

Wildlife Tourism:



How do we make it exciting,

How do we make it **exciting**,

How do we make it exciting,

**How do we make it exciting,
involving,**

**How do we make it exciting,
involving, educational,**

**How do we make it exciting,
involving, educational,
sustainable**

**How do we make it exciting,
involving, educational,
sustainable**

**How do we make it exciting,
involving, educational,
sustainable**

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involving, educational,
sustainable**

**How do we make it exciting,
involving, educational,
sustainable**

**How do we make it exciting,
involving, educational,
sustainable AND**

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involving, educational,
sustainable AND**

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**How do we make it exciting,
involving, educational,
sustainable AND**

How do we make it exciting, involving, educational, sustainable AND affordable?

Ronda J Green, PhD

Araucaria Ecotours
Chair Wildlife Tourism Australia

Wildlife Tourism

How do we make it exciting, involving, educational, sustainable AND affordable?

Ronda J Green, PhD

Wildlife Tourism Australia (chair)



Araucaria Ecotours
& Griffith University



Wildlife Tourism Australia Workshop, Darwin 2013

Responsible tour operators want to:

Responsible tour operators want to:

- Educate guests about the wildlife



Responsible tour operators want to:

- Educate guests about the wildlife
- Ensure their guests enjoy their holiday



Responsible tour operators want to:



- Educate guests about the wildlife
- Ensure their guests enjoy their holiday
- Help guests connect with nature

Responsible tour operators want to:



- Educate guests about the wildlife
- Ensure their guests enjoy their holiday
- Help guests connect with nature
- Keep them safe

Responsible tour operators want to:



- Educate guests about the wildlife
- Ensure their guests enjoy their holiday
- Help guests connect with nature
- Keep them safe
- And not disturb the wildlife

Responsible tour operators want to:

- Give guests a high-quality experience



Responsible tour operators want to:



- Give guests a high-quality experience
- Without breaking their own budget

\$\$\$\$\$ \$\$\$\$ \$\$\$

Responsible tour operators want to:



- Give guests a high-quality experience
- Without breaking their own budget
- Or pricing it too high for their customers

\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$

Not always easy!



To do it well takes planning, imagination and information-gathering ... and time and \$\$\$ (some of which can be reduced with all of the above)

Wildlife Tourism:

**A Handbook for Guides, Tour Operators,
Job-seekers and Business Start-ups**



Packed with information and ideas for:

- tour operators,
- guides,
- ecolodge staff,
- farm-stay hosts,
- zoo-keepers,
- interpreters in parks or museums,
- ecotourism students and
- others interested in providing enjoyable educational wildlife experiences to visitors



Ronda Green, BSc (Hons) PhD
Aracaria Ecotours
<http://www.learnaboutwildlife.com>
2013

Excitement/Involvement

means different things to different people



(Later in this workshop we'll be discussing the balance between 'up close and personal' and 'keeping wildlife wild')

Excitement/Involvement means different things to different people



Excitement/Involvement means different things to different people



“...the less well informed and more generalist wildlife tourism client ... dissatisfaction and boredom can arise if ... they do not see the target animal”

David Newsome “Wildlife Tourism”

What we need to know

How close can we
get to wildlife
without...



What we need to know



- How close can we get to wildlife without:
- disturbing the animals

What we need to know



How close can we get to wildlife without

- disturbing the animals
- changing their behaviour

What we need to know



How close can we get to wildlife without:

- disturbing the animals
- changing their behaviour, or
- putting our guests in danger

Under *what conditions* should we allow

- contact with wildlife



Under what conditions should we allow



- contact with wildlife
- feeding wildlife

?

Wildlife contact/feeding disputes

+

-

Public
education

Ecological
problems

Visitor
satisfaction

Animal welfare

Wildlife contact/feeding disputes

+

-

Public
education

Promotes positive
attitude, leading to
support for conservation

Ecological
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Animal welfare







Wildlife contact/feeding disputes

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Promotes positive attitude,
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Promotes idea that animals
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Ok in moderation, may help
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Can cause dependencies,
rise of aggressive species,
and aggression leading to
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Visitor
satisfaction

Enjoyment of interaction,
ability to reliably see animals
during short visit

Animal welfare

Wildlife contact/feeding disputes

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Visitor
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Enjoyment of interaction,
ability to reliably see animals
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Distaste of seeing semi-tame
instead of truly wild creatures,
feeling of lack of respect for
animals

Animal welfare

Wildlife contact/feeding disputes

	+	-
Public education	Promotes positive attitude, leading to support for conservation	Promotes idea that animals are our toys or wild animals are pets
Ecological problems	Ok in moderation, may help in lean times	Can cause dependencies, rise of aggressive species, and aggression leading to animal removal
Visitor satisfaction	Enjoyment of interaction, ability to reliably see animals during short visit	Distaste of seeing semi-tame instead of truly wild creatures, feeling of lack of respect for animals
Animal welfare	If well-controlled, animals get a bonus feed, can be caught if necessary for medical help habituate so less disturbed by humans	

Wildlife contact/feeding disputes

	+	-
Public education	Promotes positive attitude, leading to support for conservation	Promotes idea that animals are our toys or wild animals are pets
Ecological problems	Ok in moderation, may help in lean times	Can cause dependencies, rise of aggressive species, and aggression leading to animal removal
Visitor satisfaction	Enjoyment of interaction, ability to reliably see animals during short visit	Distaste of seeing semi-tame instead of truly wild creatures, feeling of lack of respect for animals
Animal welfare	If well-controlled, animals get a bonus feed, can be caught if necessary for medical help habituate so less disturbed by humans	May become dependent and then suddenly deprived, poor diets, disease, increase aggression, habituation may lead to danger



TANGALOOMA
Wild Dolphin Resort

Tangalooma Wild Dolphin Feeding Program

DOLPHIN ATTENDANCE

DATE	2/9	3/9	4/9	5/9	6/9	7/9	8/9
Echo B. Mid 1992 (M)	✓						
Nari B. 27/01/97 (M)	✓						
Tinkerbell B. Mid 1990 (F)	✓						
Tangles B. 20/09/00 (F)	✓						
Zephyr B. 17/09/08 (M)	✓						
Rani B. Early 1992 (M)	✓						
Storm B. 27/08/04 (M)	✓						
Silhouette B. 07/09/04 (F)	✓						
Luna B. 24/05/12 (M)	✓						
Cruze B. 26/11/12 (M)	✓						

Dolphin feed starts at: **6:15 PM**

Everyone is welcome to watch the Dolphin Feed from the jetty on any night. Due to the popularity of the Dolphin Feeding Program, guests will only be able to feed if they are staying in the resort under a dolphin feeding package. To keep the dolphins wild, we only feed the dolphins 10-20% of their daily food requirements, hence guests can only feed the dolphins once during their stay.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Please register for the dolphin feeding on the day that you arrive from 1 to 4pm in the Marine Education and Conservation Centre.

If you are feeding the dolphins you must:

- Attend the briefing on the Jetty
- Be prepared to get wet
- Remove all sunscreens and insect repellants
- Photographs may be taken from the jetty, but only video cameras are allowed in the feed area.

PLEASE REMEMBER THE DOLPHINS ARE WILD AND WE **DO NOT** PERMIT TOUCHING OR PATTING OF THE DOLPHINS FOR THEIR SAFETY.

Have a dolphin friendly day!





What about the 'opening up' of our national parks to 'ecotourism'?



What about the 'opening up' of our national parks to 'ecotourism'?

“The head of Tourism NT wants to change the "whole dynamic" of national parks at Kakadu and Uluru by allowing more accommodation, more activities and better access.” NT News

“Campbell Newman has pledged to slash green tape and increase access to National Parks under a plan to breath new life into the tourism sector. The Premier says over regulation is stifling the industry and will be relaxed to make way for new eco tourism ventures.” ABC News

What about the 'opening up' of our national parks to 'ecotourism'?



What about the 'opening up' of our national parks to 'ecotourism'?

Money is needed for conservation in national parks, which can be achieved by:

- Government funds from elsewhere
- Donations
- **Entry fees**
- **Private enterprise – permits for currently allowed activities**
- **Private enterprise – permits for new activities**
- **Private enterprise – permits for facilities (accommodation, shops etc.**

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How do we do this without compromising biodiversity conservation?

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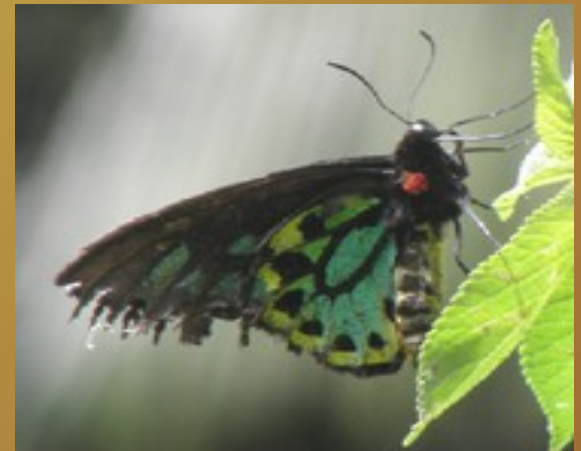
- Government funds from elsewhere
- Entry fees
- Private enterprise – permits for currently allowed activities
- Private enterprise – permits for new activities
- Private enterprise – permits for facilities (accommodation, shops etc.

How do we do this without compromising biodiversity conservation and a feeling of wilderness?

What about the 'opening up' of our national parks to 'ecotourism'?



Will cutting of 'green tape' compromise biodiversity conservation?



Will cutting of green tape compromise biodiversity conservation?

- Do we have sufficient monitoring programs in place?



Will cutting of green tape compromise biodiversity conservation?

- Do we have sufficient monitoring programs in place? (it appears not)



Will cutting of green tape compromise biodiversity conservation?



- Do we have sufficient monitoring programs in place?
- Will there be adequate fauna and flora assessment before new activities are introduced?

Will cutting of green tape compromise biodiversity conservation?



- Do we have sufficient monitoring programs in place?
- Will there be adequate fauna and flora assessment before new activities are introduced?
(again it appears not)

Will cutting of green tape compromise biodiversity conservation?



- Do our tourists want more development in national parks?

Will cutting of green tape compromise biodiversity conservation?



*Do our tourists **want** more development in national parks?*

- Visitors to Jourama Falls (FNQ) mostly didn't (T&W 2012)
- Nor did campers at Andrew Drynan Reserve
- View of buildings near Lamington NP has been a concern
- Many local conservationists are very concerned – and many are also paying guests
- Many others probably do – but do they understand potential impacts?

Will cutting of green tape compromise biodiversity conservation?



The value of private and NGO nature reserves and tourism ventures

- National parks alone will never be enough
- Should be supplement, not replacement
- Protection against mining etc. not as strong in private nature reserves

Red tape reduction needed here

Will cutting of green tape compromise biodiversity conservation?

What kinds of new development may be ok in national parks?



- Small overnight hiker cabins in large parks?
- Overnight hides for watching nocturnal animals?
- Accommodation in existing cleared areas in large parks?
- Horse-riding in large parks in arid regions using only weed-free horses?
- ...?

Will cutting of green tape
compromise biodiversity
conservation?

*Ecotourism policy MUST
include ecological
sustainability!*



Will cutting of green tape compromise biodiversity conservation?



Ecotourism policy MUST include ecological sustainability!

“The Tour Operator Permit system for NT managed Parks and Reserves was developed through full consultation with Park Management and the tourism industry.”

Can we achieve biodiversity conservation AND great tourism experience?



Can we achieve biodiversity conservation AND great tourism experience?

- Achieve excitement, pleasure, sense of adventure



Can we achieve biodiversity conservation AND great tourism experience?

- Achieve excitement, pleasure, sense of adventure without significant impact



Can we achieve biodiversity conservation AND great tourism experience?



- Achieve excitement, pleasure, sense of adventure without significant impact?
- Use the moment of excitement to deliver environmental education?

Can we achieve biodiversity conservation AND great tourism experience?

Using the moment of excitement to deliver environmental education



Ballantyne, R., Packer, J. and Falk, J. (2011). "Visitors' learning for environmental sustainability: Testing short and long term impacts of wildlife tourism experiences using structural equation modelling." *Tourism Management* 32 (6): 1243-1252.

Can we achieve biodiversity conservation AND great tourism experience?



Using the moment of excitement to deliver environmental education

Ballantyne, R., Packer, J. and Sutherland, L. (2011). "Visitors' memories of wildlife tourism: Implications for the design of powerful interpretive experiences." *Tourism Management* 32 (4): 770-779.

Can we achieve biodiversity conservation AND great tourism experience?



- Achieve excitement, pleasure, sense of adventure without significant impact?
- Use the moment of excitement to deliver environmental education?
- And make enough \$\$ to keep going?

Can we achieve biodiversity conservation AND great tourism experience AND financial viability?

There are 3 main aspects to the economics of wildlife tourism:

1. Australia's economy
2. Local economies
3. Individual operators' ability to keep going through tough times

Can we achieve biodiversity conservation AND great tourism experience AND financial viability?

There are 3 main aspects to the economics of wildlife tourism:

1. Australia's economy
2. Local economies
3. Individual operators' ability to keep going through the tough times (and the skilled guides who are best able to contribute longterm to the above aren't necessarily the most experienced or skilled in the financial aspects of running businesses)

Can we achieve biodiversity conservation AND great tourism experience AND financial viability?

Australia's economy

Tourism is one of our economic pillars

Many places have picturesque beaches and grand hotels

Only Australia has wild kangaroos, koalas, platypus, emus

We also have wide vistas of wilderness, of which our wildlife are an important component

We also have one of the world's oldest human cultures, and wildlife features significantly in their culture

Can we achieve biodiversity conservation AND great tourism experience?

Doing it well, and without disturbing wildlife or their habitats, can sometimes cost more

Can those who really try to do the right thing (whether government departments or individual operators) be sufficiently rewarded to afford to keep doing it?

Can we achieve biodiversity conservation AND great tourism experience?



Can World Heritage listing and ecotourism certification add to the \$\$\$ tourists are willing to spend?



Can we achieve biodiversity conservation AND great tourism experience?



Can World Heritage listing and ecotourism certification add to the \$\$\$ tourists are willing to spend?

Only with a lot more public education on what these terms mean

Can we achieve biodiversity conservation AND great tourism experience?



Can World Heritage listing and ecotourism certification add to the \$\$\$ tourists are willing to spend?

Only with a lot more public education on what these terms mean

So, how will we do that?

Can we achieve biodiversity conservation AND great tourism experience AND financial viability?

Local economies

Some places have been shown to contribute a lot to the local economy because of wildlife viewing and enjoyment of their habitats

Can we achieve biodiversity conservation AND great tourism experience AND financial viability?

Local economies

Some places have been shown to contribute a lot to the local economy because of simple wildlife viewing and enjoyment of their habitats

- Lamington NP
- Phillip Island
- Mon Repos
- Hervey Bay

Papers and books by Tsdell, Willson and others

Can we achieve biodiversity conservation AND great tourism experience AND financial viability?

Local economies

Some places haven't yet been able to

- Tree kangaroo tourism n FNQ
- Remote areas in India and elsewhere
- Places where NP activities undercut private enterprise

What should we do?

Local economies

Visitors staying an extra night make a difference to local economies, and can thus justify habitat protection on economic as well as ecological grounds

Individual operators and guides

How can a small or micro- tourism business or part-time or casual guide afford the necessary overheads and how can any wildlife tourism business – big or small - keep going through the tough times?

Expenses



- Major purchases
- Facilities
- Smaller items
- Permits
- Insurance
- Employees
- PR
- On-going education
- Travel
- Time

A certain amount of government support is needed for biodiversity and small business

“The importance of nature-based tourism in generating income and employment means that such a valuable resource needs to be sustainably managed”

(Nature-based Tourism and Conservation: Tisdell and Wilson 2012)

Adequate legislation and enforcement is needed

Delegates attending the Africa Hotel Investment Forum (AHIF) in Nairobi on Wednesday declared poaching to be the greatest threat to Africa's tourism industry and branded poachers as the continent's No.1 public enemy

(Coastweek.com, September 2013)



Can we achieve biodiversity conservation AND great tourism experience?

- Good interpretation
- Good sightings – some easy, some challenging
- Some close encounters
- Guide's knowledge of behaviour, to predict best times to watch
- Indirect viewing – webcams etc.



Find us on
Facebook

How do we get the
'wow' factor that gets
our guests talking and
tweeting about us
without spending too
more than we can
afford?

More research needed



Visitor attention to
conservation messages

Guide attention to visitor
attention

Visitor action subsequent
to wildlife experience

More research needed

What wildlife experiences in a given region would induce visitors to spend an extra day or more?

What facilities are needed/desired by those not currently visiting a good wildlife area? (public transport? Better roads? Clean toilets? Safe accommodation? Reasonably priced food in local shops? Tours with knowledgeable guides? Online information about destination and the animals? Less distance between fuel stations? Additional activities in region or en route?

More research needed

Distribution of wildlife and their use of habitat in areas to be opened up to new activities or facilities, how they are likely to be affected

To what extent do disturbances to wildlife lead to population declines?

What effect does tourism based on iconic animals have on other species?

More research needed

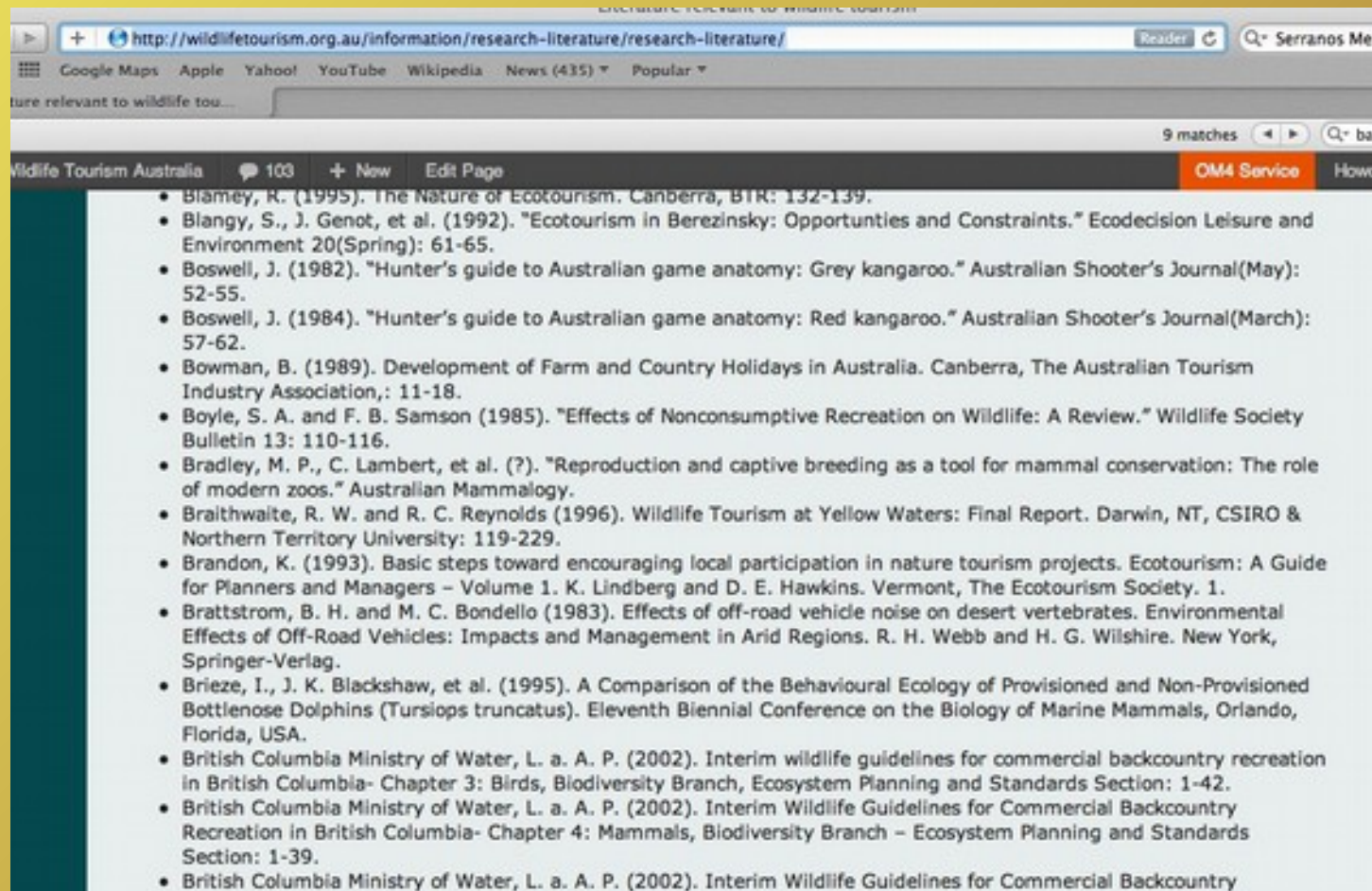
How can the tourism \$\$\$ assist wildlife conservation?

What conservation problems are NOT likely to be solved by the tourism \$\$\$?

How do we manage things to achieve what *is* possible and supplement the rest?

Further information

<http://wildlifetourism.org.au/information/research-literature/research-literature/>



Wildlife Tourism Australia 103 + New Edit Page OM4 Service Howd

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*Thank you all for taking the time to
ponder these important questions*



Enjoy the workshop!