

Course- WL- 707 Terrestrial Wildlife
Management
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10th Lecture

Wildlife and Ecotourism

Ecotourism

Is a form of tourism involving visiting fragile, pristine, and relatively undisturbed natural areas, intended as a low-impact and often small scale alternative to standard commercial mass tourism. Ecotourism focuses on socially responsible travel, personal growth, and environmental sustainability.

Wildlife tourism can cause significant disturbances to animals in their natural habitats. This may frighten animals, especially at sensitive times of their life cycle, and have an adverse effect on breeding. Feeding of wildlife by tourists can change social behavior patterns.

Wildlife and ecotourism

Wildlife tourism is an element of many nations travel industry centered on observation and interaction with local animals and plant life in their natural habitats. While it can include eco and animal friendly tourism, safari hunting and high intervention activities also fall under the umbrella of wildlife tourism.

Wildlife tourism in its simplest sense, is interacting with wild animals in their natural habitat, either actively (e.g. hunting, collection) or passively (e.g. watching or photography).

A positive step towards conservation of wildlife:

Like a two phases of coin, wildlife tourism is also bejeweled with two perception.

As per one opinion wildlife must be set apart from tourism, so as to protect the endangered species, on the other hand, a different school of thoughts promotes wildlife tourism as a mean of conservation.

Principles of Ecotourism

Ecotourism is about uniting conservation, communities, and sustainable travel. This means that those who implement, participate in and market ecotourism activities should adopt the following ecotourism principles:

- Minimize physical, social, behavioral, and psychological impacts.
- Build environmental and cultural awareness and respect.
- Provide positive experiences for both visitors and hosts.
- Provide direct financial benefits for conservation.
- Generate financial benefits for both local people and private industry.
- Deliver memorable interpretative experiences to visitors that help raise sensitivity to host countries' political, environmental, and social climates.
- Design, construct and operate low-impact facilities.
- Recognize the rights and spiritual beliefs of the Indigenous People in your community and work in partnership with them to create empowerment.

Negative impacts

Wildlife tourism can cause significant disturbances to animals in their natural habitats. Even among the tourism practices which boast minimal to no direct contact with wildlife, the growing interest in travelling to developing countries has created a bon in resorts and hotels construction, particularly on rain forests and mangrove forests land.

Wildlife viewing can scare away animals, disrupt their feeding and nesting sites, or decline them to presence of people.

For example, in Kenya wildlife observer disruption drives cheetahs off their reserve, increasing risk of inbreeding and further endangering the species.

1. Direct impact

The direct impact on wildlife tourism depends on the scale of tourist development and behavior and difference of wildlife to the presence of humans. When tourists activities occurs during sensitive times of the life cycle (for example, during nesting seasons) and when they involve close approaches to wildlife for the purpose of identification or photography, the potential for disturbance is high. Not all species appear to be disturbed by tourists even within heavily visited areas.

2. Disturbing breeding patterns

The pressure of tourists searching out wildlife to photograph or hunt can adversely affect hunting and feeding success of some species. Some may even have a long term implications for behavioral and ecological relationships. Disturbance of wildlife occurs when tourist guides dig up turtle nests and chase swimming jaguars. The disturbance caused by human intervention may prevent species from their regular breeding and feeding activities.

3. Disturbing feeding pattern

Artificial feeding of wildlife by tourists can have severe consequences for social behavior patterns. Artificial feeding by tourists caused a breakdown of their territorial breeding system of land iguanas on the south plaza in the Galapagos Island. Artificial feeding can also result in a complete loss of normal feeding behavior.

Positive impact

1) Habitat restoration

Many owners of eco-accommodation or wildlife attractions preserve and restore native habitats on their properties. In a large way tourists and travelers visiting the wildlife destinations contribute to the conservation and improvement of the conditions for the animals. The flow of people keeps the poachers at bay from killing the valuable animals.

2) Conservative breeding

Many wild parks and zoos breed rare and endangered species as a part of their activities and release the progeny when possible into suitable habitat.

3) Quality interpretation

A good guide will impact a deeper understanding of the local wildlife and its ecological needs, which may give visitors a more informed based on which to subsequently modify their behavior and decides what political moves to support.

4) Conservation and hunting

Well monitoring trophy hunting is inherently self-regulating because modest off take is required to ensure high trophy quality and thus marketability of the area and future seasons.