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Abstract

This conclusion chapter offers a summary of key contributions of each chapter, gathering the main conceptual approaches and major issues of the case studies presented in the volume. A recurring theme is the importance of quality interpretation for visitors and tourism businesses in the wildlife tourism sector. As readers will have noted, the chapters encompass a range of wildlife topics to varied audiences to convey information, a sense of wonder and concern for conservation. The authors have sought to present their topics bias-free by balancing ecological and anthropocentric views, but the welfare and conservation of wildlife used as tourism attractions, whether captive, semi-captive or in the wild, has been of major concern. Ethical and moral issues pervade the discussions on human-animal encounters, particularly in situations where wildlife has apparently been over-exploited for entertaining visitors. While extreme cases such as obvious abuses of animal welfare and practices that threatened endangered species are easy to condemn, the debates are often not so easy to resolve with the simple answers that many hope for. Emotions are often high when pros and cons of various tourism operations are discussed, but there remains much that we do not know about pressures on the ecological needs of wildlife and the seriousness of stress imposed on individual animals. Much further research related to some of the impasses and deadlocks related to wildlife tourism planning and management would be valuable for future publications. For example, some argue that the 'end of zoos' should become a future reality, or that zoos should be replaced by sanctuaries, while others point to valuable work by zoos supporting conservation, caring for rescued wildlife, educating the public and conducting research. There will also be many readers who will be uncomfortable with the chapter on hunting, while others will maintain that although we must remain vigilant on the welfare and conservation implications, without hunters many areas that retain most of their natural attributes would never have been protected and may not remain protected into the future if all hunting is banned.

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Management of both animals and people is crucial to truly sustainable wildlife tourism, to mediate the interaction with wildlife in tourism contexts and incorporate compassionate and conservation-based ideology. Integration of different disciplines is essential, which may be a novel approach for many and call for innovative goals, research and management plans.

The study of wildlife tourism is ideally a multi-disciplinary pursuit involving many fields of inquiry, including ecology of animals important to tourists and other species that share their habitat, conservation biology and management of both animals and people, stress in wild and captive animals, attitudes and needs of tourists, sociology of local human residents, regional economic influences, the politics of decision making and other issues. It is hoped that this volume will both assist readers working within the field covered by particular authors and also provide insights by stepping outside their own specialties.

Examples are presented from many parts of the world, and these can be of great use both to readers interested in the particular regions and to those who would like to consider how to apply the methods, results and insights to investigations or plans for other geographic areas across the planet.

The Sheldon et al. chapter recognises the need for integrating different disciplines, and will probably demonstrate a novel approach for many readers. They attempt to locate wildlife tourism, applied ecology, environmental education and interpretation within a philosophical framework dealing with notions of nature and the environment and to then link this with the analytical approach of political ecology. Taking a particular project, the reintroduction of the yellow-eyed penguin (*Megadyptes antipodes*) at Long Point, New Zealand, where habitat is managed with particular species in mind and with tourism infrastructure to be developed before the penguins and other birds are re-introduced, they explore the 'political ecology' of the process, demonstrating the unavoidable entanglement of political economy with ecological concerns. They briefly discuss the increasing integration of tourism and conservation, the rearrangement and renegotiation of the power relationships between various groups, and other aspects of the project, and conclude that unravelling the political dimensions of site and species management is an endless task, and that the ability to engage politically in a multi-faceted way makes political ecology a useful analytic approach to the study of wildlife tourism, applied ecology and environmental education and interpretation.

Macoll and Tribe also consider an inter-disciplinary approach to the potential for the tourism industry, wildlife management, research, visitor educational training of tertiary students to be intertwined. They present a particularly interesting case on a large, wooded mountain property in subtropical Australia, where research and education facilities plus six very large aviaries at currently (i.e. at time of

writing) being constructed with a view to rehabilitating endangered wildlife to the property and involving the owners and staff, a university, local residents and of course the tourists. A survey showed a considerable interest by current visitors, even while staying at the accommodation for different reasons, in seeing and learning about the animals and the rehabilitation process (while acknowledging that this has yet really been tested). They caution that the commercial success of any such venture is linked to entertainment value rather than education or conservation, but that conservation messages can be delivered in an entertaining way, and that on-going research will explore actual behaviour and attitudes of guests as well as outcomes of rehabilitation projects. Other establishments wanting to combine conservation, tourism, research and education could do well to watch the progress of this quite elaborate program.

Many regions have the potential to diversify their tourism offerings, and an understanding of both the attractions and the prospective tourists is important for effective planning. Werdlar's chapter explores the potential for Rwanda, famous for its primate trekking, to attract birdwatching tourists, especially from the Netherlands. After surveying the literature, including African bird guides, national park reports, research articles and a Dutch journal aimed at birdwatchers, and actually participating in birding tours within Rwanda, the author concludes the country has great potential to become a prime African birdwatching destination, and recommends the wider dissemination of information on Rwanda's birds through various channels and the specialised training of local guides for birdwatching tourism.

A country already famous for attracting tourists with its rich biodiversity as well as tropical climate is Brazil. Lanzer et al. explore the tourism potential as well as human impacts on one of the country's less famous regions, the coastal southern lakes. They conclude that past tourism activities as well as other human pressures have tended to exert negative impacts on the ecosystem, but that the rich diversity of animals and plants, including endangered species, makes the region eminently suitable for the development of more ecologically sustainable tourism pursuits such as educational and science tourism. They recommended careful management to avoid further environmental damage, and efforts to educate the local community about the region's biodiversity, not just of the larger and more conspicuous animals but including the rich invertebrate and plant life.

Moswete et al. examine a common problem of impact often intensifying in the more popular areas and efforts to

spread the tourist load to other sites in the overall tourist destination. Specifically they consider the Chobe National Park in Botswana, where tour operators and self-drive tourists tend naturally to congregate around the best wildlife-viewing areas along the river, causing much congestion, and neglect other parts of the Park. They conclude that the simple provision of other roads has not helped alleviate the problem, and that provision of facilities and a shift in marketing approach are needed.

Quality interpretation is a recurring theme, and it is a primary focus of several chapters. Mayes notes that wildlife watching has an emotional context as well as an intellectual one, and analyzes the relationship between intensity of wildlife encounter and interpretation by the guides when watching, feeding or swimming with dolphins. She concludes that interpretation during an emotionally intense event is not effective, advising it is best to let the ocean speak' and provide a very different kind of education, but that as the intensity decreases the interpretation becomes increasingly important for the learning experience and visitor satisfaction.

Lima's chapter notes the history and complexities of Australia's system of protected areas, and points to a gap in the literature regarding interpretation in the parks, which tends to be carried out more by tour guides, educators and volunteers than by rangers. He presents a framework for introducing wildlife topics for interpretation to different age groups, discusses learning theories and presents information on some iconic Australian animals. He recommends that Kolb's experiential learning theory could be more widely adapted for rangers to present interpretation on a range of wildlife topics to varied audiences to convey information, a sense of wonder and concern for conservation, and that more research is needed in this field.

Hassan and Sharma consider the potential for better educational signage and guiding focussed on the Bengal tiger in India and Bangladesh, and present the results of a survey of attitudes of visitors, local residents and tourism staff. They conclude that much potential for education is currently missed, and recommend adding more kinds of information on signs, in English and other languages in addition to Hindi and provision of better access roads and amenities in the sites, and propose a multi-day educational tour that could add to the educational experience regarding the tigers and also other species that share their ecosystems. They also point to the need for further research in this area.

Moreira et al. outline a project (TAMAR) focussed on marine turtle research and conservation in a leading ecotourism destination in Brazil. They discuss exciting opportunities for visitors to participate in various aspects of this research, both by day and night, on land and in the water, and thus gain deeper understanding of turtle biology, conservation and research techniques. They conclude that there

is economic benefit to the local community but that the most important benefits are public education and turtle conservation.

Harman and Dilek review the history of whale and dolphin watching, and analyse recent visitor comments on cruises in the context of sensory impressions, emotional affinity, reflective response and behavioural response, concluding that behavioural response (i.e. intended behaviour change as a result of the experience) was low. They recommend that tour companies should concentrate more on the quality of education, and use sensory and emotive messages. They also recommend research into the reasons behind their findings, and in continents other than North America.

Ayazlar describes Turkey's current and potential wildlife tourist attractions, including wildlife viewing and photography, hunting and visits to captive wildlife attractions, and notes that wildlife tourism as a sector has not been given sufficient attention in this country. He lists a number of species of interest, including various mammals, birds, turtles and fish, conservation management in respect of minimising tourism impacts, and visitor impressions of a zoo and its learning opportunities. He concludes that there needs to be further research on motivation of tourists and the tourism potential of different regions within Turkey.

Ethical issues are an important aspect of wildlife tourism, including responsibilities towards tourists, tour operations, local communities and the wildlife themselves. Burns highlights some of the ethical complexities worthy of deeper consideration in the context of wildlife tourism and proposes a way forward for responsible human engagement with wildlife. She integrates various theories from the field of ethics, emphasises the importance of recognises management of both animals and people as crucial and combined components in sustainable wildlife tourism, and proposes an ethically responsible approach to interacting with wildlife in tourism contexts that incorporates compassionate conservation ideology.

Green considers the impacts of disturbance by tourists of wildlife in both wild and captive settings and explores some of what we already know and what we need further research on in regards to how much stress could be a serious factor in individual animal welfare and to what extent this could lead to local population declines. She also considers ethical considerations of tourist disturbance of wildlife that may affect local human residents, other tourists and tour operators. She stresses the need for far more research on the ecological impacts of both the animals the tourists are seeking and other animal they may inadvertently disturb in the process, on the kinds of disturbance that are trivial or overly stressful to free or captive wildlife, and the effects of close encounters of tourists' subsequent understanding of and feelings towards animals (so that optimal outcomes may be achieved where compromises are needed).

Reiser examines the claims of zoos to support conservation, research and education and finds them wanting, recommending there should instead be a shift to large sanctuaries.

Moghimehfar et al. consider the controversial topic of recreational hunting, lamenting that it is declining in Canada partly due to barriers to access to hunting grounds. They analyse interviews with hunters and consider that hunting

plays an important role in conservation, and that results of their analysis can inform tourism, outdoor recreation, and wildlife managers and planners to retain the local ecological and economic benefits of waterfowl hunting.

This volume thus provides readers with much to think about, with new insights that we hope will lead to practical improvements within the industry, as well as inspiring some much-needed further research.