



**Snake as Sister, Spectacle or Scientific Object:  
Connecting the Dots for Wildlife Tourism**



**Book of abstracts**

**Wildlife Tourism Australia Workshop, Darwin, October 2013**

<http://wildlifetourism.org.au>

### **Sponsors and helpers:**

Kezia Purick, MLA, NT government, sponsoring two local guides to attend the workshop  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kezia\\_Purick](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kezia_Purick)

Denise Lawungkurr Goodfellow and Michael Scott, monetary donation, guiding of tours  
<http://wildlifetourism.org.au/experiencing-our-wildlife/wildlife-tours/nt/denise-lawungkurr-goodfellow-t-nt/>

Rocklily Wombats, providing workshop prizes [www.rocklilywombats.com](http://www.rocklilywombats.com)

Wildlife Rescue Magazine, providing workshop prizes [www.wildliferescuemagazine.com](http://www.wildliferescuemagazine.com)

Jim Smith, Sea Darwin, NT – eco cruises, turtle cruises, sunset cruises from Darwin (all proceeds from the last-named to be donated to Wildlife Tourism Australia)  
<http://wildlifetourism.org.au/experiencing-our-wildlife/wildlife-tours/nt/sea-darwin-tours-nnt/>

Mike Jarvis, Experience the Wild providing pre-workshop birding tour, assistance with guiding other workshop tours, transport to and from workshop and on tours, picking up various items  
<http://wildlifetourism.org.au/experiencing-our-wildlife/wildlife-tours/nt/experience-the-wild-nt-t/>

Darren Green, Araucaria Ecotours – preparing and running audiovisuals during workshop  
<http://wildlifetourism.org.au/experiencing-our-wildlife/wildlife-tours/qld/araucaria-ecotours-qld/>

Charles Darwin University (Palmerston) – free use of data projector for duration of workshop  
<http://www.cdu.edu.au/campuses-centres/palmerston-campus> (thanks to Chris Hogarth and Ben Humphries for arranging this)

David Croft – computers and backup data projector for use during workshop, post-workshop accommodation <http://wildlifetourism.org.au/experiencing-our-wildlife/wildlife-tours/wildlife-travels-in-australia/rootourism-kangaroo-trail-australia/>

Barry Davies of Gondwana Guides – transporting of delegates between venues  
<http://wildlifetourism.org.au/experiencing-our-wildlife/wildlife-tours/qld/gondwana-guides-qld/>

Kamini Barua, University of Leuphana, – taking notes during discussions at workshop

*Many thanks for to all sponsors and to others who have assisted along the way, reducing some of the many hours and expenses necessary to put this workshop together*

*WTA committee Ronda Green, Denise Goodfellow, Peter Wood and Kevin Mahney*

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## Schedule

### Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> October

#### Field trips

- 7.00am to 12.00noon Birdwatching (Experience the Wild)
- 5.00pm Sunset Dreaming: networking event - profits donated to WTA workshop (Sea Darwin)

### Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> October

#### Field Trip/s

- 7.00am to 12.00noon Birdwatching and Indigenous culture, Fogg Dam and Pudukul (Denise Lawungkurr Goodfellow)
- 3.00pm Eco Cruise (Sea Darwin)
- 3.30pm Meet the local insects – walk with Graham Brown (at workshop venue)

#### Workshop

- 4.00 – 6.00pm Registration and opening reception (at workshop venue)
- 6.30pm optional networking event – BBQ (at home of Denise Goodfellow)

### Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> October

#### Workshop

#### **8.30am Opening talks – chair Peter Wood (secretary WTA)**

8.30am Welcome to workshop by Dr Ronda Green (WTA Chair) and Denise Lawungkurr Goodfellow (WTA vice chair and chair of local workshop committee)

8.35am Welcome to Country- Stephanie Nganjmirra Thompson

8.55am Welcome to region – the Honourable Kezia Purick, Speaker of the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly, and Sue Fraser-Adams, President of the Country Liberals Party, NT

9.05am Opening of workshop by her Honour the Honourable Sally Thomas, Administrator of Northern Territory

#### **9.15am Workshop presentations begin – chair Dr David Newsome**

9.15am Snake as Sister: interpretation the Bininj way (Denise Goodfellow)

9.30am Developing a network of tourism operations involved in conservation monitoring and wildlife research: benefits to tourism and research. (Peter Wood and Ronda Green)

9.45am How do we make wildlife tourism exciting, involving, educational, sustainable AND affordable for guides and small businesses? (Ronda Green)

10.00am What are the benefits of wildlife tourism for the entire tourism supply chain in the Northern Territory? (Mike Jarvis)

*10.15 am morning tea*

#### **Birding tourism session – chair Barry Davies**

10.45am Twitch or connection: what do birdwatchers want? (Denise Goodfellow)

11.00am Birdwatching for all? (Bo Beolens) - presented as podcast

11.15am Birding tourism in Kaziranga National Park Assam, India – ecotourism contributing to biodiversity conservation (Kamini Barua)

- 11.30am Conflicts between cultural use and ecotourism: the case of bird tours in Papua New Guinea (David Newsome)  
11.45am Critical point of endemic birds in Okinawa, JAPAN- Challenge of shaping for management of wildlife viewing (Junko Oshima)

*12.00pm lunch, and time to peruse posters and displays*

- 1.30pm **Round table discussion:** Doing it differently: what kinds of new products or new approaches to old ones could we be attempting, in the Top End and elsewhere? (Convener Ronda Green)  
2.15pm **Round table discussion:** What works and what doesn't? Problems of training and working as a guide or ranger (including Indigenous) in regional Australia (Convener Denise Lawungkurr Goodfellow)

*3.00pm afternoon tea*

- 3.30pm **Round table discussion:** Developing the wildlife tourism research network at all levels and in all regions (Conveners Peter Wood and Ronda Green)  
4.15pm **Round table discussion:** Jumping hurdles: overcoming financial, bureaucratic and other problems for high-quality but low-budget wildlife guides, tourism businesses, research students and NGOs (Convener Denise Lawungkurr Goodfellow)

*5.00pm AGM of WTA*

*6.00pm - Optional networking event (dinner at Crazy Acres)*

## **Friday 4<sup>th</sup> October**

### **Workshop – chair Ronda Green**

8.55am Opening remarks (Ronda Green and Denise Lawungkurr Goodfellow)

#### **Wildlife Tourism and Ecosystems**

- 9.00am Who's watching whom? Research on minimising disturbance by the wildlife tourist in animal encounters (David B. Croft and Isabelle D. Wolf)  
9.15am You Yangs Koala Research Project An insight into the benefits of wildlife research both to wildlife and to business sales (Roger Smith and Janine Duffy)  
9.30am What we want to learn from the 2014 World Parks Congress (Ron Mader) – presented *via* Google Hangouts  
9.45am Love your (native) Cockroach: or Invertebrates are animals too (Graham Brown)  
10.0am Northern Territory Parks and Wildlife permit requirements as it relates to the Tourism Industry (Ray Chatto)

*10.15am Morning tea*

### **Workshop continues – Chair Kamini Barua**

#### **Wildlife Tourism around the world**

- 10.45am Twenty years of research process on wildlife tourism in China (Cong Lee, presented by David Newsome)  
11.00am Wildlife Tourism in the Top End of Europe (Titta Tapaninen)  
11.15am One More Hurdle (Denise Lawungkurr Goodfellow)  
11.30am Round table discussion: How can we best make wildlife tourism contribute to wildlife conservation? (Convener David Croft and Jeff Skibbins)

*12.15noon Lunch*

1.20pm Round table discussion: Using GIS to help with wildlife tourism and biodiversity conservation (Convener Peter Wood)

2.05 pm Round table discussion: Close encounters with wildlife vs minimal impact is there a place for both? (Convener Kamini Barua)

*3.20pm afternoon tea*

3.50pm Round table discussion: 'Problem' wildlife and tourism: fruitbats, emus, wombats, ferals and others (Convener Maree Kerr)

4.45pm Plenary discussion (Conveners Ronda and Denise)

5.10pm Concluding remarks

5.30pm Close of workshop

**Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> October**

Field trips

- 8.00am Kakadu and Arnhem Land (overnight, return 6.00pm Sunday)

**Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> October**

- Turtle Tracks Tour (Sea Darwin)

## Abstracts of oral presentations

### **Birding tourism in Kaziranga National Park, Assam, India – ecotourism contributing to conservation through community participation**

Kamini Barua\* & Bhaskar J Barua\*\*

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\*\* Agoratoli Ecotourism Camp, Kaziranga National Park, Assam, India

Kaziranga National Park sprawled over an area of nearly 430 sq. kms. is a world heritage site (UNESCO 1985) and one of the landmark ecotourism hotspots' in Northeast India. This national park is located in the riverine floodplain of the river Brahmaputra in Assam, and has a mixed assemblage of habitats ranging from grasslands, woodlands, mixed deciduous and tropical wet evergreen to semi-evergreen forests and wetlands. The savanna grasslands along with the wetlands are the habitats to a variety of wildlife ranging from mammals to amphibians, reptiles, fishes and birds. This national park is renowned for the world's largest population of Indian one-horned rhinoceros (*Rhinoceros unicornis*), apart from the Asiatic wild buffalo (*Bubalus bubalis*), Asiatic elephant (*Elephas maximus*), Tiger (*Panthera tigris*) and the eastern race of the swamp deer (*Cervus duvauceli ranjitsinghi*). Kaziranga National Park is also famous as a birding paradise, and has been recognized as an Important Bird Area (IBA) by Birdlife International with a recorded checklist of nearly 500 species of birds, and the unique location of this park at the junction of the Australasian and Indo-Asian flyway makes it an important migrating, breeding and nesting site for a rich diversity of avian fauna. The National Park has recently been in focus due to the promotion of birding tourism through 'interactive tourism and community participation' by the locally based 'Agoratoli Ecotourism Camp. The main objective of this ecotourism camp is to not only create awareness for wildlife and nature conservation amongst the local communities and tourists, but to also foster the development of community-based participation, through training and self-employment opportunities for the under privileged local youth towards responsible tourism services. The proactive participation of the stakeholders also includes government bodies and local NGOs. The main drive towards promotion of 'birding tourism' at the Agoratoli Ecotourism camp is through training of the local youth on birding with respect to spotting, identification, and knowledge on habitat and protection of the locally resident birds (more than 400 species). Activities like providing updated checklist of recorded bird species from specific birding points, providing information on birding itineraries and organization of 'Birding photo exhibition' targeting international tour operators, tourists and the local people have been some of the most promising initiatives of this ecotourism camp. Promotion of birding festivals, designing specified birding trails and hotspots, as well as highlighting some of the endemic and endangered species are some of the future initiatives that aims to target both birding enthusiasts and ornithological experts. An interesting feature of this Agoratoli camp is its strategic location at the 'Agoratoli range' of the national park where the birding trail is the best and houses the largest water body (locally called Sohola Beel) where hundreds of migratory birds flock at the onset of winter. Moreover this range is an amalgamation of grasslands, woodlands and water bodies which makes it an exciting 'birding range'. It is mainly through such initiatives that creation of conservation awareness in general and promoting a sustainable local culture and appreciation for the environment can be achieved.

## **Birding For All**

Bo Beolens

(Author, Columnist, Webmaster, Tour Leader, Travel Arranger and Birder), UK

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(to be presented by podcast)

Different strokes for different folks, horses for courses, whatever floats your boat... should be the watchwords for birding tourism just as it should be for any provision of leisure or other social activity.

Too often what is offered is inflexible, un-tailored and meets the needs of the provider more often than it does the end user.

Just as public provision at nature reserves tends to be designed for six-foot tall, fit young and healthy males, because most wardens and reserve managers are fit, tall blokes; so tours for birders tend to be rugged, rarity-chasing, glimpses at the icons of the avian world. Why? Because tour leaders like it that way!

There are birders who want to be up at dawn, trekking through the bush in the heat of the day and staking out a little brown job until its head pops up for thirty seconds before disappearing for the duration. There are birders who will be satisfied with being shown everyday birds by leaders who are only one page in front of them in the fieldguide. I know this to be true as I have met both.

My contention is that there are plenty of unfit, elderly, young, female or disabled birders wanting to go on tours or day trips that cater for their specific needs for it to make it worthwhile for individual guides to adapt what they offer, and an overwhelming number who would help the industry grow and develop specialist niche workers.

I've been with guides who were annoyed that we didn't want to stop at their favourite teashop! I've been with guides who have walked off for twenty minutes to see a bird only to announce that the group wouldn't be able to get down a path. Moreover, guides often stick to a stakeout that has unsuitable access because they were too lazy to research accessible options.

Birding For All? Not yet, but sooner or later entrepreneurs will wise up to the fact that there are millions of assorted birders with dozens of different needs waiting to be their clients!



**Love your (native) Cockroach: or *Invertebrates are animals too***

Dr Graham Brown,  
Consultant Insect Taxonomist  
[thynnini@hotmail.com](mailto:thynnini@hotmail.com)

"According to the public there are only two iconic insects in the Territory, Leichhardt's Grasshopper and dragonflies; the other 8,000 recorded species are pests. This is about the extent of people's conception of insects and other invertebrates, and it is wrong in so many ways.

There are so many species that are potentially iconic, whether it is their size, beauty or biology. The problem is most people don't know there are more. If they do they cannot get any information about them, or even easily identify them.

All invertebrates have an interesting story to tell. Yet the NT is frontier country, and for insects and most other invertebrates we know know next to nothing. This talk covers some examples and how to find more, whether they be butterflies, bugs, cockroaches or beetles.

**NT Parks and Wildlife permit requirements as relates to the Tourism Industry,  
Wildlife Tourism Australia Workshop, 2013**

Ray Chatto\* (Wildlife Ranger) and Kristen Appel\*\* (A/Director), Wildlife Operations  
Parks and Wildlife Commission, NT  
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The Parks and Wildlife Commission of the NT is the government department tasked with the management and conservation of the Northern Territory's wildlife and its parks and reserves system. Such management includes administering the *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act*, its Regulations and By-laws.

One of the means of doing this is through the Permits System which is designed to help control wildlife related and park-based activities.

Wildlife permits relate to wildlife both on and off reserves. The main emphasis of them relate to taking/killing or interfering with wildlife in the wild, releasing wildlife to the wild, keeping and trading (which includes importing and exporting wildlife) and scientific research. Such permits are in place for the conserving the integrity of wildlife both on and off our Parks & Reserves, conserving rare and threatened species, controlling legal and illegal trade in wildlife, caring for injured wildlife, allowing scientific research/education, and more.

Such permits can be issued on both a personal and commercial basis.  
Permits pertaining to our parks and reserves relate to activities covered under our By-laws.  
Examples include: camping, commercial filming, scientific research, tour operations etc.

## **Twenty Years of Research Process on Wildlife Tourism in China**

Cong Li (to be read by Dr David Newsome)  
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Wildlife tourism has attracted more and more people's attention and participation. China is rich in wildlife resources. However, no comprehensive review of literature in this context has been completed, and international academics have little understanding of China tourism research. This paper aims to provide an overview of 234 articles selected from China Knowledge Resource Integrated Database published from 1992 to 2012. The references are divided into four parts according to the content: consumptive wildlife tourism, semi-consumptive wildlife tourism, non-consumptive wildlife tourism and the fundamental theory-based research and found that industry phenomenon gained much attention, description and experience analysis method is often used. Fundamental theory-based research is seriously insufficient. The attention of tourists is limited. Lacking of innovation research methods. Suggestions for the framework of wildlife tourism future research are put forward.

**Keyword:** Wildlife tourism; non-consumptive; China; research process

**Who's watching whom? Research on minimising disturbance by the wildlife tourist in animal encounters.**

David B. Croft \* and Isabelle Wolf \*\*

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Impacts on the fitness of animals under observation by wildlife tourists are difficult to prove. These require longitudinal observations across generations and are only obvious if the focus is on breeding assemblages, and reproductive failure relative to undisturbed controls is proven. More often a proxy of fitness such as energy expenditure (e.g. heart rate), foraging rates (e.g. giving up times) or time budgets (e.g. investments in vigilance) are measured. We review research on free-ranging kangaroos examining optimal approach modes and distances, and methods for nocturnal observations which yield a good wildlife experience with minimal disturbance to subjects. We also consider the value of prescribed approach distances in whale-watching and land-based encounters with sea-lions. We examine the role of habituation and the importance of expected behaviour on the part of the wildlife tourist from the perspective of the animal under view.

## **You Yangs Koala Research Project: An insight into the benefits of wildlife research both to wildlife and to business sales**

Janine Duffy and Roger Smith  
Echidna Walkabout Nature Tours, Melbourne Victoria

For the past 12 years Echidna Walkabout has carried out increasing intensive observations of koalas both in the Brisbane Ranges National Park and in the You Yangs Regional Park, to the west of Melbourne. Initially the observations were taken to help guides on tours have a better idea of where koalas may be located I.e. their home range, but, as more data was obtained we (and our guests) began to ask these questions about wild koalas:

- do they form social relationships within the forest?
- are they impacted by regular close-up human activity – i.e. by tour groups?
- can they be individually identified without the use of tags?
- are birth rates impacted by long term high temperatures – i.e climate change?
- what area/type of forest does a healthy population require?

This questions led to an idea that grew into a permanent ongoing research project into wild koalas as part of our tours. We based this research on the fact that our tours are in the region most days of the year and as a result we could observe the koala population almost continuously, especially if our tour groups became involved in the research. Thus we began collecting data that has helped us to:

- understand the fascinating and extended relationship between koalas in the wild
- create a 'Wild Koala Etiquette' ensuring that tour groups do not impact on wild koalas
- identify individual koalas using their 'nose patterns', a unique concept
- evaluate the very serious impacts of high temperatures (and drought) on koala fecundity and mortality
- appreciate that koalas require complex, multi-species forest types with a relatively open under-story

The results of this research have been shared with our guests - and the world - and have allowed Echidna Walkabout to come up with some site specific, and global, recommendations into the way these iconic animals should be cared for in the wild. Our tours into the You Yangs actively increase koala habitat (by pulling weeds that choke ground movement of koalas) and help lessen the impact of our tours on the koalas. A three person research team monitors koala activity and presents information to guests on the ground on tours. Koalas are located 'manually' without the use of tracking devices. Mobile smart-phone mapping apps are used position koalas after they are located and these, along with field observations and photos by our Koala Research Team, guides and guests, form the basis for the annual report.

**A significant benefit to the business** has been that we now market ourselves as a voluntourism/conservation tour operator, where participants can become actively involved in the monitoring and conservation of fauna and flora. We've found there has been a significant take-up of this concept by international suppliers and guests; they see us as doing something extra-special to protect the environment and want to participate, even if it is only in a small way.

It is this benefit that we'd like to primarily present to the workshop. We'd like to show that Wildlife Tourism can be a high profile activity on the Australian tourism scene. Most international visitors come to Australia to see our wildlife yet very little effort is put into marketing it by our State or National tourism organisations. There are positive ways and means that we can use to overcome this lethargy that we'd like to present to the workshop.

## **Snake as Sister: interpretation the Bininj way**

Denise Lawungkurr Goodfellow

Tour guide (NT) and doctoral student, Southern Cross University, Lismore NSW, vice chair WTA  
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Although birdwatching guides have mainly focused on the tiny market of 'twitchers' it seems most people watch birds to feel a special connection with the country. And so it makes sense to link such visitors with guides who can help put them in touch with the country, in other words indigenous guides.

My semi-traditional Indigenous relatives are inked to their land in part by Dreamings, a special relationship with certain animals or spirits. However, this is not something esoteric but implies a close relationship and a responsibility for taking care of dreaming creatures and their environment. Python for example, was viewed as a relative by all I called my children. But they had more to offer visitors for example, integrity and kindness as 'necessities for survival'; a view of seniors as sacred, of children as useful and competent. Yet all were reluctant to talk about such things.

When my semi-traditional relatives asked me to help them in tourism I had to work with their negative feelings about white society. Some also felt themselves 'too stupid' to learn; understandable considering they were treated as ignorant and uneducated even though they spoke or understood several languages, and had incredible bush skills. They were treated as irresponsible even though from the time they were toddlers they had learned to take responsibility for others.

The training of guides, has generally been 'top down'. Training at my sisters' country, Baby Dreaming, was different for it built upon my relatives' existing skills, knowledge and values. And visitors were fitted to them and not the other way round.

Those visitors helped build trust. My relatives now felt confident enough to share with visitors a different view of country and life, and birds, snakes and other wildlife, not as spectacle or collectors' items, but as relatives to be looked after and respected.

## **Twitch or connection: what do birdwatchers want?**

Denise Lawungkurr Goodfellow

Tour guide (NT) and doctoral student, Southern Cross University, Lismore NSW vice chair WTA  
[goodfellow@bigpond.com.au](mailto:goodfellow@bigpond.com.au)

Birdwatching is by far the largest sector of wildlife tourism, and American birdwatchers constitute the largest market, there being between 50-80 m, about 20 m of whom travel to watch birds. Most American birdwatchers are women, and most are well-travelled, well-educated and affluent seniors.

Some years ago Tourism NT latched onto one particular market – the ‘twitchers’, those people (mainly men) who obsessively collect sightings of new birds. But in focussing on ‘twitchers’ TNT missed a far larger and more inelastic market.

In general males and females watch birds in different ways, with more women being either generalists, more interested in bird behaviour (as opposed to just listing species) or more casual about the activity, while men are more interested in listing new birds, and competition and adventure. Thus it follows that married couples who watch birds may have different reasons for doing so.

As interest in birds may vary between spouses so may the reasons for travel. For example a spouse less interested in birds may travel for the experience and not to see new birds. Yet it appears that even among ‘twitchers’, certainly those who travel with their spouse (and it appears that birders prefer to have their spouse accompany them on international trips), the most important reason for watching birds is to feel a special connection with wildlife.

So guides and operators may find themselves dealing with two separate areas of interest in a couple: one a serious birder who wishes to see that next new species, and the other who may prefer to linger, to observe, or even watch butterflies instead of birds.

However guides also need the ability to help connect people with wildlife. And where can the tourism industry source such people?

**One more huddle**

Denise Lawungkurr Goodfellow

Tour guide (NT) and doctoral student, Southern Cross University, Lismore NSW vice chair WTA  
[goodfellow@bigpond.com.au](mailto:goodfellow@bigpond.com.au)

Indigenous rangers are popular among visitors to the Top End, know their country, and are hard-working and dedicated. Yet several have resigned, despite their love for the work, feeling they had no choice. This is not a new problem.

But given the importance of Indigenous people to tourism, and the importance of the bush vote to Government, one hopes that at last the issues are being taken seriously.



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

Ronda Green, BSc(Hons)  
Araucaria Ecotours (proprietor), Environmental Futures (Griffith University Qld) and Wildlife  
Tourism Australia (chair)  
[chair@wildlifetourismaustralia.org.au](mailto:chair@wildlifetourismaustralia.org.au)

Responsible wildlife tour operators want to educate tourists about the wildlife while ensuring they enjoy their holiday, connect people with nature in exciting ways but without disturbing the wildlife or compromising the safety of their guests, and give their guests a high-quality experience without either breaking their own budget or putting it out of the price range of too many prospective customers. Solving potential conflicts can be problematical. How close can we get to various animals without disturbing them, changing their behaviour or endangering our guests? Under what circumstances should we allow contact with or feeding of wildlife? Will the cutting of 'green tape' in Queensland and other states compromise the biodiversity values of our national parks? In a world of diminishing habitats and species, how do we ensure sustainable harvest where traditional hunting and fishing combine with tourism? How do we promote an enthusiasm for our wildlife and get environmental messages across to our tourists without detracting from the holiday atmosphere? How do we get the 'wow' factor that gets our guests talking and tweeting about us without spending more than we can afford? 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? How does the tourism industry encourage a diversity of quality operations small and large and promote cooperation between them? I don't pretend to have all the answers, but will provide what I hope will be some useful ideas, a summary of past research, pointers to future research that is needed, and links to further information

## **What are the benefits of wildlife tourism for the entire tourism supply chain in the NT?**

Mike Jarvis,  
Experience the Wild  
[mike@experiencethewild.com.au](mailto:mike@experiencethewild.com.au)

Wildlife Tourism is a subject that is close to the heart of everyone in attendance at this workshop. Something that we all have in common to a greater or lesser degree is

1. An appreciation of wildlife, and
2. A desire to share this with others

And many of us have succeeded in combining business with pleasure and turned our passion into our profession.

The question we all have to address and get a handle on is “What are the Benefits?”

- Benefits to Ourselves
- Benefits to other Tourism businesses
- Benefits to Visitors
- Benefits to Wildlife

### **Benefits to Ourselves**

Satisfaction comes to us from being immersed in a field that we are passionate about, and the satisfaction from sharing experiences with like-minded people.

Will we have an easy life because there is big money to be made?

### **Benefits to other Operators**

There is more satisfaction to be had by co-operating and enjoying friendly exchanges with competing businesses. In this field no two businesses are the same, and there is much to be gained by extolling the virtues of one another's products.

### **Benefits to Visitors**

Wildlife Tourism operators enable the visitor to experience safely and effectively the exposure to wildlife he or she is seeking.

### **Benefits to Wildlife**

Wildlife Tourism raises the profile of the animals and habitats that we care about. Like it or not, monetizing wildlife is the most effective way we can contribute to its wellbeing, and we have the opportunity and responsibility to do this in a sustainable manner.

## **What we want to learn from the 2014 World Parks Congress**

Ron Mader,  
planeta.com  
presented *via* Google Hangouts  
[editor@planeta.com](mailto:editor@planeta.com)

The World Parks Congress takes place once every ten years and is the world's most influential gathering of people involved in protected area management. Sydney, Australia hosts the event in November 2014.

Ron Mader previews the event with recommendations for participants - physical and remote - on making the most of this congress in a livestream Google hangout on October 4 (Australia time) from Oaxaca, Mexico (October 3 Mexico time).

- Among the focal points of the World Parks Congress:
- Achieving conservation results
- Engaging a new generation
- Broadening participation
- Improving health and well being
- Reconciling development challenges
- Respecting diverse knowledge systems
- Reacting to climate change
- Securing food and water

Of particular interest is the creation of a series of goals by which we can measure the success of the congress.

## **Conflicts between cultural use and ecotourism: the case of bird tours in Papua New Guinea**

David Newsome,  
Murdoch University. WA  
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Specialist bird watching tours are a feature of many countries that have a high diversity, spectacular, enigmatic and endemic species. One such place is Papua New Guinea where bird watching tourism has grown during the last 20 years. Today bird watching tour companies, based in the UK, USA, South Africa and Australia, market and run bird watching tours to PNG with a view to seeing parrots, crowned pigeons, jewel babbler and bird of paradise. This type of tourism generally does not take place in protected areas as 95% of the land in PNG is, and has been, owned by different families for generations. Some local communities have seen the potential for diversifying their income and have set up lodges at key locations where bird watchers can stay. Kumul Lodge in the Mount Hagen area, for example, is now a world famous bird watchers lodge where clients are able to see and obtain close views of birds of paradise. Kumul is an expensive place to stay but offers exceptional bird watching and bird photography opportunities. Local bird watching guides, most are former hunters, provide guiding services for tourists. Such guides liaise with the foreign tour group leader to maximise species identification and engage in daily excursions into the surrounding environment in order to see and identify different species of birds.

The before mentioned bird watching activities provide income for a significant number of people who are associated with the lodge and who own the land on which the bird watching takes place. What at one level may seem to be a successful and sustainable wildlife tourism operation is however troubled by a number of issues. Currently in the Mount Hagen area there are land disputes and one family clan threatened to burn down Kumul Lodge. The conflict is related to disputes as to which family owns various parcels of land and arguments over boundaries. Moreover, a deeply engrained culture of hunting larger species of birds, and especially birds of paradise for their feathers, threatens the abundance, population viability and the ability to view many species of birds at close range. In addition to this as the population of PNG grows there is more demand for land and forest resources and areas of forest are cleared to make way for the provision of food and areas for living. The central New Guinea Highlands, where many birds of paradise occur, extend across altitudes of 1200 to 2300 m and there is a significant demand for firewood for cooking and heating. Accordingly the combined impacts of hunting and forest loss are diminishing bird numbers and their habitats.

The absence of a comprehensive network of protected areas in PNG means that there are 'no safe havens' from hunting and habitat loss for birds of paradise and other species that ecotourism depends upon. Although places like Kumul Lodge are hailed as a conservation success story, the question arises for how long?

**Critical point of endemic birds in Okinawa, Japan  
- Challenge of shaping for management of wildlife viewing**

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This presentation focuses on exploring of the management of wildlife and the viewing in Yanbaru and particularly the current situation of two endemic birds in Okinawa, Okinawan rail (*Gallirallus okinawae*, EN) and Pryers woodpecker (*Sapheopipo noguchii*, CR) These birds are valuable to Yanbaru and area also the symbols for Okinawa and the main attraction for birdwatching in Okinawa.

However these birds have become threatened because of human activity such as vehicle traffic as well as predation by invasive feral animals. Although Japanese government departments such as Ministry of Environment and Municipality in Yanbaru attempts to contribute towards conservation they don't have operate with community consensus. This results in community confusion and less than ideal outcomes

Although Yanbaru has an unique wildlife, wildlife tourism is not as yet well developed. There is no official guideline or code of conduct for wildlife watching activity in the community and there is no network to share the idea of wildlife watching. Each sector operates independently based on its own strategy for conservation or management.

## **Wildlife Tourism in the Top End of Europe**

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Situated between the 60 and 70 northern latitude, Finland is one of the world's northernmost countries. The vast landscape is covered mostly by coniferous taiga forests mixed with a mosaic of lakes and mires. Finland has some 250 bird species, the species of high tourism interest being the nesting owls and rare north-eastern species. There are five bird tour operators in Finland and it is estimated that the total number of international bird watchers was 5 500 in 2012, most of them visiting the bird hotspots of Liminganlahti and Kuusamo. Finland is also known for its bears, wolves, lynxes and wolverines. There are some 12 service providers in the sparsely populated area of North-East Finland that offer facilities for both photographers and wildlife generalists. In 2012 the estimated number of wildlife clients in the area was 6 000.

The Finnish wildlife tourism customer numbers are still small and we have little knowledge of the economic impact of this business throughout Finland (a situation analysis is being conducted by KUAS). The image value of both birds and large carnivores, however, is bigger than its economic value and the economic value of wildlife tourism increases many times if we take into account the economic impact of FITs and visitors in national parks for whom wildlife watching is just one of the motives of visit.

In Finland especially the large carnivore watching and photography is based on systematic food provisioning which has raised debate as to the social and ecological sustainability of the business. The Finnish Tourism Board is currently revising the Wildlife Tourism Product Strategy and it is hoped the new version will have a comprehensive approach to developing wildlife tourism and a stronger stakeholder involvement in order to increase the triple bottom line sustainability of the business.

**Developing a network of tourism operations involved in conservation monitoring and wildlife research: benefits to tourism and research.**

Peter Wood \* and Ronda Green \*\*

\* James Cooke University, secretary and chair WTA, \*\* Araucaria Ecotours, chair of WTA

At last year's workshop Peter Wood presented a talk on the research being undertaken by a number of operators who are often unaware of each other's work. It was decided that a network of operators involved in research (whether academic for scientific publication or monitoring for conservation management) could benefit from connecting with one another, to discuss ideas, collaborate, complement one another's work, or avoid duplication. Subsequently, WTA has started a new website with the assistance of our new webmaster Robyn

Stark, <http://www.wildliferesearchnetwork.org/>

This website includes details of wildlife research throughout Australia which involves tourism, either by operators with scientific background conducting research themselves, or operators, eco-lodges and wildlife parks respectively offering free or discounted transport, accommodation or access to academic researchers. Some such research involves tourists as volunteers at various levels. The website also provides links to books, identification keys and useful equipment, as well as background information on 'citizen science,' 'voluntourism' and other related topics, and will soon introduce interactive forums.

In this presentation we will explore the potential for tourism involvement in both scientific research and conservation monitoring, also some of the possible pitfalls and how to avoid them.

## Round Table Discussions

**Doing it differently: what kinds of new products or new approaches to old ones could we be attempting, in the Top End and elsewhere?**

Which animals excite tourists the most and how can we show them in new ways that emphasise their uniqueness and their roles in the ecosystem while giving our tourists truly memorable experiences?

What other animals have potential to grab the attention of tourists and how do we plan for this?

Are there some great wildlife areas not currently being visited, and what should we do about it?

How can we provide a more genuine connection with nature on tours or at eco-lodges?

How can we use modern technology to enhance wildlife viewing and understanding of wildlife and ecosystems?

What kinds of tourism attraction are currently most visited, and can we ease some appropriate wildlife-based themes into them? e.g. theme park rides, mazes, playgrounds.

Can we use theme parks and wildlife parks to prompt visitors to travel to regional areas and see wildlife in the wild?

Are there special wild events we can promote, the way for instance the migration of wildebeeste is promoted in Tanzania?



## **What works and what doesn't? Problems of training and working as a guide or ranger (including Indigenous) in regional Australia**

NT tourism has always targeted the mass international market - coach tours and backpackers, “bums on seats” sightseeing that concentrates on major iconic and cultural attractions and “megaprojects” (Schmallegger & Carson, 2010). That this sort of tourism tends to fluctuate and decline has largely been ignored by both Government and the tourism industry with what could best be described as blind optimism in the belief that the market would always grow.

Instead the declines have been attributed to ‘extraordinary’ events - unfavourable exchange rates, terrorism, epidemics etc. While all play a part much blame must be directed to failure by industry and government to adapt to changing markets (Schmallegger and Carson, 2010), for example the growing desire of visitors for an experience that is ‘intimate, interactive and “authentic”’ (Goodfellow, 2010 unpubl.).

Diverse, small wildlife and cultural products would supply that intimacy. However, tourism culture has largely been constructed around a mass sightseeing tourism model, thus limiting the ability of niche tourism eg cultural and wildlife, to participate. As well sightseeing tourism has attempted to represent those niches, (operators adopting the term ‘ecotour’ for a start), resulting in the simplification of both wildlife and cultural experiences - homogeneous products for what is seen to be a homogeneous market (Schmallegger & Carson, 2010).

Likewise indigenous people are led to believe that they must follow “past patterns of development (Baum, 1999; George et al (2009); Kneafsey, 2000 in Schmallegger & Carson, 2010) whatever their feelings of caution. This was certainly the author’s experience with the Kunwinjku people involved with a little tourism project in western Arnhem Land, being told they would have to build “big hotels”. This approach sets Indigenous people and others up to fail (Goodfellow, 2003).

It may be time to do "business as unusual" (García-Rosell, et al, 2007).

## **Developing the wildlife tourism research network at all levels and in all regions**

See abstract for the talk on this theme by Peter Wood and Ronda Green

Can tour operators and tourists provide real value to scientific research?

Can tour operators and tourists provide real value to conservation monitoring?

What can tour operators, wildlife parks and eco-accommodation usefully offer to wildlife researchers? Could there be a danger of exploitation by researchers (including post-graduate students) and how do we safeguard against this?

What kinds of guidelines should we develop for operators to ensure the science is good enough to gain the support of academics?

What are some of the tasks that could be usefully done by people with no scientific background or knowledge of local wildlife?

Are there some higher-level tasks that more experience volunteers could assist with?

What kinds of safeguards should we have in place to check for accuracy of data collected?

What kind of acknowledgment should be given to volunteer assistants?

**Jumping hurdles: overcoming financial, bureaucratic and other problems for high-quality but low-budget wildlife guides, tourism businesses, research students and NGOs**

How do we identify guides who are excellent in their ability to lead high-quality tours but lack the resources to set themselves up in business?

Can we get a better deal for public liability insurance for casual guides, start-up businesses and small (including micro) businesses struggling through tough financial times?

What are some good low-cost avenues for letting the world know your availability?

Are there prejudices or 'blind spots' in high places that make it difficult for the smaller operator or casual guide to be taken seriously?

What are the main hurdles to developing wildlife guiding as a career in regional Australia?

### **How can we best make wildlife tourism contribute to wildlife conservation?**

- Conservation through sustainable use – what weighting should be given to wildlife tourism and the non-consumptive sector?
- Wildlife on the plate – are seeing and eating wildlife compatible in wildlife tourism's quest to promote sustainability and conservation values?
- David Attenborough for the day – does getting off the couch promote conservation values and activism?
- How best do we get tourism dollars contributing to conservation breeding and habitat restoration?
- What is the potential for volunteerism in conservation monitoring?
- To what extent can the development of wildlife tourism add to the economic turnover of regional areas and provide an economically viable alternative to clearing habitats for agriculture, mining and other industries?
- What are some steps a small operator can reasonably easily take to enhance their contribution to wildlife conservation?

## **Using GIS to help with wildlife tourism and biodiversity conservation**

*(From Wikipedia: “A Geographic Information System (GIS) is a system designed to capture, store, manipulate, analyze, manage, and present all types of geographical data... for informing [decision making](#).)*

This session is a discussion about the usefulness of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) for wildlife tourism managers. It is useful for others to also understand this process and know what kinds of information s best contributed and utilised, and the scope but also the limits to its effectiveness. Priorities for wildlife tourism related GIS will be identified, and effectively options for addressing those priorities will be developed.

- What are the main conflicts between tourism and biodiversity conservation?
- What do we need to find out in order to make informed decisions as to where to allow various kinds of activities and structures?
- How can GIS assist this information-gathering?
- How much 'ground-truthing' is needed for different purposes?
- How can GIS most effectively be used for deciding which particular areas should be preserved as national parks r other conservation areas and which are more suited to active forms of recreation or accommodation?

## **Close encounters with wildlife vs minimal impact is there a place for both?**

Many who are now enthusiastic about wildlife and supportive of its conservation have childhood memories of interactions with wild animals that helped shaped their positive attitudes. Adults who have not had contact with wildlife are often affected by close encounters. Many travellers seek out such encounters. Others see encounters as demeaning to wildlife, and see the dangers of altering natural behaviour.

We sometimes see a dichotomy appearing between those who feel wildlife should always be kept wild, with no human contact, and others who either very much enjoy close encounters themselves or see them as a valuable way of attracting attention to the animals while presenting environmental messages.

Some questions to ponder:

Can you recall close encounters that shaped your attitudes as a child or were very memorable parts of your travels?

Can you recall instances of seeing wildlife in a wild setting, without yourself being seen by the animals, that shaped your attitudes as a child or were very memorable parts of your travels?

What are the major problems associated with close encounters?

Can we solve these, at least in some situations?

What are the circumstances under which close encounters would be acceptable, perhaps even desirable?

Under what circumstances should they not be allowed?

How do we make viewing from afar exciting for the traveller who is not already a dedicated wildlife enthusiast?

## **Abstracts for cancelled presentations**

*The following presenters have unfortunately found they are unable to attend*

### **Sustainable Tourism Benefiting the Local Communities: The El Nido Case, Plawan, Philippines**

Emilia Boadilla-Abalos and Gabriel Lucero  
DMMMSU, Bacnotan, La Union, Philippines

(no longer to be presented, but included here for interest of delegates)

Palawan is an island province of the Philippines located in the MIMAROPA Region. It's almost 2,000 km of irregular coastlines are dotted with 1,780 islands, islets, rocky coves and sugar-white sandy beaches. It harbors a vast stretch of virgin forest. The terrain is a mix of coastal plain, craggy foothills, valley deltas and heavy forest interspersed with riverine arteries. It is here where one of the 8<sup>th</sup> wonders of the world is located – the **underground river** and the winner of Sustainable tourism Award, given by the World Travel and Tourism Council Tourism for Tomorrow(WTTC) Awards in Abu Dhabi – the **El Nido Resorts**.

The award, which were part of the WTTC's global summit, highlight the efforts of travel and tourism businesses and destinations around the world to successfully balance their commitments to profitability and to uphold environmental best practices to benefit the local communities that host them. The El Nido Resorts was one of the four winners from among 133 applications from 46 countries.

El Nido composed of 4 ecoresorts in the island of Miniloc, Lagan, Pangulasian and Apulit. El Nido Resorts was recognized for employing and training the locals that staff its properties. Palawan residents, mostly from the municipality of El Nido, make up 90% of its organization.

El Nido is a home to a wide range of flora and fauna, many of which are endemic. Thus, the locals are involved in conservation while earning or having livelihood in ecotourism activities such as island hopping, bird watching, kayaking, cliff climbing, cave exploring, and other service oriented activities. Through constant training, the staff, learn and appreciate environmental best practices in addition to the high level of skills required of them.

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### **Wildlife Tourism in Nepal's Lowland Protected Areas**

Hum Gurung

Himalayan Sustainable Future Foundation

(no longer to be presented, but included here for interest of delegates)

Nepal's protected areas are home to some of the endangered flagship wildlife species. The low lands of Nepal stretching from Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve in the East to Shukla Phanta Wildlife Reserve in the West are designated for wildlife conservation. Although the low lands including Chitwan, Bardia and Parsa were popular for hunting by then the Royal families and their dignitaries, the protected areas became important destinations for wildlife tourism in recent years. Some of the flagship wildlife species include Wild buffalo (*Bubalus arnee*), wild Asian elephant (*Elephas maximus*), Bengal florican (*Houbaropsis bengalensis*), Swamp deer (*Cervus duvauceli*), Gangetic dolphin (*Platanista gangetica*), tigers (*Panthera tigris*), and Greater One-horned Rhinoceros (*Rhinoceros unicornis*).

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) declared the Chitwan National Park a World Heritage Site in 1984, and it has both national and international significance. It is popular for both domestic and international tourists, receiving more than 100,000 visitors annually. However, there has been a growing conflict between parks and people due to damage of

crops and threat to livelihoods by wildlife in the parks and reserves. The surrounding parks and reserves have been declared buffer zones, which consists of forests and private lands including cultivated lands in order to reduce the conflict between parks and people. The parks, reserves and the local communities jointly initiate community development activities, promote wildlife tourism and manage natural resources in the buffer zones. The Government of Nepal has made provision of to provide 30-50 percent of the park revenue for community development, tourism promotion and natural resource management in the buffer zones.

This paper highlights how wildlife tourism has benefited the local communities and contributed in conservation of biodiversity in the protected areas. It discusses some of the contemporary issues in protected area management and wildlife tourism for the benefit of present and future generation.

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### **Walking on Country with Spirits: Enhancing Scientific Collaboration through Aboriginal Research Tourism**

Helen Murphy (James Cook University)  
Marilyn Wallace (Manager, Bana Yarralji Ranger Service)  
(no longer to be presented, but included here for interest of delegates)

This paper describes an Aboriginal research tourism enterprise with a specific focus on how scientific information is gained and shared between Aboriginal people and the scientific community within a tourism context. This paper describes the Aboriginal research tourism enterprise of Bana Yarralji located in the Wet Tropics World Heritage area of northern Queensland. Aboriginal research tourism is a relatively new phenomenon whereby scientists, students and volunteers pay to experience cross cultural collaboration in research on Aboriginal land.

This paper describes how Bana Yarralji have acknowledged the importance of scientific collaboration in caring for country and how they have in turn incorporated their own monitoring activities into their product range of research tourism opportunities. This research is important as it describes how an Aboriginal group identified a gap in the tourism market and are using this opportunity to create jobs, foster knowledge exchange and revitalize traditional ecological knowledge for a younger generation. The results from this research demonstrate that traditional knowledge and culture can be sustained through tourism enterprise and offers outstanding opportunities to both the scientific community and students alike for cross cultural collaboration in a variety of research activities.

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