Using Wildlife for Tourism: Opportunities, Threats, Responsibilities

Wildlife Tourism Australia’s 3rd National Workshop

Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary, Queensland

16-18 May 2012

Program and Abstracts
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**Southern Gold Coast**

The Southern Gold Coast is the quieter, less developed end of the Gold Coast. Visit their link for ideas on what you might do and see before and after the Workshop.

**Denise Lawungkurr Goodfellow & Michael Stott**

Denise Goodfellow runs exert birding tours and Indigenous culture tours in the Northern Territory.

**Gondwana Guides**

Gondwana Guides offers expert birdwatching and other nature tours in Australia, New Guinea and New Zealand, plus related consultancies.

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http://www.learnaboutwildlife.com

Araucaria Ecotours offers zoologist-designed wildlife, birding and other nature tours, all with advanced eco-accreditation, in southern Queensland and northern New South Wales, plus related consultancies.
Using Wildlife for Tourism: Opportunities, Threats, Responsibilities

WTA’s 3rd National Workshop
Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary, Queensland May 2012

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Wildlife Art display by Caldera Art (organized by Andy Reimanis)
featuring works by Vivienne Bowen, Jan Bracher, Janet Barret,
Cloe Joseph, Kalinda Lee-Witchey and Ros Oakes
Program Wildlife Tourism Workshop 2012

Note: all events below will be at the Theatre, Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary, except the welcoming cocktails (Vikings), lunches (rainforest room, near entry) and some of the breakout discussion groups (some of these will be in the education room adjacent to the theatre, or possibly outdoors if weather is good)

Tuesday 15th May

5.30pm Welcoming Cocktails and Networking Vikings Surf Club (free for all delegates registering for 3 days, $20 for others)

Wednesday 16th May

8.00am Registration opens at the Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary (our venue for next 3 days)

8.15am Welcome
• Welcome to the workshop, Ten years of Wildlife Tourism Australia (Ronda Green, chair WTA)
• Welcome to the venue, brief history of Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary (Jonathan Fisher, CEO of Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary)
• Welcome to the Southern Gold Coast (Rachael Canard, Operations Officer, Southern Gold Coast)

8.45am Keynote: Economic Benefits, Conservation and Wildlife Tourism (Professor Clement Tisdell, University of Queensland)  …………………  P.10

9.30am Morning tea (browse posters and display by NGOs)

9.55am Contributed papers. Chair: Angus M Robinsons
• 9.55am Wildlife in the promotion of Australia’s national Landscapes (Jonathan Fisher, Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary)…………………………..p.18
• 10.15am Tasmania’s Great Wildlife Viewing Sites Combining Tourism and Conservation (Ingrid Albion, Tasmania’s Parks and Wildlife Service).p.11
• 10.35am A new resource guide for everyone involved in recovery and management of Queensland’s threatened animals (Lee Curtis, chief editor, Queensland’s Threatened Animals)…………………………..p.16
• 10.55am The value of quality interpretation: a short guide to how to provide memorable experiences (Barry Davies, Gondwana Guides) …..p.17
• 11.40am Plant-based tourism (Mark Ballantyne) …………………p.14

12.00noon Lunch (opportunity to view wildlife art)
12.50pm **Discussions**: 5-minute introduction by moderator, divide into small groups for 30 minutes, re-unite for final discussion and collective decisions on what future actions should be

- 12.50pm The value of wildlife tourism to Australia’s economy and environment (moderator Angus M. Robinson, Leisure Solutions® and Board Member, Foundation for National Parks and Wildlife) ………………………. p.35
- 2.10pm Small business finances relevant to wildlife tourism: Insurance, licenses, promotion etc. (moderator Ronda Green) ……………………………p. 36

3.30pm **Afternoon tea (browse posters and displays by NGOs)**

3.30pm **Discussion**

- Using wildlife to value-add to tours and accommodation (moderator Barry Davies, Gondwana Guides) …………………p.39

4.50pm **Close of talks**

5.30pm **Yanguwah**: (5.30pm pre-show drinks 6.30 - 9.00pm Show and Dinner)

**Thursday 17th May**

8.00am **Registration opens**

8.15am **Contributed papers.** Chair: Angus M Robinson

- 8.15am Are you looking at me? Tourism effects on behaviour: a Rottnest Island case study (Teele Worrell et al, Murdoch University) …………………p. 34
- 8.35am The Repositioning of Zoos as Conservation Organisations: Evaluating the Perceptions of Stakeholders (Larry Perry, Southern Cross University)..p.27
- 8.55am Fostering pro-environmental behaviour of zoo visitors through persuasive communication (Liam Smith and Betty Weiler, Monash Sustainability Institute) ……………………….p. 31
- 9.15am Dubai wildlife tourism: a veterinary perspective (Peter McKinney, Zoo and Wildlife Veterinary Consultant, Yandina) …………………. p.25
- 9.35am The development of birdwatching tourism in Japan (Assoc-Professor Junko Oshima, University of the Ryukyus, Japan) ………… p.26

10.00am **Morning tea  (browse posters and displays by NGOs)**

10.25am **Keynote** Close encounters: Why understanding human-wildlife interactions matters (Assoc-Professor Darryl N Jones, Griffith University) ….. p.8

11.10am **Contributed papers.** Chair: Lee Curtis
• 11.10am Forming a network of marine wildlife tourism operators involved in research (Dr Peter Wood, James Cook University) .......... p. 32
• 11.30am Let the Oceans Speak (Dr Gayle Mayes, University of the Sunshine Coast) ................................ p. 24
• 11.50am Ecotourism as a contributor to conservation of bats in urban environments (Maree Kerr, Australasian Bat Society) ........ P. 23
• 12.10pm Commercial and philanthropic opportunities for enhancing wildlife conservation through ecotourism (Angus M Robinson, Leisure Solutions® and Susanna Bradshaw, Foundation for National Parks and Wildlife) ..... p. 29

12.20pm lunch  (opportunity to view wildlife art)

**1.20pm Discussions**

5-minute introduction by moderator, divide into small groups 30minutes, re-unite for final discussion and collective decisions on what future actions should be

• 1.20pm The Repositioning of Zoos as Conservation Organisations (moderator, Larry Perry, Southern Cross University).......................p.40
• 2.40 pm The three-way marriage of conservation, research and tourism (moderator Peter Wood, James Cook University) ...........p.41

4.00pm afternoon tea (browse posters and displays by NGOs)

**4.20pm Discussion**

• Emerging threats to wildlife and tourism (moderator Ronda Green, Araucaria Ecotours and Chair WTA) ............... p. 42

5.40pm Close of afternoon session (option of drinks at bar opens 5.30pm)

6.30pm New Wildlife Tourism Television Series, premier viewing of episode to air in June, and opportunity to participate: Lin Sutherland of Travel Wild

**Friday 18th May**

8.00am Registration opens

**8.10am Contributed papers.** Chair: Barry Davies

• 8.10am The Baby Dreaming Project: the Snake as Sister (Interpretation the Indigenous way) (Denise Lawungkurr Goodfellow, Southern Cross University and vice chair WTA) .............. p. 19
• 8.30am Marine Plastic Debris – a threat - and opportunity for Wildlife Tourism (Ian Hutton, Lord Howe Nature Tours) ........ p. 22
• 8.50am Psychological Variables for Conservation through Wildlife
Tourism (Rodolfo Sapiains, University of Queensland) … p. 30

• 9.10am Managing Wildlife Tourism: an ethics approach to human-wildlife interactions (Dr Leah Burns, Griffith University) … p. 15

• 9.30am Wildlife tourism in Australia: the next ten years (Dr Ronda Green, chair WTA, proprietor Araucaria Ecotours, adjunct research fellow Environmental Futures, Griffith University) … p. 21

9.50am Morning tea (browse posters and displays by NGOs)

10.20 Keynote - What is Wildlife Tourism in 2012, and what do people want? (Shane O'Reilly, Managing Director, O'Reilly's Rainforest Retreat) … p. 9

11.05 Discussion

• Providing high-quality memorable wildlife experiences (moderator Dr Ronda Green, Araucaria Ecotours and chair WTA) … p. 43

12.15pm lunch (opportunity to view wildlife art)

1.15pm Discussions

• 1.15pm Wildlife interpretation for different kinds of visitor (moderator Barry Davies, Gondwana Guides) ……………………… p.44

• 2.25pm Environmental ethics and wildlife tourism (Dr Leah Burns, Griffith University) ……………………………………………p.45

3.45pm Afternoon tea (browse posters and displays by NGOs)

4.15 Summing up of past three days

4.30 Final plenary discussion

General discussion of all topics, suggestions from everyone on any actions we should support for the future (lobbying, policy statements, press releases, networking, partnerships etc.), resolutions of actions to be taken up by WTA committee in the coming year

5.30 Close of workshop

Poster papers

• Impacts of dolphin provisioning on visitors’ intended pro-environmental attitudes, behaviours and actions in Tin Can Bay, South East Queensland (Ximena Arango et al). p.12

• American couples who travel internationally and watch birds (Denise Goodfellow).p. 20
KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

Associate Professor Darryl Jones, Environmental Futures Centre, Griffith University

Close encounters: Why understanding human-wildlife interactions matters.

Most people on earth now live in cities, a situation our species has never previously experienced in its entire evolutionary history. This is almost certainly going to have profound implications for our relationship with nature. Already there is abundant evidence that many people perceive the non-human world with various combinations of fear, disgust and confusion as well as unrealistic sentimentality. These are new responses and appear to stem in part from the contemporary disconnect between people and the natural world, a phenomenon called the “extinction of experience”. Among the many concerns that flow from this situation are the likelihood that subsequent generation will feel far less affinity with nature resulting in declining support for conservation. As has been alarmingly stated: “There is no need to ‘Save the Whales’; we have the video.” It is in this context that close encounters with wild animals in natural setting takes on a more profound perspective. This talk will explore some of the challenges and opportunities available to wildlife tourism and suggest that these encounters may be even more important than you realized.

Darryl Jones is an Associate Professor in the Griffith School of Environment, Griffith University and is currently Deputy Director of the Environmental Futures Centre.

Darryl was one of the pioneers of the new field of urban ecology in Australia, conducting some of the earliest studies of urban birds. This interest have expanded and developed into a series of strands, including understanding the impacts of urbanisation on native species, the management of human-wildlife conflicts, and an exploration of the reasons some species are successful at coexisting with humans in cities.

As well as formal science publishing, he is deeply committed to communicating to the public and writes many popular articles as well as a column on urban wildlife in the magazine Wildlife Australia.
Keynote speakers (cont.)

Shane O’Reilly, O’Reilly’s Rainforest Retreat

What is Wildlife Tourism in 2012, and what do people want?

The presentation explores “Wildlife Tourism” from an O’Reilly’s perspective. It looks at what is provided, and - importantly - it asks which group of tourists or visitors make use of which activity. This leads to an obvious question of what “value” is each activity, and to my view of one size does not fit all markets – which I’m happy to point out is in agreement with the guidelines and policies of Wildlife Tourism Australia. I will also briefly look at some of the hurdles of delivering such experiences in today’s climate, beset with a soft economy and masses of bureaucratic overlay.

In 1989 Shane gave up a successful management career in Brisbane and before that South Africa to return to the family business and now resides in his current position as Managing Director of National Park Pty Limited the family holding company of O’Reilly’s and Canungra Valley Vineyards Pty Ltd..

Shane’s formal qualifications include a Business Degree in Human Resource Management and a Diploma of Company Directorship and a Diploma in Directorship of not-for profit and Government owned corporations.

Shane has and is currently involved with numerous community and industry associations including the following:

1. Director Gold Coast Tourism 2002 to 2006 (membership based nomination)
2. Director of the Queensland Wine Industry Association 2004 to 2008 (membership based nomination)
4. Director Tourism Queensland 2006 to 2011 (State appointment)
5. Shane is also the Chairman of the Canungra Information and Historical Association and a life member of his local Natural History Association which oversees the Green Mountains section of Lamington National Park.

Under Shane’s guidance the O’Reilly family business has grown from a domestic leisure based accommodation business with 41 rooms to the current 70 rooms in the main Retreat plus the development and subsequent management of 48 Mt Villas, a conference centre and Lost World Spa. The accommodation market is now split between domestic and international leisure as well as conferences. There are been a large investment in facilities for day visitors, including the off mountain development of Canungra Valley Vineyards situated at the bottom of the mountain road to O’Reilly’s.
Wildlife tourism is widely believed to generate considerable economic benefits and to contribute significantly to nature conservation. These aspects are seen to be of growing importance, and there is hope that wildlife tourism will help to stem global biodiversity loss. This raises the question of what are the economic benefits from wildlife tourism and how are they to be determined or measured. Diverse measures are being used; some defensible and others more problematic. Examples and applications of these measures are given. Then, the role played by economic benefits from wildlife tourism in nature conservation is examined and the contribution of wildlife tourism to biodiversity conservation is considered. A brief discussion follows of the diversity of the types of businesses in the wildlife tourism industry and the economic challenges facing them.

Clem Tisdell is Professor Emeritus in economics at The University of Queensland and has had a long-term interest in the connections between economics, nature conservation and tourism; an interest that first developed in the 1970s and which has continued ever since. He has authored many articles and several books on these connections. His most recent book (co-authored with C. Wilson) is in press and is entitled Nature-based Tourism and Conservation: New Economic Insights and Case Studies. It is expected to be available within the next few months. Clem Tisdell has been recognised internationally as a pioneer of tourism economics and is a major contributor to the study of conservation economics.
CONTRIBUTED PAPERS

Ingrid Albion, Tasmania’s Parks and Wildlife Service

Tasmania’s Great Wildlife Viewing Sites Combining Tourism and Conservation

The Tasmanian Wildlife Tourism Strategy 2005 identified the need to provide ongoing development of outstanding wildlife viewing opportunities within the State’s protected areas to promote tourism and wildlife conservation outcomes. In 2006 the Parks and Wildlife Service received $300 000 for Stage One of the Great Wildlife Viewing Sites Project to review and prioritise 8-10 Great Wildlife Sites and to provide initial development at some of these. This paper describes the developments at three key sites: Mt Field glow-worm and wildlife interactive screen; Lillico Beach penguin rookery enhancement; and Maria Island’s underwater wonderland. It also looks at the outcomes from these projects including ongoing values to Park management as a result of improved infrastructure; the development of saleable DVDs (Maria and Pt Davey); and assistance with the development of the Wildlife Trail brochure.

Ingrid attained her zoology degree at Melbourne University and went on to achieve Honours in marine zoology and a Dip Ed from the University of Tasmania. As well as working as a science teacher she has worked as a scientist on marine pests and with the fox eradication program. For the last 18 years she has worked as an Education Officer with the Parks and Wildlife Service and also with the Tasmanian Devil insurance breeding program for the last 8 years. Her passion is wildlife and educating the public about it.
Impacts of dolphin provisioning on visitors’ intended pro-environmental attitudes, behaviours and actions in Tin Can Bay, South East Queensland.

(Poster presentation)

In the Tin Can Bay Inlet, Great Sandy Biosphere historical encounters between humans and Indo-Pacific humpback dolphins (*Sousa chinensis*) developed more than three decades ago (Garbett & Garbett 1997). These encounters evolved, generating a tourism activity focused on the provisioning of individuals of *S. chinensis* (Mayes et al. 2004). The provisioning of dolphins has produced intense debate worldwide as a result of the associated negative impacts at biological, ecological and behavioural levels (Aparicio & Bonal 2002; Orams 2002; Tennent & Downs 2008; Turner et al. 2008; Wilson 1994). Nevertheless, these activities provide an opportunity to research, manage and understand the predictable nature of encounters between humans and dolphins (Connor & Smolker 1985; Orams 1997b; Orams & Hill 1998). Wildlife tourism activities such as dolphin–based provisioning tourism, through the educational and interpretive messages delivered create opportunities to generate more responsible citizens and pro-environmental active visitors (Orams 1999). Positive changes in visitor perspectives post-participation can be directly beneficial for wildlife species and their environment or the prelude for future favourable actions (Ballantyne et al. 2011). The combination of operational procedures and effective interpretation and education programs delivered to the visitors have the potential to generate those changes (Orams 1997a).

In Tin Can Bay, the management of the provisioning, the hygiene and operational procedures and interpretation messages delivered to the public have changed and improved since 2002. The objective of this paper is to compare the 2002 and 2011 management practices and the impacts that the 2011 dolphin provisioning experience has on the intended pro-environmental attitudes and intentions to behave and act on visitors after participating in the *S. chinensis* provisioning-based tourism in Tin Can Bay. A questionnaire was distributed to visitors immediately after their participation in the activity. Significant differences occurred between the 2002 and 2011 responses in four out of seven questions relating to intentions to act pro-environmentally. These differences may be attributed to the changes that have occurred to the management of the experience and the improved quality of interpretation and education program delivered to the public.

References


Connor, R. C., and R. A. Smolker. 1985. Habituated dolphins (*Tursiops truncatus*) in


Ximena Arango is currently a PhD Student with the Sustainability Research Centre at the University of the Sunshine Coast. She has an MSc in the Management and Conservation of Subantarctic Natural Resources (UMAG, Chile) and a BSc (Hons) in Marine Biology (UJTL, Colombia). The title of her doctoral research is: ‘Socio-economic and Dolphin Behavioural Impacts from the Provisioning of Indo-Pacific Humpback Dolphins (Sousa chinensis) in Tin Can Bay, South East Queensland.’

Bill Carter is an Associate Director of the Sustainability Research Centre at the University of the Sunshine Coast (USC). His background is in protected area management and consulting in the areas of ecological impact assessment, and tourism, park and interpretive planning throughout the Asia Pacific Region and South Africa. Bill is co-editor of the Australasian Journal of Environmental Management. His research areas include ecotourism, cultural change, protected area management, environmental interpretation, management effectiveness and monitoring and evaluation, and adaptive management.

Dr Gayle Mayes: see page 24
Plant-based Tourism

Tourism is a multi-trillion dollar industry and is increasing worldwide. Plants form an important and under-recognised part of many types of tourism. Examples can be categorised within ‘nature-based tourism’ which has until now been predominantly associated with animals, but also as an integral component of many human-context tourisms. Visitor motivations can be inherent within the plant attraction (e.g. viewing charismatic species), an associative relationship with the plant (e.g. historical connotations) or an extractive/consumptive use (e.g. plant collecting). Scales range from iconic individuals to whole landscapes dominated by floral spectacles and from mass tourism to niche-market ventures such as dark or culinary tourism. The plants themselves can be employed throughout the entire marketing procedure from advertising to the destination experience itself. Benefits of plant-based tourism to economics, conservation, education and human culture are discussed along with associated direct and indirect impacts. Further review is required of this under-recognised form of tourism in order to gain a better insight into the available research and market potentials.

Mark Ballantyne is a PhD student at Griffith University working on the impacts of fragmentation by tourism and recreation on endangered plant communities. He previously worked for the Gaia Trust in the UK working in partnership with local farm-holders to promote wildlife-friendly agriculture and develop volunteer biodiversity surveys. Future research will focus on protected area management and monitoring the impacts of visitation on plant communities and endangered species in Australia.
Managing Wildlife Tourism: an ethics approach to human-wildlife interactions.

Wildlife tourism takes many different forms, involving different types of tourism and different species of wildlife as well as a multitude of different ways tourists and wildlife interact. This paper examines ethical positions that inform management of this diverse phenomenon and proposes a set of ecocentric ethical principles with potential to enhance both the visitor experience and the conservation of wildlife. Applying the seven principles to a case study demonstrates that recognizing the intrinsic value of wildlife and developing a sense of moral obligation and moral reasoning toward the wildlife tourism experience can have positive outcomes for both people and wildlife. If management strategies work within a precautionary principle, acknowledge the interconnectedness between people and nature, and accept that wildlife belongs in nature, then a more ecocentric ethic is possible. This requires managers to engage in a reflexive process with regard to their own ethical position to facilitate the practical application of an ecocentric approach.

With a background in Cultural Anthropology, Leah has been working in the Environmental Sciences at Griffith University since 1996. She was a founding member of the Sustainable Tourism CRC, the original home of Wildlife Tourism Australia. Leah’s long standing research interests in tourism impacts (first published following a fieldtrip to Nepal in 1989) have recently focused on the interactions between humans and wildlife, especially in nature-based tourism settings. She is author of several book chapters and journal articles on this topic, as well as the book *Dingoes, Penguins and People: Engaging Anthropology to Reconstruct the Management of Wildlife Tourism Interactions* (2010). Leah is Deputy Coordinator of the “Australia's Past and Present” research cluster in Griffith’s Environmental Future’s Centre, and Vice Chairperson of the Australian Animal Studies Group (www.aasg.org.au).
Lee K Curtis, author and editor

A new resource guide for everyone involved in recovery and management of Queensland’s Threatened Animals.

Queensland is home to 70% of Australia’s native mammals (226 species), over 70% of native birds (630 species), just over half of the nation’s native reptiles (485) and native frogs (127), and more than 11 000 native plant species. Hundreds of these have a threatened status in Queensland. In order for Queensland to maintain and recover a healthy biodiversity we must address the serious problems faced by our natural environment – habitat loss, inappropriate land management, change in fire regimes, pollution of natural resources, proliferation of invasive species and climate change.

Queensland's Threatened Animals (CSIRO Publishing 2012) features up-to-date distribution data, photos and maps for most of Queensland’s threatened animals. It also includes a comprehensive list of resources, with key state, national and international organisations involved in the recovery and management of threatened species.

Queensland's Threatened Animals will provide vital information to scientists, educators, business entities, government agencies, students, community groups, environmental NGOs, regional NRMs and potential volunteers, including wildlife tourism operators and their clients.

Lee Curtis is the Chief Editor of CSIRO Publishing’s recently published Queensland’s Threatened Animals, author of the Green Guide to Kangaroos and Wallabies of Australia as well as the Whitley award winning Wallabies, Wombats and Other Mammals of Australia. She is a freelance journalist and copywriter who is passionate about Australia’s natural environment and wildlife. Lee is an active member of the Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland and has been correspondent for Wildlife Australia Magazine since 2002. She writes about wildlife for a variety of publications and does presentations whenever an opportunity to help educate children and/or the public arises. Lee’s volunteer work with several threatened species recovery projects in Queensland over the years inspired her to organise the compilation of a resource guide to Queensland’s threatened animals in order to facilitate networking and communication among those involved in species management and recovery.
Barry Davies, Gondwana Guides

The Value of Quality Interpretation – a short guide to how to provide memorable experiences.

Interpretation is not just about the imparting of knowledge, giving facts, it is about creating understanding and it is done by telling stories, generating enthusiasm and a sense of wonder.

This paper reviews the basic principles of face-to-face interpretation and highlights the benefits, challenges and pitfalls using examples from the author’s experiences both as an interpreter and as a tour leader listening to the best and worst examples of interpretation around Australia.

Barry owns and operates Gondwana Guides, and is the only person to twice be named Australian EcoGuide of the Year by Ecotourism Australia. Barry also subcontracts as a Tour Leader, Guide and Tour Planner to groups traveling to Australia, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea for Birding, Wildlife, Cultural and Educational tours and provides Consulting Services in Ecotourism, Environmental Interpretation and Fauna management (Spotter Catcher)
Jonathan Fisher, Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary

**Wildlife in the promotion of Australia’s national Landscapes**

Jonathan will summarise the process to date to get to a draft Experience Development Strategy for Australia’s Green Cauldron, highlight where wildlife tourism features in the recent draft and raise questions about the role of wildlife tourism in the future of National Landscapes.

Jonathan is the CEO of Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary with 25 years experience managing tourism businesses in sensitive environmental landscapes from the Lake District in the UK via the Hunter Valley to the Gold Coast. Originally qualified as a Chartered Surveyor, Jonathan holds a Post Graduate Diploma in Building Conservation and a Masters in Marketing Management. Jonathan is acutely aware of the impact of the human interaction in the environment and on wildlife, from his time as Operations Manager at Taronga Zoo to his current role as CEO of Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary. Positioning Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary as the lead eco-tourism attraction on the Gold Coast remains a personal vision however the harsh realities of a tough tourism market on the Gold Coast tempered some of the ambitious plans. The Sanctuary is well positioned to create a gateway for Australia’s Green Cauldron, the National Landscape surrounding Currumbin promoting partnerships between tourism, conservation and seeking to empower indigenous opportunity. Jonathan is currently Chair of the Steering Committee for Australia’s Green Cauldron. Over the last four years Currumbin has ventured into adventure tourism with the Adventure Parc Green Challenge High Ropes course, opened a new Wildlife Hospital precinct, created a Hospital Foundation and recently opened a new indigenous hosted dinner show experience called Yanguwah.
Denise Goodfellow, Southern Cross University, birding and cultural guide in NT and vice-chair of WTA

The Baby Dreaming Project: the Snake as Sister (Interpretation the Indigenous way)

The Baby Dreaming project was a little tourism project that my semi-traditional relatives asked me to start in Arnhem Land. While birdwatching was a focus a main tourism objective was to introduce visitors to an indigenous perspective of wildlife. To give an example of this – we all have dreamings. My son’s is python. One of mine is crocodile. And we have a responsibility to care for, not only the animal, but also its country. For me to eat crocodile would be considered cannibalism. And if attacked all I am supposed to do is ask the crocodile ‘politely’ to leave me alone. I saw my son aged five, break his heart over a dying python, seeing her not as roadkill, but his sister.

The program aimed to attract visitors who would fit in with my relatives, not the other way round. And training built upon my relatives’ skills, knowledge and values, rather than treating them as if they were blank slates. And so within that context they felt happy to talk about animals as dreamings, for example, instead of adopting the Western hierarchical approach.

Visitors got a whole new take on wildlife, not as sacrosanct, but as fellow beings. And the whole experience empowered my relatives and encouraged them to keep looking after their country and wildlife.

Denise Lawungkurr Goodfellow is a birdwatching/natural history guide, environmental/Indigenous tourism consultant and writer. As biological consultant she has conducted fauna surveys in the remote Top End, often solo. In 1981 she stood for Council to save mangrove habitat. Learning that Indigenous people lacked representation she won their trust by accepting an invitation from a senior woman to catch a water python, entailing four hours in a lake inhabited by large estuarine crocodiles. The Indigenous women were horrified when Denise was then threatened with prosecution, and to protect her they adopted Denise. Denise began working as a birdwatching/natural history guide for international visitors in the early 80’s. Later she ran a national campaign against operators in Kakadu National Park who rammed crocodiles with boats to make them jump for visitors, a mistreatment that angered the Indigenous owners and made them want to ban visitors. At the request of her adopted Aboriginal sisters, Denise helped establish an appropriate tourism project on their country, Baby Dreaming, in western Arnhem Land. The elders, previously scared and distrustful of white people, drove 450 kms to Denise’s home to tell her their first visitors – American birdwatchers and students – were “great”. Elders also decided to make their prized hunting waterhole a sanctuary for birds. The sensitive visitation enhanced the status of women and families. Denise has worked as a wildlife and Indigenous adviser to television, and in 2000 was contracted as an interpreter/transcriber on the Lonely Planet’s Guide to Aboriginal Australia. Her book Birds of Australia’s Top End has been described as winning “top honors” (American Birdwatcher’s Digest), and ‘impressive’ (the American Birding Association’s Winging It). Her autobiographical Quiet Snake Dreaming is used for literacy projects in European educational institutions and cross-cultural awareness courses. Since 2010 Denise has lectured for the University of New South Wales’ summer school and is presently planning a study tour for the University of Georgia. She is doing a PhD on American couples who travel internationally to watch birds.
Denise Goodfellow, Southern Cross University, birding and cultural guide in NT and vice-chair of WTA

American couples who travel internationally and watch birds

(Poster paper)

Birdwatching tourism (avitourism) may be the world’s largest sector of wildlife tourism or ecotourism. There is much research on what is most likely the biggest market - American birdwatchers. This PhD research examines the social context, birdwatchers who watch birds and travel internationally with their spouse or partner.

See previous page for Denise’s bio
Wildlife Tourism in Australia: the next 10 years

What would we like to see in Australia ten years from now? Some of my own visions would include: (1) most of our current biodiversity (including terrestrial, freshwater and marine), still being here (all of it is probably too much to hope for), (2) our most important habitats preserved for all time, (3) our most scenic natural areas and places that give the greatest feelings of wilderness and connecting with nature preserved for all time, (4) a proper green infrastructure plan throughout Australia that recognizes the need for animals and plants of all kinds to move between areas, integrated with plans for mining, roads, agriculture, urban development and of course tourism of all kinds, (5) reconnection with nature established as a focus in our primary schools (this could be related to educational tourism, future tourism demand of a non-destructive kind, and general support for conservation of wildlife habitat), (6) proper recognition by governments and tourism organizations of the actual and potential value of wildlife and their habitats to Australia’s economy, (7) proper recognition of non-monetary values of wildlife and their habitats, (8) innovative ways of introducing tourists to our wildlife which are deeply satisfying to the individual while not disturbing the habitats, (9) less impediments for small businesses and micro-businesses with low initial budgets but great ideas to become established (10) more research relevant to all the above and (11) true cooperation between wildlife tourism operations throughout Australia to advance knowledge relevant to conservation management. Okay, now what are some of the things we can do to head in those directions, and what roles can Wildlife Tourism Australia play?

Ronda Green, BSc (Hons), PhD, Araucaria Ecotours (and chair of WTA)

Wildlife Tourism in Australia: the next 10 years

What would we like to see in Australia ten years from now? Some of my own visions would include: (1) most of our current biodiversity (including terrestrial, freshwater and marine), still being here (all of it is probably too much to hope for), (2) our most important habitats preserved for all time, (3) our most scenic natural areas and places that give the greatest feelings of wilderness and connecting with nature preserved for all time, (4) a proper green infrastructure plan throughout Australia that recognizes the need for animals and plants of all kinds to move between areas, integrated with plans for mining, roads, agriculture, urban development and of course tourism of all kinds, (5) reconnection with nature established as a focus in our primary schools (this could be related to educational tourism, future tourism demand of a non-destructive kind, and general support for conservation of wildlife habitat), (6) proper recognition by governments and tourism organizations of the actual and potential value of wildlife and their habitats to Australia’s economy, (7) proper recognition of non-monetary values of wildlife and their habitats, (8) innovative ways of introducing tourists to our wildlife which are deeply satisfying to the individual while not disturbing the habitats, (9) less impediments for small businesses and micro-businesses with low initial budgets but great ideas to become established (10) more research relevant to all the above and (11) true cooperation between wildlife tourism operations throughout Australia to advance knowledge relevant to conservation management. Okay, now what are some of the things we can do to head in those directions, and what roles can Wildlife Tourism Australia play?

Ronda Green, BSc (Hons), PhD, Araucaria Ecotours (and chair of WTA)

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Ian Hutton, Lord Howe Nature Tours

**Marine Plastic Debris – a threat - and opportunity for Wildlife Tourism**

Plastic debris in our oceans has been on the increase since plastics have become widely used from the 1960’s. The impacts of this marine plastic on wildlife have become more widespread in the past decade.

Research on Lord Howe Island since 2001 has shown that the Flesh Footed shearwater is one of the world’s seabirds most affected by marine plastic ingestion.

Marine plastic debris is causing death of our wildlife, and a threat to our wildlife is a threat to tourism. But also an opportunity. Tourism operators have the opportunity to be part of the solution, by promoting awareness through information and activities provided on tours. Many organizations exist around Australia who are involved in monitoring of marine debris. Operators can link with these organizations and include monitoring in their tour program. First hand experience messages stick more than hearing or reading about an issue.

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Ian Hutton is owner-operator of Lord Howe Island Nature Tours and part time Curator at the Lord Howe Island Museum, Ian has been involved with flora and fauna research and conservation on Lord Howe Island for the past 30 years. In 2000 Ian was the first to recognize marine plastic as an issue with Flesh-footed shearwaters, and has been carrying out research on this issue since. In 2006 Ian was awarded the OAM for services to conservation and tourism.
Maree Kerr and Dominique Thiret

**Ecotourism as a contributor to conservation of bats in urban environments**
*(working title)*

In China, the bat is a symbol of good luck and happiness. In Europe they have long been feared. In Australia some species have been persecuted.

D.H. Lawrence’s poem “Bats”, published in 1923, begins by noting that the swallows are late tonight and turns to disgust as he realises he is watching bats.

How can these fears and misapprehensions be turned round in an environment with increasing encounters between humans and bats?

Knowing the important ecological services that bats provide is not enough. Flying foxes in Australia have been shot in orchards, and with the recent disease outbreaks and populations moving into cities and towns as a result of habitat clearing and the impacts of droughts and floods on their food resources, there have been calls that they should be moved or destroyed.

Microbats are largely unknown to the public and increasing urbanisation is impacting on species distribution and densities. Overseas disease is decimating microbat populations.

Ecotourism can play a positive part in changing attitudes and informing public of the positive aspects of bats and raise awareness of the threats facing them. This presentation looks at examples in the eco-tourism sector that have helped change attitudes to bats.

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Maree Treadwell (Kerr) has a Masters of Wildlife Management and is an executive committee member of the Australasian Bat Society Inc. She has a background in environmental, heritage and cultural interpretation and visitor services in zoos, wildlife sanctuaries, national parks and museums, including nine years in outreach community and school programs with Ku-ring-gai Bat Conservation Society.

Dominique Thiret's area of research is wildlife management law, and she is interested particularly in how communities have been managing, often poorly, their flying foxes colonies. She is also flying fox carer so knows the species well. Dominique has become convinced that ecotourism could be a powerful tool to assist conservation of bats.
To “let the experience speak for itself” is the take-home message of this presentation of a research project which demonstrated the impacts of high intensity (highly affective) experiences on education/interpretation and more specifically: participants’ pro-environmental attitudes, beliefs, behaviours and actions (ABBA).

The doctoral research project was undertaken with three differing levels of intensity of wild dolphin tourism operations – swimming with, feeding and watching dolphins from boat-based platforms. Additionally, differing qualities of interpretive messages were delivered to participants – high and low quality messages.

It was found that the level of intensity of a wildlife experience has a moderator role and the effect on pro-environmental ABBA appears to vary. The effects move from positive to neutral to negative, depending on the level of the intensity of the experience and which dependent variable is being tested for the significant interactive effects with intensity of experience X education/interpretation. This interactive relationship between intensity of experience and education/interpretation can be summarised in three statements: in the presence of low intensity, high quality education/interpretation commentaries have a role; in the presence of moderate intensity, high quality education/interpretation commentaries have a major role; in the presence of high intensity, high quality education/interpretation commentaries have a very limited role.

These findings can be transferred across all interpretation/education settings – not just wildlife situations. Interpretation messages delivered by guides can focus too much on the mind or content (the cognitive domain) and therefore not sufficiently engage the heart (the affective domain). The results show that high intensity experiences work synergistically with education, so interpretive guides need to work with the hearts and the minds of participants to make messages more powerful and more effective!

Gayle is a researcher with the recently formed and highly successful Sustainability Research Centre at the University of the Sunshine Coast. Her current research projects include sustainable coastal and marine tourism, adaptation to climate change in the tourism industry, sustainable tourism development in the Asia-Pacific and especially Islands.

Gayle has taught in universities for approximately 20 years in the interconnected fields of tourism, health and lifestyle, sport, environmental education, outdoor pursuits, leisure and events. Her successful use of experiential education (learning through experience) as her main teaching and learning strategy, earned her a national award for outstanding contribution to student learning in 2007.

Gayle has introduced an opportunity for students from all faculties to participate in educational tourism expeditions to remote destinations in the Pacific Islands region to participate in health, education and business based projects and activities. These expeditions give students a unique hands-on experience with small scale businesses and corporate social responsibility, and empowers them to become change agents for sustainability.
Dubai wildlife tourism: a veterinary perspective

Dubai is a tourist hotspot and it has found a number of ingenious ways to promote tourism. I will discuss two wildlife tourism projects in which I was involved as a veterinarian.

The first, 'Al Maha', a luxury hotel with the Arabian oryx as the main attraction and which later stimulated the establishment of the Dubai Desert Conservation Reserve (DDCR). The resort has received a number of international awards and is recognised as a leading resort in the ecotourism field. It has become a model for conservation efforts in the region with ambitious habitat rehabilitation programs, university linked wildlife research projects and promotion of Arabian wildlife as a valuable asset in the region.

The second project is the Dubai Turtle Rehabilitation project, a collaboration between the Wildlife Protection Office of Dubai and the Jumeirah group of hotels. The project's goal is to receive sick or injured turtles and to rehabilitate them before releasing them back into their environment. This project highlights the issues facing turtles and the marine environment and encourages the participation of hotel guests in this conservation effort.
Ms Junko OSHIMA, Department of Tourism Sciences, University of the Ryukyus

Towards shaping sustainable wildlife tourism in Japan

Despite the country’s small size, Japan over 90,000 animal species have been confirmed in Japan. Its location gives high precipitation, significant seasonal climactic variation and disturbance caused by volcanic eruptions and river action has created diverse habitats that support rich biodiversity. Geologically isolated habitats, including a variety of distinct island groups and alpine regions are home to a great diversity of endemic species.

Although Japan has unique wildlife, wildlife tourism is not yet well established and only a small percentage of this becomes the focus of conservation, popularly observed species. Neither is understanding their natural resources and the relationship to economic and social development well developed in the community. It is however becoming apparent that wildlife-watching activities (including wildlife photography) are the reasons for visiting some destinations.

This presentation focuses on exploring of the range of wildlife watching activities in Japan and an introduction of the first wildlife tourism activity in Hokkaido for watching Japanese crane (Grus japonensis) and Steller's sea eagle (Haliaeetus pelagicus) as a case study.

Junko OSHIMA is Associate Professor in environmental education and sustainable tourism in the Department of Tourism Sciences at University of the Ryukyus in Okinawa, JAPAN. She has been involved with environmental education in community for promoting nature-based experience since 1989. Her interest lies in advancing the status and quality of environmental education with critical thinking – in particular the modification which has broad implication including population, poverty, economy, development and social justice issues and the interdependency among them.

Her current research focus is the host community involvement and participation with sustainable wildlife tourism, particularly empowering the host community with environmental communication and developing their understanding of concepts of sustainable wildlife tourism for building sustainable society in a local community. It also includes developing learning styles to encourage people develop the confidence and skills necessary for them to achieve their purpose.

She holds a Masters of Environmental Education in the Australian School of Environmental Studies from Griffith University. She publishes some papers and articles on topics of community development for the sustainable use of Okinawa’s natural resources. She works with Mr Masakazu KUDAKA, Wildlife Photographer & Environmentalist, in this research. He has a wide experience in researching animal behavior, particularly endemic birds and rats in Okinawa, JAPAN.
Larry Perry

The Repositioning of Zoos as Conservation Organisations: Evaluating the Perceptions of Stakeholders

Australia’s Biodiversity Conservation Strategy 2010-2030 identifies amongst its priorities the engagement of all Australians in biodiversity conservation, the building of ecosystem resilience in a changing climate and the attainment of measurable results (Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council 2010). The strategy identifies 10 national targets to be met by 2015, the first of which is most relevant to zoos, being that ‘by 2015, [Australia] achieves a 25% increase in the number of Australians and public and private organisations who participate in biodiversity conservation activities’. The World Zoo Conservation Strategy (Olney 2005) has identified similar aspirations and many zoos worldwide have made significant efforts to transform their organisations from places of leisure and recreation to include a major role for them as conservation centres. This transformation is progressing and zoos around the world are at different stages of this endeavour.

Zoos have, particularly over the last 10 to 15 years, been strategically promoting and acting upon issues of environmental and biodiversity conservation and changing their marketing and operational approaches as a means to fulfilling, marketing and promoting their missions and objectives as conservation organisations (Mazur and Clark 2001; Tribe and Booth 2003; Hancocks 2007; Evans 2008; Dickie 2009; Fraser and Sickler 2009; Lees and Wilcken 2009; Gusset and Dick 2010).

Understanding how zoos are progressing in this transformation is a new dilemma for zoos and, despite years of debate and discussion amongst zoo professionals over the role and success of zoos as conservation organisations, there is little academic research that offers rich insights into their successes and their transformations. Much of the debate and research in the zoo literature relates to the evaluation of species-specific programs and the value of zoos in engaging zoo visitors during a zoo visit, zoo visitor satisfaction and associated marketing research along with some research on the value of interpretive educational activities. A new approach may provide the understanding.

References

Larry is studying towards gaining his PhD at Southern Cross University where he now also tutors in organisational communication and research methods and analysis. His PhD topic is ‘Exploring the reputation and credibility of zoos as conservation organisations’

Larry completed his Bachelor of Applied Science (Parks Recreation and Heritage) from Charles Sturt University and then went on to do his Honours researching communication in zoos with a particular focus on the relationship between internal communication and organisational culture and employee engagement.

Larry’s current PhD research is a continuation of his earlier study 27 year while his interest in zoos stems from his 27 years employment in a number of Australian zoos.
Commercial and philanthropic opportunities for enhancing wildlife conservation through ecotourism

One of the key drivers of ecotourism should be providing direct financial benefits for conservation of natural heritage which includes wildlife. Tour operators are encouraged through the eco-certification process to explore ways in which their operations can make the difference to the environment in which they operate. However, to date there has been little attention in Australia to explore how the philanthropic aspirations of ecotourism customers can be captured to support, in a meaningful way, the range of wildlife conservation activities that are being undertaken, particularly in protected areas. For the past 40 years, the mission of the Foundation for National Parks and Wildlife has included growing protected areas with high conservation values, helping the recovery of threatened species, and building knowledge and engaging the community as stakeholders in nature conservation. In recent years, as managers of Australia’s national parks areas have been encouraging an enhanced level of tourism visitation, it is timely to review how an expansion of tourism activity into protected areas can translate into a higher level of funding into conservation imperatives, particularly those which directly focus on the needs of protecting Australia’s threatened and endangered wildlife species.

Angus M Robinson is Managing Partner of Leisure Solutions®, an eco-certified tour operator, and a Board member of the Foundation for National Parks & Wildlife, as well as a long standing member of Ecotourism Australia. Some 20 years ago, as Director of Commercial Services at Taronga Zoo, Angus was responsible for growing the Zoo’s international tourism and corporate sponsorship programs and initiated the Zoo’s early foray into outbound ecotourism.

Susanna Bradshaw is the Marketing Manager of the Foundation for National Parks & Wildlife and manages public relation campaigns and overarching strategies to maximise opportunities for the Foundation to raise both funds and profile. Susanna is currently undertaking a Bachelor of Environmental Science, Conservation and Management at Charles Sturt University.
Psychological Variables for Conservation through Wildlife Tourism

Pro environmental actions are resulted of multiple variables including complex psychological processes. Beliefs, attitudes, and values about nature influence behavioural responses to environmental challenges conditioning the impact of wildlife tourism on daily life. Previous research has showed the positive impact of wildlife experiences on people wellbeing (e.g. restorative effect of nature). Yet the impact of such experiences on the development of conservation actions is more complex.

Including such psychological variables can increase the impact of wildlife tourism on wildlife conservation. Understanding how people interact with the natural environment is fundamental to provide adequate wildlife experiences and education in tourism programs aimed at conservation goals. Many times people enjoy wildlife experiences increasing their environmental awareness, but they do not translate necessary that in conservation actions.

This paper reports a study aimed to answer questions which have important consequences for the success of any conservation program: When do people care about wildlife? How do people make environmental choices? What do people value about nature? When are people prepared to act for the environment in their daily lives? This research led to the conclusion that what people believe about the state of nature influence significantly their behaviour. Strong environmental awareness is associated to environmental actions yet, many times people with other beliefs and values act environmentally too. Under some circumstances even people with low environmental concern can develop conservation actions. Including such psychological findings in the design of wildlife tourism programs is a valuable opportunity for increasing its impact on people daily life.

The integration of psychology and wildlife tourism offers multiple possibilities for further research and collaborations.

Rodolfo Sapiains Arrue is a PhD Candidate in Promoters and Barriers of Pro Environmental Behaviours, School of Geography, Planning and Environmental Management, University of Queensland. Masters Degree specializing in Psychology of Communities and Psychology Degree, Universidad de Chile. Ten years of experience as lecturer and researcher in Psychology of Communities and Environmental Psychology at the Social Sciences Faculty, Universidad de Chile (2000-2009). Some significant studies are: “Psychological Impacts of a Dump on inhabitants of Rinconada de Maipú (Chile)” “Psychosocial Characterization of Human Groups living in areas along investment projects, environmentally qualified by SEIA”; and “Potential Impacts of Hydroelectric Projects on Tourism in Aysen region, Chile”. Main publication: Sapiains, R.; Ugarte, A.; Rodríguez, M. (2010). Psychology in Environmental Conflicts. Universidad de Chile.
Liam Smith & Betty Weiler, Behaviour Works, Monash University and School of Tourism and Hospitality Management, Southern Cross University

Fostering pro-environmental behavior of zoo visitors through persuasive communication

Of all the threats to wildlife, the majority are caused by human action and inaction. Australian zoos are uniquely placed to use their emotive wildlife experiences to persuade their visitors to engage in behaviours that may redress some of the threats to wildlife and their habitats. The aim of this project was to apply theory and compare the effectiveness of a range of persuasive communication approaches in influencing zoo visitors’ pro-wildlife and pro-environmental behaviours. In partnership with 4 Australian zoo organisations, research was undertaken at 8 zoo properties in three states.

The paper will briefly overview the methods but primarily report on the findings of the research. We will report on the selection and prioritisation of target behaviours (phase 1), the identification of beliefs that discriminate between visitors who already do the desired behaviour (compliers) and those who do not (non-compliers) (phase 2), and the design and delivery of persuasive communication campaigns aimed at persuading non-compliers to undertake the target behaviour (phase 3). Behaviours that were targeted included on-site behaviours (e.g. buying beads for wildlife; donating to the Tassie Devil Appeal) and off-site behaviours (buying recycled toilet paper; buying phosphate-free detergent). While the effectiveness of the communication campaigns is of interest, the main outcome of the project is a better understanding of how to enhance the persuasion potential of zoos and other wildlife tourism operations in order to foster pro-wildlife behaviour.

Liam Smith has recently taken up the role of Director of Behaviour Works Australia, an interdisciplinary research grouping examining behavioural solutions to sustainability issues based at Monash University. Prior to taking up this role, much of Liam’s research focused on human-wildlife interactions in tourism contexts, especially in zoos and national parks. He has also researched profound wildlife interactions both in and out of tourism contexts. The common theme to this research is how wildlife experiences can influence peoples’ attitudes and behaviours.

Betty Weiler holds a PhD from the University of Victoria (Canada) and is currently Research Professor at Southern Cross University. Her research has centred on the tourist experience, including the role of the tour guide and heritage and nature interpretation. Betty is known for her collaboration with and contribution to the management of protected areas, zoos and heritage attractions. More recently her work has focused on managing visitors and influencing their on-site and post-visit behaviour.
Peter Wood, James Cook University

**Forming a network of marine wildlife tourism operators involved in research**

“While efforts to exploit space as the ‘final frontier’ for tourism continue, it is clear that the penultimate frontier - the marine realm - still offers much untapped potential”.

Cater and Cater (2007, p. 2)

Marine research tourism is described as marine ecotourism whereby non-specialist volunteers or tourists pay for a volunteer vacation or conservation holiday to help marine wildlife managers in marine research and contribute financially to that activity. Marine research tourism occurs when skilled and non-skilled scientific tourists explore and discover marine phenomena, and learn through experienced marine scientists and/or enthusiasts. It is typically focused on charismatic megafauna; governed by the nature of the marine environment; offers a passive and/or active experience; delivers significant marine research, conservation biology, and/or educational outcomes; and a rich tourist experience. SCUBA diving also plays a major role in marine research tourism in Australia and elsewhere. Examples of marine research tourism organisations worldwide are Biosphere Expeditions, Blue Ventures, Coral Cay Conservation, Conservation Volunteers Australia, and DiVo volunteerism.

Australia can be considered to be a hotspot for marine research tourism with 30 marine research tourism products out of a worldwide total of 125, that is almost a quarter of the worldwide total, occur in Australia. This is surprising as even the existing marine research tourism operators in Australia appear to know little about other marine research tourism operators. When compared with marine research tourism elsewhere, Australian marine research tourism is characterised by a prevalence of small and independent organisations (80%). These smaller organisations are typified by liveaboard marine research tourism products that operate in isolated, uninhabited and/or pristine locations, and marine research that focuses on coral reefs, whales, sea birds, sharks, and dolphins. Skilled scientific tourists are more often attracted to those marine research tourism products. By contrast, marine research tourism elsewhere is dominated by UK or USA owned (87%) larger and/or international marine research tourism organisations (99%) such as The Earthwatch Institute, Coral Cay Conservation, and Greenforce. Those larger organisations are typified by coastal or island-based operations, volunteer mindedness, backpackers, and volunteer tourists, less comfort for the tourist, more skills training, more interaction with local communities, and coral reef and turtle marine research tourism products.

The main points of this talk are:

- The distribution of marine research tourism worldwide and in Australia
- Tourist motivations of marine research tourism
- Driving forces and the potential for marine research tourism
- Issues with marine research tourism
• Australian marine management involvement in marine research tourism
• Forming a network of tourism operators participating in marine wildlife research

Reference

Peter Wood completed a PhD at the James Cook University (JCU) on the conceptual, supply and demand of marine research tourism worldwide and in Australia in 2011. Presently he is a researcher with the JCU studying products and markets for offshore research tourism over the Great Barrier Reef. Since 2009, Peter has supported the marine tourism company - Eye to Eye Marine Encounters with marketing, grant and award applications, and advanced ecotourism accreditation.
Are you looking at me? Tourism effects on behaviour: a Rottnest Island case study.

Iconic animals provide an attraction for tourists in natural areas all over the world, but how much does ecotourism negatively effect the behaviour of these animals? On Rottnest Island, WA, an A-class reserve, we explored how the presence of tourism affects the behaviour of its draw-card species, the quokka (Setonix brachyurus). We hypothesized that if quokkas were affected by tourism then there would be a significant difference between anti-predator response and behaviour recorded, between differing levels of tourism activity. We compared anti-predator responses (alert distance and Flight Initiation Distances; FID) and time budgets (recording behaviour over 5-minute intervals), between sites with high levels of tourism activity or no tourism activity, in summer and winter (high and low tourism levels, respectively). Quokkas had a greater alert distance and FID in low tourism sites, there was a significant effect of season on alert distance (i.e. quokkas were more alert to the presence of a person during low tourism season) but there was no seasonal effect on FID. Time budgets were also affected by site and season with animals at the high tourism site showing more social behaviour and locomotion, with an increase in locomotion in the summer period. Animals showed more vigilance in the low tourism site during summer and showed more feeding in the low tourism site in winter. The aim of ecotourism management is to maintain a successful balance between the benefits of tourism and the impacts on the iconic species that tourists come to see. Identifying the nature of altered quokka behaviour in response to disturbance by people should inform management decisions, benefiting overall health of the Rottnest Island tourism industry. Present behavioural data may then be used to guide management decisions, with success of future policies quantifiable against this baseline information.

Teele Worrell

Teele Worrell lives in Perth, Western Australia, with husband Christopher and sons Ryllie and Jaspyr. Teele started her Bachelor of Science in 2006 and finished in 2010 with a double major in Ecotourism and Conservation and Wildlife Biology. Seeking to combine her majors she decided to do her honours under Patricia Fleming, Department of Veterinary Biology at Murdoch University. Which ultimately led her to study the quokkas on Rottnest Island.
DISCUSSIONS

5-minute introduction by moderator, divide into small groups for 30 minutes, re-unite for final discussion and collective decisions on what future actions should be

The value of wildlife tourism to Australia’s economy and environment
Moderator Angus M. Robinson, Leisure Solutions® and Board Member, Foundation for National Parks and Wildlife

Australia may well boast lovely white beaches and fine hotels, but so do other countries. Nowhere else however do you find wild koalas, kangaroos, wombats, numbats, platypus, lyrebirds, leafy sea-dragons and a host of other fascinating creatures. Australia also offers the experience of diving in the world’s largest coral reef, miles of safe walking tracks through rainforests or the uniquely-Australian eucalypt forests, swimming with the world’s largest fish, camping out in the wide open spaces of the outback roamed by the world’s largest marsupial and second-largest bird, a greater diversity of parrots than anywhere outside of South America, most of the world’s wild cockatoos and many other special things to do that involve wildlife. How important then is our wildlife to international and domestic tourism, and thus to both the Australian economy and the livelihood of individual tourism businesses?

Participants will discuss the following:

- Does wildlife tourism in Australia tend to be under-valued, e.g. by some tourism organizations and government departments?
- Could better recognition of its value assist both with conservation of wildlife and their habitats and assistance to small businesses focusing on wildlife tourism?
- What do we know already about the value of wildlife tourism to Australia?
- What might we need further research on to enhance our understanding of its value?
- What are some of our major untapped potential wildlife experiences, and are there obstacles to implementing or marketing these?
- Are there ways in which government or tourism organizations could assist more than they currently do with the promotion of wildlife tourism? If so, what messages should WTA and others be sending to them at this stage?
- Any other relevant points to be made?
Small business finances relevant to wildlife tourism: Insurance, licenses, promotion etc.
Moderator Ronda Green, chair WTA

Insurance

Insurance premiums sky-rocketed after certain trends in litigation and the collapse of insurer HIH, perhaps exacerbated by the fall of the twin towers, and a number of small businesses collapsed. Several people working as solo guides simply cannot afford the insurance to keep operating each year, and many other potential or actual small businesses are in a similar situation. WTA has in the past engaged in discussions with insurance brokers to ascertain whether groups of small operators could take out a group insurance, in similar fashion to other groups (such as football teams) but has generally been advised it is not possible because of the great variation in risk between different kinds of activity.

We have also investigated whether we can co-insure farmers in our tourism policies (similar to the co-insurance with national parks when leading tours into these) such that we can pay farmers for the privilege of taking small groups of tourists onto their properties. The philosophy behind this is that (1) it opens up more potential for tours, (2) it helps to take the pressure off national parks and (3) our national parks will never be enough to conserve all biodiversity, so we must conserve as much as possible on private lands, but when farmers are penalized rather than rewarded it is understandable that we do not always find full cooperation in this. Arranging insurance to satisfy the first two goals is fairly straightforward, but WTA has been advised in the past that if we are to pay the farmers, the framers will themselves need to take out expensive insurance premiums, which defeats the purpose of trying to set-up this ‘user-pays’ system.

However, our insurance adviser Rod Hughes, who will be participating in this discussion, considers the above to be possible, and will also be on hand to answer other queries about insurance

Bureaucracy

From Barry Davies:

“We all find it difficult and expensive dealing with government agencies in our own states. For small operators the costs and complications make it almost prohibitive and quite frankly if it wasn’t a lifestyle choice most would be better off working for someone else. However, if it is difficult intrastate it becomes a lot more complex and expensive working interstate. Each state has its own system of licensing transport operators and issuing passenger authorities. Whilst there are federal regulations governing the heavy transport industry these don’t apply to tourism operators. How do we go about getting a nationally recognized transport accreditation for tourism operators?
Low-cost promotion

Tourism has been through some tough times lately, and some methods of promotion get very expensive without adequate return. For the use of media and online social media, wildlife tourism operations should be at somewhat of an advantage to some of the more general tourism, as the wildlife itself should be generally more attention-grabbing than hotel beds or swimming pools, but what are the best ways of doing this, and what are the taboos?

Questions for delegates to discuss (since this is a multi-faceted topic, each group may elect to tackle just one or two sets of questions: we will accordingly divide into interest groups if this is what delegates wish)

Insurance (Rod Hughes to speak briefly to this before commencement):
• Is it possible for a group such as WTA members to obtain a group deal on insurance to reduce premiums? What would we need to do to achieve this?
• Is it possible for tour operators to co-insure farmers whose properties they pay to take guests, thus providing a benefit for farmers who leave wildlife and native habitats on their property without making it necessary for them to pay expensive premiums?
• Other insurance queries?
• Are there ways in which government could assist with an easing of premiums for both tourism operators and farmers (either financially or through legislation)?

Bureaucracy (Barry Davies to speak briefly to this before commencement):
• What are some of the major bureaucratic hurdles for tourism businesses, especially small businesses, in providing quality wildlife experiences
• What are some of the major bureaucratic hurdles for tourism businesses, especially small businesses, to keep costs down so they can continue to be viable?
• Are there ways in which government could assist with a streamlining of bureaucracy for tourism businesses (e.g. getting a nationally recognized transport accreditation for tourism operators, other streamlining, more accessible information on requirements)
• What are some of the dangers of making it too easy (e.g. easing restrictions that could result in more environmental impact)?

Low-cost Promotion for small tourism businesses (Denise Goodfellow to speak briefly to this before commencement). This is largely to swap ideas and experience on:
• Using the media (press releases etc.) to promote an interest in seeing wildlife in general and individua businesses
• How to most effectively use word of mouth
• Should you reward guests for recommending your product or does this make it seem less genuine?
• What are some of the more effective ways of using social media, and what are the taboos on these?
Rod Hughes, OAMPS

Rod is the National Manager for OAMPS Insurance Brokers sport and recreation insurance and risk management services. He has a long involvement in sport and recreation risk going back over 30 years, being the Chief Executive Officer of IEA Brokers when they became part of the OAMPS group in 2004.

Addressing the risk management and insurance requirements of the sport, leisure and recreation industries is a role Rod is particularly suited to due to his lifelong involvement in sport from the playing, coaching and administration viewpoints. This hands-on knowledge provides Rod with the perfect practical experience to support his Graduate Certificate in Risk Management qualification from Monash University and Diploma of Financial Services (Insurance Broking).

An author of numerous articles on risk management and insurance and an experienced conference presenter, Rod is an Associate Fellow of the Australian Institute of Risk Management and the Australian Institute of Management. He is also a Qualified Practising Insurance Broker.
Using wildlife to value-add to tours and accommodation

Moderator Barry Davies, Gondwana Guides

Some tour operations focus almost exclusively on wildlife (e.g. birdwatching tours, kayaking with dolphins, penguin parade).

Other more general tours and accommodations use one or more wildlife experiences to value-add (e.g. farmstays that promote watching for kangaroos coming to graze in the paddocks, B&Bs that advertise good birdwatching along the neighbouring creek, tours that call in to see a koala park or glow worm cave amidst other attractions.

Questions for discussion:

- What un-tapped potential do you see for more general tourism to use wildlife to add value to the experience?
- What pitfalls can you see associated with this? Is there for instance a danger of really poor interpretation by guides with little understanding of the animals they are pointing out?
- What can we do to remedy such problems?
- Any other issues that arise during discussion, and actions WTA could take to assist?
The Repositioning of Zoos as Conservation Organisations
Moderator, Larry Perry, Southern Cross University

The primary purpose of zoos may once have been entertainment, and are still seen as such by some visitors, but nowadays they tend also to be expected to be involved in education, conservation and research.

Pease refer to the abstract by Larry Perry for his paper, which will be presented earlier on the day of this discussion.

Questions for discussion:

• What do you understand to be the roles of zoos today?
• What do you understand to be the role of conservation within a zoo context?
• How aware are you of the repositioning of zoos as conservation organisations?
• How do you define and evaluate the reputation of zoos as conservation organisations?
• How do you perceive the credibility of zoos as conservation organisations?
• Are zoos on the right track or could/should they be reinvented?
The three-way marriage of conservation, research and tourism

Moderator Dr. Peter Wood, James Cook University

Please see the abstract of the paper Peter will be presenting earlier on the day on forming a network of marine wildlife tourism operators involved in research.

Tourism operators frequently venture into regions of natural habitat and see wildlife (marine, terrestrial or freshwater) involved in all kinds of behaviour and often in a variety of locations. There is thus much scope for them to be involved in conservation-related research, from simple records of presence/absence which can be added to a general database of distribution and show patterns of change from season to season, year to year or ultimately decade to decade, through to more complex records of animal behaviour and ecological interactions. A number of tour operators are already involved in various levels of research, but often only vaguely aware of each others’ existence, if at all. This discussion looks at ways of developing a truly cooperative network of operators interested in adding to our basic knowledge of wildlife behaviour and ecology or to information more deliberately directed towards what is needed for conservation management (e.g. migrations, population changes or feeding behaviour of rare and threatened species).

Questions for discussion:

- What are some of the things we really need to know for effective conservation management?
- What are some of the ways that tour operators, eco-accommodation providers and staff of wildlife parks and zoos could reasonably add to these questions (given the inevitable time constraints and other duties)?
- How can academic researchers and tour operators best combine their expertise, opportunities and goals to pursue some of these questions?
- What are some of the barriers to cooperation between operators and between operators and researchers and/or conservation managers, and how might these be overcome?
- Would you like to be part of a cooperative networking group (or a subgroup such as marine wildlife tourism) working towards such aims? If so, how would you see yourself contributing?
- What would we need to do to really make such a network effective?
Emerging threats to wildlife and tourism
Moderator Ronda Green, proprietor Araucaria Ecotours, adjunct research fellow Griffith University and Chair WTA

Some potential changes over the coming years and decades could pose threats to both wildlife or to the tourism that depends on it, or to both, including:

- Continued habitat loss and modification
- Over-fishing, excessive or irresponsible hunting and collection
- Population increases leading to spread of urbanization and resultant supporting industries, agriculture and water storage
- The mining boom – including open cut mines, fracking, dredging and oil extraction
- Climate change
- Economic factors affecting efficient running of wildlife tourism operations, visitation by tourists and effectiveness of conservation measures
- Pressures of tourism itself (even wildlife tourism)

Questions for discussion:
- Can you offer concrete examples of any or all of the above affecting wildlife or wildlife tourism?
- What in general do you see as the most pressing problems in the next couple of decades?
- What could government be doing to alleviate some of these problems?
- What can those of us in the wildlife tourism industry or research institutions do to alleviate some of these problems?
- How can WTA assist? What information or lobbying for example should we get involved in presenting to government, tourism organizations or leaders of other businesses? How best do we disseminate genuine information connected with these issues, and to whom should we be presenting the information?
Providing high-quality memorable wildlife experiences

Moderator Dr Ronda Green, chair WTA

Dr Roy Ballantyne and his colleagues have produced some constructive papers on providing memorable experiences for tourists that lead to enhanced understanding and concern for some of the conservation issues facing the wildlife viewed by them and there have been a number of valuable reports by Gianna Moscardo and others for the wildlife sector of the Sustainable Tourism CRC on visitor attitudes and satisfaction. There is also much unpublished information and ideas amongst tourism operators and other educators. While some ideas may be guarded because those working in tourism are after all in a competitive situation, there is much we can learn from each other, and there is potential for working together to generally raise the standard of wildlife tourism in our country and to provide the kind of interpretation that truly inspires our tourists to take a real interest in the animals they see, and a concern for conservation issues. We must remember they are on holiday and don’t want too much gloomy talk, but at the same time there has been increasing interest in the environment, and some studies (e.g. at Taronga Zoo) have shown that visitors do want to learn something of the environmental issues that threaten the animals they care about. So how do we provide the ‘wow’ experiences that bring enjoyment and a sense of wonder and get people talking (always a good thing for business) and also to use these moments to get across an awareness and understanding of some conservation issues and actually alter some aspects of our visitors’ lives, whether it leads them to find more information, stop throwing out rubbish and pollutants that could harm wildlife and habitats, refuse to buy wildlife-unfriendly products, donate to conservation projects, design more environmentally-friendly ways of conducting their businesses, lobby the government or?

Questions for discussion:

• What have been some of the ‘wow’ moments in your own life involving wildlife?
• Are there some common themes we can identify that can help us reproduce such moments for tourists?
• Can you recall some ‘aha’ moments when you suddenly realized the extent of a conservation problem?
• Can you cite some examples of good guiding practice that has enabled special moments of wonder or insights into conservation issues?
• Have you seen examples of wasted opportunities, where experiences could have been improved by better action or interpretation?
• How do we reach people of differing attitudes and backgrounds?
• What are some overall guidelines and information sources we can provide for tour guides and other nature interpreters?
Wildlife interpretation for different kinds of visitor
Moderator Barry Davies, Gondwana Guides

Tour operators face many challenges. How do we present interpretation to a group which includes a professor from Oxford University, other fluent English speakers, and people from different parts of Asia who understand very little English? How do we best cater for people with disabilities, including the obvious ones of confinement to wheelchairs or use of crutches and obvious obesity to the more hidden ailments of severe chronic asthma, short-sightedness, epilepsy and diabetes? What about mental disabilities? Cultural differences? Catering for people who have camped in wilderness all their lives and those who have never really been out of a city before, especially at night, and find the new experiences un-nerving? Mixed groups that include children, teenagers, and various ages of adults? Novice birdwatchers and highly-experienced ones, perhaps also mixed in with people who really just want to be there for the scenery or hiking and get annoyed at frequent stops for viewing every possible bird? How, generally, can we give each of them the best possible tourism experience?

We also hear some horror stories of people with disabilities, language problems or cultural differences not being well-cared for by our airlines or coach companies. How much does this affect their general enjoyment of our country or region, and what can we in the tourism industry do about this?

Questions for discussion:

- What are some of your experiences of being part of a tour where your needs or those of others were not well attended to?
- What are some examples you’ve seen where people from different backgrounds were in fact very well taken care of?
- If you have had experience of leading groups, what is some of the advice you can offer?
- What are some of the guidelines we could offer on our website to assist guides in giving high-quality experiences to people of varying backgrounds and with various disabilities or other challenges?
- Are there some issues we need to inform or lobby government about or suggest to other factions of the tourism industry?
- Any other points of discussion?
Environmental ethics and wildlife tourism
Moderator Dr Leah Burns, Griffith University

Can we apply a set of principles to all wildlife tourism situations that will enhance outcomes for all key stakeholders? Given the many different types of tourists, of wildlife, and the many different forms wildlife tourism takes this would seem an impossible task. Enhanced conservation is a commonly acknowledged goal of many forms of wildlife tourism, but how can this be achieved?

The theme of environmental ethics - focusing on what relationships humans do have, and should have, with the natural world – may be a useful topic for wildlife tourism managers to consider. Can an exploration of different ethical perspectives assist us in a goal of wildlife conservation through tourism?

The aim of this workshop is to discuss underlying philosophies that guide the management of wildlife tourism ventures. Participants will be asked to draw on evidence from policies, plans and practices with which they are familiar. Can we find commonality in these? Where differences exist, are these necessarily barriers to shared goals? Considering ethical perspectives along a continuum from those that are more anthropocentric to those that are more ecocentric, where can we place wildlife tourism? Ideally? Practically?