on what can be shared.
- Plans for zoning or rationing in time and place.
- Requiring employment of local talent & training for non-local guides.
- Schemes to "share the wealth" among local groups.

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Ayers Rock has officially been known as Uluru since it was returned to the Anangu, the Aboriginal owners, in 1985. It was then leased to the Australian government and is now jointly administered.

Ayers Rock Resort was developed at Yulara in the early 1980s to cater for visitors and is designed to blend in with the environment.

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The role of the Ecotourism: An Example from Kenya



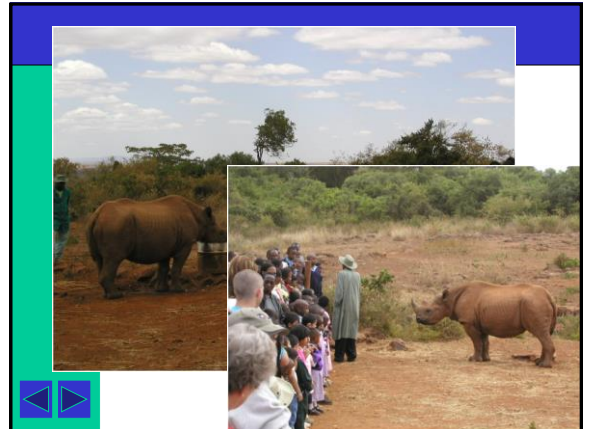
THE DAVID SHELDRIK WILDLIFE TRUST

A lifetime dedicated to the protection and preservation of Africa's Wilderness and its denizens, particularly endangered species such as elephants and Black Rhino

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56,000 local children visit free!

What's next?
Ecotourism in AMERICA!

