

3rd Australian Wildlife Tourism Conference

Geelong, Victoria
29 September to 2 October 2015

#WildlifeTourism2015: a force for
biodiversity conservation & local economies?



3rd Australian Wildlife Tourism Conference

Conference Program and Abstracts

Wildlife Tourism: a Force for Biodiversity Conservation and Local Economies?



Tourism Victoria



Principal Conference Partner

Host organisation:



Wildlife Tourism Australia Inc. is a national organisation of tour operators, eco-lodges wildlife parks, academics and others involved in wildlife tourism, incorporated in 2003.

Our overall goal is the sustainable development of a diverse wildlife tourism industry that supports conservation.

www.wildlifetourism.org.au

Our principal partner:

Tourism Victoria



As the Victorian Government's lead tourism agency, Tourism Victoria works to develop and realise the local and global market potential for Victoria's tourism industry

Our Sponsors:



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Please note that abstracts can be viewed and printed from presentation title links in the [conference program](#).

This book of program and abstracts is a downloadable pdf.

It will not be available as a printed document in line with our environmental aims - so if you **need any of it printed** for note-taking etc please bring your own.



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Welcome Reception before conference:

Tuesday 29 September: Welcome reception –

sponsored by

Principal Partner Tourism Victoria



6.00 to 8.00pm –

Waterfront Kitchen at Deakin University, Western Beach Road, Geelong
(free for all delegates registered for 3 days, \$35 for others)...

There will be light hot and cold refreshments and a complimentary wine, beer or soft drink on arrival. **A cash bar will also be available.**

see [more information](#).

Welcome speech by Chris White, Group Manager Product Marketing, **Tourism Victoria**

Conference Program

Wednesday 30 September: International Aspects

- 8.45 am - Conference Welcome and information for delegates - WTA Chair (**Ronda Green**) and Vice Chair (**Roger Smith**)
- 9.00 am - **Official opening** of conference by the **Hon John Eren MP**, Victorian Minister for Tourism and Major Events
- 9.15 am - **"Wildlife tourism's untapped potential: How tourists' emotions contribute to conservation and your bottom line"** - **Dr Jeff Skibins**, Keynote speaker from USA (introduced and sponsored by Tourism Victoria)
- 9.45 am **"Wildlife tourism in Indonesia: A Review on Development and Progress"** - **Dr Jatna Supriatna**, Keynote speaker from Indonesia (introduced and sponsored by Tourism Victoria)

10.15 to 11.00 am - morning tea, networking and viewing of posters and displays

- 11.00 am - **"Conservation, Education, Entertainment? Reflections from history and future directions for zoos"** - **Dr Warwick Frost**, Keynote speaker
- 11.30 am - **"Conservation Partnerships" at work – from wallaby to albatross! Reflections from New Zealand"** - **Dr Anna Thompson-Carr**, Keynote speaker from New Zealand (introduced and sponsored by Parks Victoria)
- 12 noon - **"Threatened Species – ours to protect"** - **Gregory Andrews**, Australian Threatened Species Commissioner

12.30 to 2.00 pm - lunch, networking and viewing of posters and displays

Wednesday 30 September: International Aspects

- 2.00 pm - "Playing games and telling stories: opportunities for Responsible Wildlife Tourism" - Christopher Warren, Keynote Speaker

Contributed papers: international aspects

- 2.30 pm - "Analyzing food-derived interactions between tourists and sika deer (Cervus nippon) at Miyajima Island in Hiroshima, Japan" - Rie Usui, Hiroshima University
- 2.45 pm - "Wildlife tourism in Okinawa JAPAN: current concerns and future prospects" - Junko Oshima, University of the Ryukyus, Okinawa Japan
- 3.00 pm - "Saving the Environment through Tourism: importance of collaboration between Tourism and Conservation" - Peter Miller, Orangutan Odysseys
- 3.15 pm - "Exploring Asia-Pacific Zoos' Role in Delivering Conservation Messages to Visitors" - Dr Warwick Frost and Dr Jennifer Laing
- 3.30pm - "Marine Wildlife Tourism Interaction in the Philippines" - Maria Rica C Bueno, Office of Tourism Standards & Regulation, Philippine Department of Tourism

3.45 to 4.15pm afternoon tea, networking and viewing of posters and displays

4.15 pm - **Round Table discussion:** - "International wildlife travels: opportunities" What are the main wildlife features attracting Australia to other countries and vice versa? What lesser known wildlife and regions could be better promoted?

4.45 pm - **Round Table discussion:** - "International wildlife travels: challenges" What are some of the problems involved in opening up new regions to tourism? (eg. access and facilities for tourists, increasing pressure on natural resources, changes to local lifestyle, illegal wildlife trade) and how can these be tackled by the tourism industry and governments?

5.30 pm - **Skype Presentation** "Wildlife tours to save nature - What can Australia learn from Sweden?" - Marcus Eldh, Wild Sweden

6.00pm Close - Those who have booked the optional Mt Rothwell guided spotlight walk and bbq dinner will leave venue (optional field trip extra cost)

Thursday 1 October: Value of Wildlife Tourism to Biodiversity and Conservation

- 8.50am - Announcements, general information for delegates - **Ronda Green** and **Roger Smith**
- 9.00am - **"Nature-based tourism – the political perspective"** - **Senator Janet Rice**, Keynote speaker

Contributed papers: How can wildlife tourism contribute to biodiversity conservation?

- 9.30am - **"Wildlife Tourism assisting biodiversity: how can we make it work?"** - **Ronda Green**, WTA Chair/Araucaria
- 9.45am - **"The benefits of including a client conservation action on tours"** - **Janine Duffy**, Echidna Walkabout
- 10.00am - **"Using a zoo based behaviour change model to drive pro-environmental actions in visitors to wildlife destinations"** - **Brooke Squires**, Zoos Victoria
- 10.15 am - **"Educational-Recreational Activities in Parks for Nature Connection and Post-visit Conservationist Outcomes: Possibilities and Challenges at an Operational Level in the Gold Coast region"** - **Dr Ismar Borges de Lima** and **Dr Betty Weiller**, Southern Cross University

10.30 to 11.15 am - morning tea, networking and viewing of posters and displays

- 11.15 am - **"A review of the conservation actions and outcomes of wildlife tourism enterprises"** - **Cassandra Wardle**, Griffith University School of Environment
- 11.30 am - **"Why the future of Wildlife Tourism in Victoria depends on sustainable private land management"** - **Dr Kaye Rodden**, Victorian Landcare Council
- 11.45 am - **"Look, Listen, and Let Your Senses Guide You"** - **Penny Irons**, William Angliss Institute
- 12.00 noon - **"Mt Rothwell's conservation model: protecting threatened species, providing uniquely wild encounters"** - **Annette Rypalski**, Mt Rothwell
- 12.15 pm - **"Conservation on Spicers Hidden Vale – A Cooperative Venture"** **Andrew Tribe**, University Of Queensland Gatton
- 12.30 pm - **"Humans in the cage: Exploring the white shark *Carcharodon carcharias* cage-diving experience"** - **Kirin Apps**, Southern Cross University

12.45 to 2.15 pm - lunch, networking and viewing of posters and displays

Thursday 1 October: Value of Wildlife Tourism to Biodiversity and Conservation

- 2.15 pm - "The Role of Citizen Science in Sustainable Tourism" - Justin Foster, Earthwatch Institute

2.30 pm - **Round Table Discussion: "Citizen Science by tourists"** How do we assure valid and useful data are collected? How do we assign different tourists to different tasks? How useful are bio-blitzes and how do we involve tourists in them? How can we improve WTA's research network?

3.15 pm - **Round Table Discussion: "Making a difference (wildlife tourism enhancing conservation)"** What more can wildlife tourism do to enhance biodiversity conservation? What can large operators and micro-businesses do? What can tourism organizations and government departments do? What are some of the obstacles to emulating success stories elsewhere, and how do we overcome them?

4.15 to 4.45 pm afternoon tea, networking and viewing of posters and displays

4.45 pm - **Round Table Discussion: "Up close and personal? Human-wildlife interactions?"** How close should we get, both in the wild and in captivity? What do we already know and what do we need to know to assess what kinds of interaction are acceptable in terms of both animal welfare and conservation? What do we know and what do we need to know about interactions with animals leading to support for their conservation?

5.30 pm - Close sessions

5.45pm - Some will drive or walk to Eastern Park to see the Grey Headed Flying Foxes leave their roost

Friday 2 October: The value of Wildlife Tourism to Local Economies

7.15am - 8.30am Wildlife Tourism Australia **Annual General Meeting** in Terrace Room at Mercure. AGM starting at 7.45am. You can bring your breakfast to the room and network from 7.15am.

Contributed papers: How can wildlife tourism contribute to local communities?

- 8.30 am - "Wildlife/people conflicts: how can tourism help to solve them"? Ronda Green, WTA Chair/Araucaria
- 9.00 am - Phillip Island Nature Parks contribution to the local community and State of Victoria - Matthew Jackson, Phillip Island Nature Parks - Sponsor
- 9.30 am - "Elevating the role of nature in the Australian Tourism industry – a case study from Kangaroo Island" Craig Wickham, Exceptional Kangaroo Island
- 9.45 am - "The spill-over effects of zooscape experience: new challenges for developing zoo identity, zoo attachment and conservation outcomes" Aise Kim, University of South Australia
- 10.00 am - "American couples who travel internationally to watch birds: An exploratory study of a large and under-explored market" - Denise Goodfellow (in absentia)

10.15 to 11.00 am - morning tea, networking and viewing of posters and displays

- 11.00 am - **The benefits of expanding the wildlife tourism offering (title TBA)** - Greg Lewin AM, WAMA Foundation Ltd
- 11.15 am - "Local Government opportunities and challenges in wildlife tourism and economic development" - Nina Hewson, Western Australia Local Government Association
- 11.30 am - "Creating jobs by boosting nature-based tourism in South Australia's national parks, marine parks and reserves" - Chris Thomas, Dept of Environment Water and Natural Resources, South Australia
- 11.45 am - "Bats and Tourism; A way to coexist and benefit financially from the other mammals with which we share the city" - Maree Treadwell-Kerr, Australasian Bat Society Inc. and Sera Steves, The Wildlife Habitat, Port Douglas
- 12.00 noon - "An opportunity for an Ecotourism destination on the doorstep of Geelong" - John Newman, Geelong Field Naturalists Club
- 12.15 pm - "A collaboration between a wildlife tour operator, a zoo and science: Monitoring nose patterns throughout life in tagged and captive koalas" - Janine Duffy, Echidna Walkabout and Yvette Pauligk, Werribee Zoo
- 12.30 pm - "The Making of Koala Clancy of the You Yangs" - Melinda King, Koala Clancy Foundation and Wathaurong Co-operative

Friday 2 October: The value of Wildlife Tourism to Local Economies

12.45 - 1.45 pm - lunch, networking and viewing of posters and displays

1.45 pm - **Round Table Discussion: "Solving human : wildlife conflicts with wildlife tourism"** What are the real wildlife problems that people face (danger to crops, human safety, limited access to protected and private areas etc.)? What problems may be exaggerated? How do we get accurate information to all stakeholders (local residents, politicians, tourism operations, NGO's)? How can wildlife tourism contribute to solving the problems?

2.30 - 3.00 pm - Skype presentation "How wildlife tourism can benefit the local communities living with wildlife in Kenya" **Daniel Sambu** and **Paul Sadera** from Kenya

3.00 pm - **Final Plenary Discussion "Where do we go from here?"** **General summary of conference and voting on priority actions.** Suggested actions to follow the conference: lobbying of governments, information to be sent to tourism organisations, travel agents, tourism operations (wildlife or other), new projects, research priorities etc.

4.00pm - Close of conference and final Afternoon tea, networking and viewing of posters and displays

Post-conference field trips -

more information and more to come

Saturday 3 October

- **Koala Conservation Day** in the You Yangs Regional Park

Sunday 4 October

- ****Venus Bay Ecolodge - 2.30pm** afternoon guided walk and refreshments
- ****Lantern-lit evening tour - Moonlit Sanctuary Wildlife Conservation Park, Pearce-dale**
- **Wildlife Journey** – 4 days in the wilderness coast of far East Gippsland – with Echidna Walkabout

** can be another time perhaps combined with a Phillip Island or Wilsons Promontory trip

Whenever it suits you –

Check out some of the great opportunities to experience the wildlife and diversity of Victoria and particularly the surrounding area if you are able to spend a bit more time here!

Thank you to all our Keynote Speakers, Presenters, Sponsors, Supporters, Members, Volunteers, Exhibitors, Organisers and all Delegates for your valuable support of our 2015 conference.

Please complete our online feedback survey by the end of November 2015 so we can use your constructive criticism, ideas and suggestions to improve our future workshops and conference.

Thank you

Ronda Green - Chair and Roger Smith - Vice Chair
Wildlife Tourism Association inc.



Presentations in Program order

“Wildlife tourism's untapped potential: How tourists' emotions contribute to conservation and your bottom line”



Dr Jeffrey Skibins,

Assistant Professor of Park Management and Conservation
at Kansas State University.

**Keynote Speaker from USA
Sponsored by Tourism Victoria**

A key component to the wildlife tourism experience is the visceral response tourists have when first glimpsing an animal in the wild. Often, this is what justifies endless hours on airplanes and lavish holiday budgets.

But is there more to it than that? Can that emotional reaction be the spark that ignites a life-long passion for conservation? New data suggests the experiences created by wildlife tourism may be one of the most vital components for conservation in the 21st century.

However, such emotionally charged experiences do not happen by accident and are anything but routine. Furthermore, the quality and quantity of these experiences is contingent on the success of the wildlife tourism industry worldwide.

In this presentation, Dr. Jeffrey Skibins will discuss why facilitating tourists' emotional connection to wildlife may be the most important step you take for insuring the survival of wildlife and the industry. Using data from several studies from around the world,

Dr. Skibins will provide audience members with specific strategies on how to craft meaningful wildlife viewing experiences, deliver strategic conservation benefits, and create a lasting position in the marketplace.

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Dr Jatna Supriatna,

Department of Biology, University of Indonesia and UID Foundation

**Keynote Speaker from Indonesia
Sponsored by Tourism Victoria**

The term of “wildlife tourism” in Indonesia has not been really well-defined. Law and regulation position it as part of nature tourism and/or eco-tourism.

The definition of nature tourism at most is a concept which combines commitments to nature and social responsibility. Nature tourism is also establishing a sustainable development in the form of tourism where the aspects of environment, social and economic gain are given proportional attention.

Nature and wildlife tourisms can provide a big contribution towards biodiversity conservation. It can be the source to support biodiversity conservation through direct income from tourists in the form of entrance fees or tickets to enter the area, as an alternative or additional income to the communities living in the surroundings of the conservation area. It can also support the central and provincial governments to develop regions or areas in a sustainable and environmentally friendly manner, and can provide economic-based activities in conservation areas for businesses involved in biodiversity conservation.

Recently, wildlife tourism has become a very popular type of tourism in Indonesia. Unlike the adventure tours which are more focused on recreative tourist activities, wildlife tourism is more focused on benefiting and supporting aspects of conservation and the welfare of communities’ living in the conservation area visited. Wildlife tourism is seen as an alternative tool to shift the communities’ attention and destructive or not environment-friendly income-generating activities such as hunting or poaching of wildlife. Wildlife tourism can become the global scale solution to solve the conservation issue, specifically in a developing country such as Indonesia.

My book published in 2014 “Tourism in the Indonesia National Parks ” showed that out of 50 national parks in Indonesia, only a handful of parks provide guided wildlife tourism programs and most of them were developed by NGOs or private sectors. Indonesia, whilst harboring a great diversity of wildlife with potential for tourism, has limited formal wildlife tourist attractions: from the 50 national parks in Indonesia we analysed only a few parks offered wildlife tourism such as: Tanjung Putting in Central Kalimantan and Leuser in North Sumatra offering tours to see orangutans in the wild; Komodo in West Nusa Tenggara province offered tours to see Komodo dragons; Bali Barat offered tours to see Bali Mynah. The nesting grounds of the giant sea turtles has attracted tourism, such as at Meru Betiri and Alas Purwo National Parks and South Sukabumi in Java, Benoa Bay in Bali and Dera-wan Islands in Kalimantan. Wildlife watching has also been developed in the several parks included Baluran and Way Kambas, Tangkoko, and Bukit Barisan Selatan. However, based

on data's from various sources, not one of the above mentioned has successfully combined tourism activities with ecology. In my recent book published in August 2015 entitled "Primate Tourism in Indonesia", it showed that only charismatic primate species have been used to develop wildlife tourism such as orangutan in Tanjung Puting National park and spectral tarsier in Tangkoko Toursim Park. The daily fee to see an orangutan Kalimantan and Sumatra, the Komodo dragon and Bali mynah in the mentioned national parks are not even clear. Recently the Government of Indonesia released a new Regulation no. 12, 2014 to serve as a guideline regarding various costs or fees to enter a conservation area and its derivatives.

While the activities on wildlife tourism have been carried out by private sectors, it is hoped that with the new regulation, income from this tourism can be used to protect the biodiversity and restore the damaged land in the parks. The income from this type of tourism will enable the local communities to abandon their hunting activities. Wildlife tourism opens up opportunities to the local communities to develop and increase their income, through local accommodation (homestays), guide skills, and handicrafts.

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Dr Warwick Frost -

La Trobe University, editor and one of the authors of the book “Zoos and Tourism: Conservation, Education, Entertainment?”

Keynote Speaker

Since their development and spread in the early 19th century, public zoos have faced the challenge of trying to balance conservation, education and entertainment.

The best zoos are continually developing fresh and innovative techniques for visitor interpretation and animal management, whereas the worst highlight the exploitation and degradation of animals for human gratification.

Their efforts in conservation, generally viewed as the prime rationale for zoos' continuing existence, remain a source of debate and controversy. In this paper my aim is to apply a different lens to these longstanding issues, through consideration of a number of historical case studies from around the world.

Through taking this historical approach, there is an opportunity to look forward and reflect on the types of zoos we would like to see in the future.

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Dr Anna Thompson-Carr

University of Otago

Board member of the Otago Conservation Board and editorial board member for Tourism in Marine Environments and the Journal of Heritage Tourism

**Keynote Speaker from New Zealand
Sponsored by Parks Victoria**

Anna’s keynote address reflects on the wildlife tourism sector in New Zealand, with case studies from the Otago region.

She will focus on species and habitat protection at two sites enabling community engagement in the sector.

Reflections include how communities benefit from wildlife tourism (and vice versa)?

How is the Department of Conservation supporting community members’ initiatives?

More importantly, how have habitats been managed and enhanced so protected species flourish and visitors are enthused about conservation?

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Christopher Warren

Director, International Centre for Responsible Tourism: Australia.

Doctoral candidate

Keynote Speaker

Education is an accepted critical component to helping the world become more sustainable.

Wildlife tourism represents an important teaching approach for the next generation by building connections to nature that stimulates sustainable lifestyle values.

In this research paper I report on the impacts of interpreting wildlife, through Aboriginal Belief Systems, to encourage environmental awareness in children.

The findings demonstrate great opportunities for wildlife tourism to build greater social responsibility and conserve heritage.

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“Analyzing food-derived interactions between tourists and sika deer (*Cervus nippon*) at Miyajima Island in Hiroshima, Japan”

Rie Usui

Graduate School of Integrated Arts and Sciences at Hiroshima University, Japan

Regulating feeding of wildlife is a common challenge at tourism sites. Miyajima Island in Hiroshima, Japan is registered as a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage site where hundreds of free-roaming sika deer (*Cervus nippon*) inhabit. Signs are posted throughout the island to advise tourists not to feed the deer, but feeding occurs. The objective of this study was to analyze food-derived interactions between tourists and deer and provide suggestions for their management practice.

We conducted the study at the tourism district of Miyajima Island from November 2014 to February 2015. We carried out two sets of two-hour observation periods for 16 days and recorded occurrences of tourist and deer interactions involving tourist handouts. For each interaction, we noted sex of tourists and deer, type of handouts, and initiator of interaction if observed. Chi-square tests and t-tests were performed.

We recorded a total of 346 interactions during 56 hours of observation (6 interactions/hour, $SD = 2.73$). The initiator of the interaction was recorded for 233 events (67.3%), and deer initiated significantly more interactions than tourists (tourist: 84 events, deer: 149 events, $p < 0.05$). Although deer initiated more interactions, feeding occurred in 11.4% of deer-initiated interactions while 51.1% of tourist-initiated interactions resulted in feeding the deer ($p < 0.001$). In both tourist- and deer-initiated interactions, food (e.g., vendor food, fruits, vegetables) and non-food items (e.g., maps, paper bags, trash) were equally likely to be handed out (tourist-initiated: food 50%, non-food 50%; deer-initiated: food 33%, non-food 67%).

In conclusion, the deer were seldom fed when they actively seek tourist handouts. They were more likely to obtain food when tourists approached. Nonetheless, more than half of the items given to the deer were non-food items. Thus, raising tourist awareness of how to interact with the deer is needed for the welfare of the deer.

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Associate Professor Warwick Frost and Dr Jennifer Laing

La Trobe University, Australia

Zoos around the world have responded to criticisms about the ethics of keeping animals in captivity for display and the prospect of declining relevance through two main strategies. The first is they have re-positioned themselves as *conservation institutions* and the second is they have sought to provide *experiences* to visitors, based on the principles of Pine and Gilmore’s Experience Economy (Frost and Laing, 2011).

In Asia, most major zoos are strongly tourism-driven and while there has been some flirtation with conservation, the main emphasis appears to have been on the visitor experience. This tension between tourism and conservation goals is the focus of this project.

We aim to interview zoo managers and senior staff to explore their attitudes towards education and conservation and examine the strategies employed to further these goals, as well as conducting site visits of zoos, to critically assess the interpretation provided to visitors in terms of messages aimed at lobbying for protection or change behaviour.

This will form the basis of comparative case studies of zoos in the Asia-Pacific region. These case studies will include an examination of their interest in delivering those conservation messages that many Western zoos are now seeking to highlight to visitors. In particular, we are interested in messages of protecting rainforests from clearance through reducing consumption of palm oil.

This is particularly sensitive in parts of Asia, given the prevalence of rainforest clearance in Indonesia and Malaysia for palm oil has led to the Orangutan being placed on the endangered list. We will consider whether this conservation message is being promoted to visitors to zoos in this region, and critique the method employed to do so.

References:

Frost, W and Laing, J. (2011). Up Close and Personal: Rethinking Zoos and the Experience Economy. In W. Frost (ed.) *Zoos and Tourism: Conservation, Education, Entertainment?* Bristol: Channel View, 133-142.

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“Marine Wildlife Tourism Interaction in the Philippines”

Maria Rica C Bueno, Office of Tourism Standards & Regulation, Philippine Department of Tourism

The Philippines possesses one of the most bio-diverse marine environments in the world. Aside from its islands and beaches, its coral reefs are a major attraction for tourists. In recent years there has been a diversification of tourist activities in the marine environment, instead focusing on large marine vertebrates or marine wildlife species.

Marine wildlife attractions have become a popular tourist activity across the world. In the Philippines, the different species of local marine wildlife and related tourist sites offer many unique experiences. However, such human activities – to a greater or lesser extent – result in negative impacts on the environment. To manage these impacts, the proposed Rules and Procedures will focus on six groups of wildlife.

Nature and extent of Problem

Animals considered to be ‘marine wildlife’ are not domestic animals but belong to the local environment. Tourism activities that involve interaction with these animals is considered a form of disturbance. In short, too much pressure is being put on marine wildlife.

There are many threats that are imposed on the animals and their habitat due to tourism activities. These include physical trauma due to excessive handling; bodily injuries due to boat striking and accidents with propellers; interruption of animal’s feeding time; disturbance of resting time due to chasing of the animal during SCUBA and snorkeling tours; damaging vision due to photography with flash; and disturbance of their instincts due to feeding (provisioning).

Tour guides and operators are not usually familiar with the biological needs of the animals and in pursuit of the satisfaction of their guests, untrained guides may endanger the life of both the tourists and the animal by chasing the animal and provoking the defensive instinct of the animal.

Objectives

The objectives of the proposed Joint Administrative Order are to:

- to minimize the adverse effects of human interactions on marine wildlife and their habitats;
- to ensure the safety of the tourists and tour operators while conducting marine wildlife tourism interactions; and
- to promote a responsible and sustainable marine wildlife tourism industry.

The salient features of the Joint Administrative Order are the following:

Definition of terms such as disturbance, maltreatment, sea vessel, dedicated and non-dedicated interactions, precautionary principle, threatened, etc.

Rules and Regulation Governing the Conduct of Marine Wildlife Tourism Interactions including some general considerations, zonation (interaction zone, no interaction zone and waiting zone), prohibited acts, and regulated acts per activity.

The Monitoring and Implementation part delineates the authority of each government agency involved and provide for penalties for violations.

Marcus Eldh

Wild Sweden. *Presenting via Skype*

Marcus Eldh, the founder of the multi award winning tour company Wild Sweden, will tell us how he works with local people to protect wildlife and environments, and how their tours are changing attitudes.

He will also reveal their number 1, 2 and 3 secrets to success!

Dr Ronda Green

Chair Wildlife Tourism Australia, Adjunct Research Fellow Environmental Futures
Research Institute Griffith University, Proprietor Araucaria Ecotours

All tourism, wildlife tourism included, imposes impacts on wildlife and natural habitats, and responsible tour operators, ecolodges and wildlife parks take care to minimise negative impacts.

Many also aim for positive impact in the form of financial contribution to conservation projects, habitat restoration, conservation breeding wildlife research and quality interpretation.

So how much positive impact is the industry having, and how much potential is there for operators to contribute more to wildlife conservation while still running financially viable businesses?

How do we measure success? What are some of the success stories in Australia?

What are some of the success stories elsewhere?

What are some of the obstacles and how do we avoid or mitigate these?

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Janine Duffy

Director Marketing Echidna Walkabout Nature Tours and President of Koala Clancy Foundation inc

As a wildlife and ecotour operator for 23 years, we have long contributed to conservation through our personal and business actions, guiding style and choices of services and consumables.

But in 2011 we began a program encouraging all our clients to actively contribute to conservation while on tour, and the results surprised us.

Sales increased, our guests connected more strongly with the message and client satisfaction grew, publicity ballooned, awards followed and donations flowed in.

We will discuss whether 'doing' has more impact than 'talking' and ways that can benefit conservation and wildlife tourism operations.

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“Using a zoo based behaviour change model to drive pro-environmental actions in visitors to wildlife destinations”

Brooke Squires

Zoos Victoria

As a Zoo Based Conservation Organisation, Zoos Victoria has developed the **Connect-Understand-Act (CUA)** behaviour-based conservation education model, in order to shape wildlife friendly values and behaviours in its visitors, through Community Conservation Campaigns.

The CUA model utilises conservation, education and social science theories to assist in alleviating processes that are driven by community actions and which threaten wildlife. The CUA model draws upon a range of tools that, when embedded into a targeted conservation education program, have proven to change attitudes, facilitate the acquisition of knowledge and skills, and influence behaviours.

While the primary measure of success for the zoo-based campaigns has been a measure of behaviour uptake with visitors, thus achieving conservation outcomes, the CUA model has the potential to be a powerful framework for behaviour change at in situ ecotourism and conservation programs, with the ability to engage visitors to conservation areas in actions that alleviate threats to wildlife and in many cases support local social enterprise.

ZV is trialling the impact of its CUA model on site and in situ through a conservation based social enterprise program called *Beads for Wildlife*. This presentation outlines the theoretical framework underpinning the CUA model, while also presenting preliminary findings of the *Beads for Wildlife* campaign as a behaviour change model and possible framework for conservation actions at wildlife destinations.

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“Educational-Recreational Activities in Parks for Nature Connection and Post-visit Conservationist Outcomes: Possibilities and Challenges at an Operational Level in the Gold Coast region”

Ismar Borges de Lima

*Visiting-Scholar, Southern Cross University, SCU, &
Professor at Roraima State University, UERR, Brazil.*

Email: ismarlima@yahoo.com.br

Betty Weiler

Professor and Director of Research

School of Business and Tourism, Southern Cross University, SCU, Gold Coast.

Email: betty.weiler@scu.edu.au

This paper examines the possibilities and challenges in promoting educational-recreational activities in Parks which can propitiate visitors (re)connection with nature and a post-visit conservationist orientation. It seeks to identify the viewpoints of stakeholders and of visitors about outdoor educational tourism in parks as while discusses the managerial difficulties in getting them into effect with successful outcomes. In this sense, the role of guides and of rangers as facilitators and mediators of conservation and environmental education is a critical issue to be further investigated and debated.

Environmental learning and nature conservation as part of differentiation factor for visitors in tourism demand a set of strategies for knowledge building and transfer.

Environmental learning demands cognitive, affect and behaviour processes and interventions. The literature in this field has revealed that `behaviour change` is not a simplistic process which can straightway foster a sense of care and stewardship among tourists/visitors.

Methodologically, the paper has a qualitative approach with the use of questionnaires and interviews with visitors and key stakeholders. A few Parks in the Gold Coast region, among them Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary, David Fleay Wildlife Reserve and Springbrook Park, are selected for data collection and participant observation which can help to shed on this study field filling gaps in the literature.

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“A review of the conservation actions and outcomes of wildlife tourism enterprises”

Cassandra Wardle, School of Environment, Griffith University

Professor Ralf Buckley, School of Environment, Griffith University

Dr Aishath Shakeela, Griffith Business School, Griffith University

In recent decades conservation efforts have come under increasing pressure worldwide, and extensive barriers exist for achieving conservation goals. Ecotourism is promoted as a mechanism to address these barriers through mobilising political, financial and social support for conservation; increasing environmental awareness; protecting sensitive ecosystems and threatened species; and providing an alternate income to land intensive or consumptive practices.

Although instances to date indicate that ecotourism can indeed prove highly successful in some circumstances, the conservation impact of this sector on a larger scale is unclear. Before ecotourism can be claimed as a panacea, it is important to examine the contributions of ecotourism enterprises to conservation.

This study uses the systematic quantitative literature review method, as outlined by Pickering and Byrne (2014), to identify, select and synthesise the current academic literature that analyses the use of ecotourism in carrying out conservation actions and achieving conservation outcomes. It is a quantitative study that “maps” the current academic literature across a large number of variables and identifies the existing boundaries.

Thus the method can demonstrate if conclusions drawn from the literature are reliable and can be generalised across the field. Specifically this study aimed to determine

- (1) what conservation actions and outcomes of ecotourism enterprises have been examined;
- (2) what types of enterprises have been examined;
- (3) what evaluation methods have been used to examine these;
- (4) where this research has been conducted; and
- (5) if any gaps or biases are present in the academic literature. This knowledge can help identify and support future research agendas to fill knowledge gaps.

References:

Pickering, C., & Byrne, J. (2014). The benefits of publishing systematic quantitative literature reviews for PhD candidates and other early-career researchers. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 33(3), 534-548. doi: 10.1080/07294360.2013.841651

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“Why the future of Wildlife Tourism in Victoria depends on sustainable private land management”

Dr Kaye Rodden

Executive Secretary Victorian Landcare Council

For the last 30 years or more, farmers and their communities have been quietly building “green” highways across the landscape. Few have taken much notice, except the native fauna, who have found it is by far the most pleasant way to move across the countryside, visit the neighbours, perhaps find a mate or check out a new food or water source.

The benefits of these highways though are far more widespread than just providing an easy way for our native friends to move from place to place. From one sanctuary to another. In fact the actual health of these sanctuaries relies on these highways and regular native visitors from other regions.

And the Wildlife Tourism industry depends on healthy sanctuaries to showcase wildlife in their natural environment.

Next year the landcare movement in Victoria will be 30. This partnership between the farmers and conservation movement was founded to support sustainable management of the landscape to the benefit of the environment, agricultural production and community as a whole. There are now over 60,000 members in Victoria alone, and together they have been to the most part responsible for building the “green” highways across the landscape.

With over 70% of the Victorian landscape in private hands, and changing climatic conditions these, what effectively are private biolinks, are going to be pivotal to the health of public parks.

The health of the Wildlife Tourism sector by deduction relies on the continued support of private conservation and the emphasis of this presentation will be on the mutual benefits of building closer ties between the Australian Landcare movement and the wildlife tourism

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Penny Irons

Specialist Tour Guide Teacher, William Angliss Institute

Mindfulness is a complete experience. It can be both confronting and challenging, but still add a feeling of euphoria or achievement. It promotes our sense of appreciation and beauty with reference to both natural and cultural heritage. The enhanced use of senses can take a primary experience to one of completeness.

Senses play an important role in interpreting our environments and most particularly those of Natural and Heritage Culture. The use of senses, descriptive and creative language and activities encourages connections to environments, becoming a key to visitors developing connections and ultimately a sense of place with the site. Senses assist to determine pathways by adding sound, movement and colour to what may have appeared as a rather clichéd or dull activity or environment.

Interpretive Guides are vehicles to interpret and deliver a variety of messages including conservation and preservation both of which are significant for the longevity of Natural and Heritage Tourism.

A Guide is an access point from which to educate, entertain and provide memorable experiences for visitors. By developing connections to the environments and sites with the use of interpretive skills, storytelling techniques and activities, a sense of place can be developed and an enduring lifelong involvement commenced between the visitor and the site.

Guides and the future are woven together. They are the interactive vehicle carrying a message of intimacy and connection with spirit, sensitivity and respect. Interpretive Guides are key contributors in ensuring a healthy long-term Tourism Industry.

They are the yesterday, the today and the tomorrow of Natural and Cultural attractions.

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Annette Rypalski

Manager, Mt Rothwell Biodiversity Interpretation Centre

Australia has the worst mammal extinction rate in the world. In the last 400 years, one third of mammal extinctions have occurred in Australia.

The majority of critically endangered species no longer have the luxury of waiting for government policy to affect change across the Australian landscape. They need immediate protection and conservation.

At over 1000 acres, Mt Rothwell is Victoria’s largest feral predator free ecosystem and has been for over 10 years.

Protected by an 11km predator proof fence, Mt Rothwell conserves some of Victoria’s most threatened flora and fauna populations including the critically endangered Eastern Barred Bandicoot, Brush-tailed Rock-wallaby and Eastern Quoll. These species all co-exist across the landscape.

Mt Rothwell’s conservation model is simple: remove the threats, restore the habitat and the natives will thrive. Our holistic approach to threatened species management focuses on eliminating threats, restoring ecosystems and maintaining and improving population genetic diversity.

Our priority is conservation, not tourism. However, through our conservation achievements, we have created a high conservation value asset that is now considered a high wildlife tourist value asset. Mt Rothwell’s conservation model provides a truly unique opportunity for visitors to experience Australian wildlife as it might have been pre-European settlement.

It is an opportunity to encounter fauna species that are extinct in the wild and do not exist outside fenced or island reserves. It allows visitors to engage with these species, witness them in their natural environment thriving, learn about their high conservation value, the importance of each species in the Australian landscape and why we work to conserve them.

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Andrew Tribe*, David Stent and Peter Murray***

*School of Agriculture and Food Sciences, University of Queensland

**Spicers Hidden Vale

Australia is faced with a growing conservation crisis – the rapid decline in native fauna and flora across the country. One in five of Australia’s surviving mammals and 12% of Australia’s birds are now threatened with extinction, and there remains an estimated shortfall of 70 million hectares of habitat across Australia (WWF, 2013) to secure a comprehensive, adequate and representative national reserve system. For this situation to be rectified private landowners, including wildlife tourism operators, will need to make a greater contribution towards the conservation of wildlife and their habitats.

Spicers Hidden Vale Nature Refuge was established in January 2007 and comprises 3091 hectares of a 4000 hectare working cattle station. It also includes the Spicers Hidden Vale Retreat, a luxury resort, and is located on the Little Liverpool Ranges, in the Southeast Queensland bioregion.

This Nature Refuge provides suitable habitat for wide range of native wildlife, including several rare and threatened species that are listed ‘vulnerable’ according to Queensland’s Nature Conservation Act 1992, such as the koala, glossy black-cockatoos, powerful owls, Albert’s lyrebird, and the square-tailed kite.

This year, Spicers Hidden Vale has entered into a long term cooperative venture with the University of Queensland to enhance the wildlife on the property through a number of activities, including:

- Breeding and releasing local endangered species
- Rehabilitating and releasing wildlife endemic to the area
- Managing and rehabilitating the habitat
- Providing research and education opportunities to the University of Queensland and other institutions

Such a venture promises to provide both parties with worthwhile outcomes: it will support conservation by providing for a more natural balance (and numbers) of wildlife on this land, while also enhancing the experiences of the Retreat visitors by allowing them to observe and to learn about Australian wildlife at close hand.

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“Humans in the cage: Exploring the white shark (*Carcharodon carcharias*) cage-diving experience”

Kirin Apps¹, Dr Kay Dimmock², Dr David Lloyd¹ and Dr Charlie Huveneers³.

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²School of Tourism and Hospitality Management, Southern Cross University, Po Box 157, Lismore NSW 2480, Australia.

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Interactions with marine megafauna, including shark-based tourism, has experienced exponential growth since the 1990's bringing with it intense management and academic scrutiny.

However, the underlying determinants driving growth in tourist participation remains unclear.

This paper applies a qualitative approach to investigate the beliefs underlying tourists' intention to cage-dive with white sharks (*Carcharodon carcharias*) at the Neptune Islands, South Australia.

An application of the theory of planned behaviour (TpB) was the framework for conducting elicitation surveys among a sample of (n=86) cage-diving participants.

Content analysis of responses revealed the decision to cage-dive with white sharks is driven by individual, societal, economic and environmental factors.

Salient factors associated with observing white sharks included the opportunity for education and awareness, and seeing the sharks in their natural habitat.

The potential for shark cage-dive tourism to facilitate and support shark conservation issues via education and interpretation initiatives are discussed.

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Justin Foster

,Director of Science, Earthwatch Institute (Australia)

Earthwatch inspires connections between people and the environment.

Our long-term research and the dedication and hard work of our teams in the field lead to impressive results and ground-breaking findings. By directly supporting field research and educating and engaging thousands of people, we provide the opportunity for individuals from all walks of life to connect with research expeditions in stunning and protected areas worldwide.

We bring science to life for the general public. We enable businesses to become more sustainable. We give educators the tools they need to help develop new generations of responsible leaders.

Our research allows us to understand how best to preserve and improve wildlife, habitats, cultural knowledge, and the natural resources that we all rely on.

Above all, we are working toward a vision of a world in which we live within our means and in balance with nature.

The Earthwatch Institute operates expeditions around the world which allow people to take their travel experience to new levels, by directly engaging them in scientific research, which contributes to the sustainable management of the areas they visit.

Earthwatch’s contribution to conservation is two-fold; firstly, the research conducted during expeditions contributes directly to improved decision making surrounding areas of high conservation value.

Furthermore, the experiential learning model employed by Earthwatch, helps to raise awareness of the immense challenges facing conservation our planet’s natural heritage.

This presentation will share with participants, a number of example in which citizen science has contributed to improved conservation outcomes.

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Ronda Green

Chair Wildlife Tourism Australia, Adjunct Research Fellow Environmental Futures Research Institute Griffith University, Proprietor Araucaria Ecotours

Ecotourism and wildlife tourism are often hailed as a way of contributing to both nature conservation and local communities especially in the developing world but actually relevant to all countries.

Critics have objected that many of the schemes to conserve wildlife and promote tourism have had severe detrimental effects on local people, to the point where some are very dismissive or cynical about the whole idea of local people benefitting from wildlife tourism, especially where land is seen as 'locked up' from settlement, livestock grazing and crop growing, or where wildlife is seen as threats to livestock, crops or human safety.

Yet there are examples throughout the world where local communities do indeed benefit from wildlife tourism.

This paper explores some of the success stories in Australia and elsewhere, and considers some of the obstacles to success and how some of these obstacles could be tackled.

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Matthew Jackson

Chief Executive Officer, Phillip Island Nature Parks

What is Phillip Island Nature Parks and why is it different? How does it benefit the local community and its region as well as the whole State of Victoria?

We are a not-for-profit self-funding organisation which receives no recurrent funding, with more than half of its 1.25m annual visitors coming from overseas.

PINP is the largest employer in the island’s significant tourism sector with substantial flow-on benefits to the local community.

PINP makes a major annual investment in maintaining and improving the wildlife habitat and environment including the fox eradication program, which assists all wildlife including penguins, cape barren geese, and the re-introduced eastern barred bandicoots. Over 60,000 seedlings have been planted in the past year, and other projects include weed control and maintaining and improving the recreational and foreshore facilities.

Little penguin research is now in its 47th year – Australia’s longest running breeding study of a bird species. 29 wildlife research papers have been published plus significant commitment to wildlife rescue and rehabilitation.

Focus will also be on our keys to success and exciting new developments.

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“Elevating the role of nature in the Australian Tourism industry – a case study from Kangaroo Island”

Craig Wickham

Managing Director, Exceptional Kangaroo Island

Kangaroo Island is a large Island off the end of a discontinuous chain of other islands. It has an extraordinary suite of plants and animals which have evolved in isolation to be different from those found elsewhere in the world - grass trees, ground orchids, weird Proteaceae, kangaroos, echidnas, wallabies and birds which act more like mice than birds. It has red dirt roads, sheep and cattle farms, Eucalyptus trees off to the horizon, beautiful beaches and rugged coastal cliffs. Its' new world wines, seafood and other fresh produce is second to none. You could be forgiven for thinking this destination is Australia - but the destination in mind is South Australia's Kangaroo Island.

This is the setting for the evolution of a small family business and a suite of experiences in community and industry development ranging from local Government, Regional Tourism Organisation, sustainable destination development, State Tourism Organisation, and interaction through advisory boards with the National Tourism Organisation. The pinnacle of collaborative destination development experienced to date was a tenure-blind multi-stakeholder conservation and tourism initiative known as the National Landscapes.

Can this combined experience of one business on an Island far from a major gateway city be drawn upon to elevate the role of nature in Australia's tourism sector whilst at the same time respecting the international distribution system, the roles of each of jurisdiction, improving the sales conversion rate and give Australia a more customer-focused destination marketing approach? It is the aim of this paper to argue that it can and stimulate discussion amongst leaders in the wildlife tourism sector to find a way to make permanent changes to the way we do business.

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Dr Aise Kim

Senior Lecturer in Tourism Management, School of Management, University of South Australia, Adelaide, South Australia

In recent years, modern zoos have become increasingly involved in repositioning themselves not only as a provider of recreation opportunities but also a facilitator of conservation activities in order to maximise both positive economic and environmental impacts of zoo tourism experience.

With increasing commitment to managing paradoxical roles of modern zoos, many of zoos have developed different types of unique zoo tourism experiences through redesigning new types of animal enclosures, exhibitions and interpretation which can be considered as “zooscape” environment.

For example, some zoos have attempted to take more conservation-oriented approach by providing active environmental enhancement programs such as animal-training sessions, naturalist talks/events, and animal demonstration that are designed to effectively capture visitor attentions and enhance their engagement with educational and conservational activities.

Other zoos such as ‘Night Safari’ in Singapore Zoo and London Zoo tend to highlight the recreational value of zoos, using special events, branding of iconic animals, or entertainment activities in order to create unique zoo personality and emotional attachment to zoo itself or specific animals. Clearly, such innovative and distinctive designs of the zooscape environment can help to reposition each of zoos as a unique branding power which can be differentiated from other zoos or wildlife parks.

Despite such distinctive changes in zoos, there is little empirical research about the spill-over effects of zoo tourism experience, linking from recreational experience to zoo attachment and conservational behavioural outcomes.

Previous research has often focused on either visitor perceptions of zoo animals or the effects of training/interpretation on visitor environmental attitudes or behaviour which are separately targeting economic, ethical and environmental indicators. Thus, this paper argues that it is important to evaluate a holistic aspect of the zooscape environment which can be ultimately useful for redefining zoo personality.

This research also addresses that new directions for tackling the spill-over effects of visitors’ zooscape experience are required in order to influence visitors’ emotional attachment to zoos and their continuous involvement in other travel activities and animal welfare-related behaviour for both economic and environmental benefits.

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“American couples who travel internationally to watch birds: An exploratory study of a large and under-explored market”

Denise Goodfellow, [in absentia]

About 47 million people watch birds in the USA, 19 million of whom travel for this purpose (US Fish & Wildlife Survey, 2011). Over the past few decades they have been the subject of much research. However, that research has largely focused on the avitourist, as travelling birders are called, as an individual who ticks birds off a list. More men than women list birds, and acquire the expensive accoutrements that enable bird identification necessary for listing, and so the research has had a masculine bias. Yet there is evidence that men and women have different attitudes to birding and to wildlife in general (for example Cooper & Smith, 2010; Kellert, 1996; Moore, Scott & Moore, 2008) with more men seeking the challenge and competition involved in listing and identifying birds, while women seek more to understand the birds and also to socialise with others. Yet there is little research on women who watch birds.

Most American birders are married (US Fish & Wildlife Survey, 206; 2011). Scott, Lee and Lee (2009, p.5) reported that 75% of ABA members are in a conjugal relationship compared with “just over half” of US adults. Yet there is no research on birding couples (Scott, personal comment, April, 2009).

Birders travel a lot for the purpose of watching birds (Scott & Lee, 2003). According to Scott et al. (2009) half of all of American Birding Association members had travelled abroad specifically to watch birds, covering an average of nine countries. And they may not always go alone. There is some evidence that birders, often travel with their spouse (Ellis and Vogelsong, 2003; Kerlinger, 1995; Sali, Kuehn & White, 2008).

Given the potential for different intra-couple differences birding for both leisure and travel may pose difficulties for a heterosexual couple. So how do birding couples ensure that their trips will be successful?

Both my quantitative and qualitative research on US birding couples who travelled internationally to watch birds, has indicated that men and women demonstrate differences both along gender lines. A higher percentage of male respondents listed than females (86% [168] vs. 72% [113] respectively), while a higher percentage of female respondents were more interested in meeting indigenous people. But a higher percentage of men compared with women were concerned about safety (34% [64] vs. 23% [36]). There was also a large cohort consisting of both men and women who had similar perspectives.

My interviews with American birding couples indicated that, no matter how different their level of interest most (in particular male respondents) preferred to watch birds with their spouse, and birders of both genders and varying perspectives changed behaviour to fit in with each other. Often they tempered or expanded their birding to fit in with a partner less or more keen. Furthermore couples often demonstrated a shared identity and/or an interdependency, and it is possible that this loyalty combined with different levels of interest and styles of birding or relating to the natural environment shapes their choice of destination, and of using a formal tour operator, a local guide, or birding alone.

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Nina Hewson

Community Policy Officer, Western Australian Local Government Association

Local Government is at the foreground of tourism delivery and in many ways the linchpin to other spheres of government, industry and the community. It provides an expanse of tourism infrastructure, from roads, to airports, caravan camping grounds, visitor centres and parks just to name a few. Local Government in a tourism setting is governed by legislation from the Commonwealth and State, from land-use planning through to environmental and health legislation.

It is impacted by national and State tourism strategies, as well as other government strategies, and participates in, and contributes to the activities of tourism organisations and networks. Industries that supports tourism - accommodation, retail, restaurants, bars and cafes, all have reciprocal relationships with, and exist of course within Local Government jurisdictions.

As a State, Western Australia is abundant in natural wildlife attractions with a climate conducive to tourism activity; there is a lot to celebrate. Local Governments in Western Australia have an interest in tourism as a driver for economic development and wildlife is very prominent contributor. Key opportunities and challenges in wildlife tourism and local economic development context span protected areas, ecological opportunities to marketing, and access and amenity.

To make the most of its potential, managing the challenges and opportunities in the dynamic context in which tourism exists is imperative. This can only happen with true collaboration between all spheres of government, industry, stakeholders and the community.

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“Creating jobs by boosting nature-based tourism in South Australia’s national parks, marine parks and reserves”

Chris Thomas

Department of Environment Water and Natural Resources, South Australia

South Australia is preparing an action plan to boost nature-based tourism in South Australia’s national parks, marine parks and reserves.

The Action Plan is being prepared with advice from traditional owners, the tourism industry, State and local government agencies, non-government organisations, and interested members of the public. These groups have expressed their aspirations and views for nature-based tourism during a series of workshops and online consultations.

This is a joint initiative between the Department of Environment, Water and Nature Resources and the South Australian Tourism Commission.

The State Government has a target of creating 10,000 new tourism jobs by 2020 and nature-based tourism is seen as a key focus for this growth.

Nature is the number one driver of international visitors to Australia, with about 40 percent of all international visitors to Australia travelling to a national park in 2013-14.

South Australia’s special places cover more than 21 percent of the State’s land and 44 percent of the State’s waters. They contain outstanding examples of our unique Aboriginal culture, abundant wildlife, flora and marine life, geology and landscapes, rivers, coastlines, islands and outback lakes, and countless scenic routes and adventure trails.

This Action Plan aims to look after these natural assets while also finding innovative ways to attract more visitors to the State, cultivating new business opportunities and creating more jobs.

This will require a determined and coordinated effort by traditional owners, tourism businesses, protected area managers, all levels of government and our regional communities.

It is anticipated that South Australia’s Nature-based Tourism Action Plan will be finalised in October 2015, following broad public consultation. For further details www.environment.sa.gov.au

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“Bats and Tourism; A way to coexist and benefit financially from the other mammals with which we share the city”

Maree Treadwell-Kerr¹ and Sera Steves²

¹Australasian Bat Society Inc., membership secretary Wildlife Tourism Australia Inc.

²The Wildlife Habitat, Port Douglas

Bats have long been regarded in a negative light for a variety of reasons, largely based in myth, hysteria, and fear. Little education about benefits of bats occurred and persecution persisted. In Austin, Texas, a new relationship between humans and bats has formed and is the basis of this case study for the future of bats in our cities and our tourism infrastructure.

In 1980 the Congress Avenue Bridge, Austin, was renovated and became the seasonal home to 1.5 million Mexican free-tailed bats. This was an unwelcome addition to the bridge upgrade and was initially met with much contention from the local Austinites. The presiding fear was rabies. The bats were to be harassed, dispersed and perhaps even poisoned but an educational force, Bat Conservation International, changed that.

They set up office next to the bridge and interpreted the bats' behaviour, providing an educational platform fielding questions and enlightening locals on benefits of bats. For instance, in the early 1800s, as German immigrants settled the Hill Country, Texas, there were serious health concerns regarding malaria but farmers found a smart solution; building bat roosts for microbats, thus controlling mosquitos with the added bonus of guano to fertilise their orchards.

This beneficial relationship was highlighted in Austin and perception of bats changed. Today, bats generate over 1.5 million a year in tourism dollars with over 150,000 people coming to Austin specifically to see the bats. Tours are built around their evening departures and boat companies exist for the sole purpose of viewing and enjoying the world's largest urban bat population.

In Queensland, 3.1 billion in tourist spending is on eco-tourism each year, with 2.5 million visitors to the North Queensland tropical region annually. The tropical north's biodiversity is responsible for the lion's share of eco-tourism revenue. Our urban bat populations are an untapped tourism market.

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John Newman

Geelong Field Naturalists Club Inc.

The transformation of Geelong’s economy from a predominantly manufacturing industry base to a more diversified base will require some imaginative thinking.

Located within 3 km of Geelong’s city centre and fringed by Stingaree Bay and Point Henry are the disused Moolap Salt Fields. These are an integral part of internationally recognised wader bird habitats encompassing western Port Phillip Bay and the Bellarine Peninsula.

Transformation of the disused salt fields into an world class ecotourism destination with appropriate visitor and educational centres focusing on wader birds and water birds and their habitats has the potential to bring 100,000 visitors to the fringe of downtown Geelong each year and provide a major draw card for the Bellarine Peninsula.

In doing this the Geelong region will provide a wonderful opportunity for Australia to fulfil our international treaty obligations to protect wader birds and their habitats. These birds migrate from Siberia and Alaska each year to feed here in the Australian summer before returning to the northern hemisphere to breed.

All migratory wader birds are now under grave threat due to global habitat loss. Significant local employment opportunities will flow from the development and maintenance of the environmental values of the salt fields as well as the generation of extensive recreational space on Geelong’s doorstep.

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“A collaboration between a wildlife tour operator, a zoo and science:
Monitoring nose patterns throughout life in tagged and captive koalas”.

Janine Duffy^a and Yvette Pauligk^b

^a Director Marketing Echidna Walkabout Nature Tours and President of Koala Clancy Foundation inc ^bZoo Keeper, Werribee, Zoos Victoria

In 1998 we discovered a method of identifying wild koalas by their nose patterns.

In this presentation, we show preliminary results from a small, new study of the nose patterns over time of captive, microchipped koalas in two Zoos Victoria properties: Werribee Open Range Zoo (2 koalas) and Healesville Sanctuary (8-10 koalas).

In addition, some analysis of photographs of repeatedly wild-caught, tagged Queensland koalas supplied by Dr Bill Ellis, University of Queensland, is included to show whether the method works for the northern koala subspecies/race.

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Melinda King

Koala Clancy Foundation and Wathaurong Co-operative

“My name is Mel, I’m 26 years old and I’m the Koala Research Co-ordinator for Echidna Walkabout. I’m a descendant of the Wamba Wamba tribe near the Murray River, but I have lived in the Wathaurong community in Geelong my entire life.

My passion is my culture and wildlife, particularly koalas. Koalas have been special to me my whole life. When I was 12 years old I was lucky enough to meet Janine Duffy and Roger Smith. They watched me with the koalas and decided that I might make a good koala researcher. From then on I spent most of my summers in the bush with the koalas. Now I spend most days with the Koalas of the You Yangs.

Each koala is so different from the next, they all have their own personalities, behaviours and features. I first met Clancy when he was just a joey with his mum Pat. I get so excited each time Pat has a joey as we have known her since she was a joey also.

Clancy is the only joey of Pat’s that we have been able to continue researching after leaving his mother. This story describes the journey we watched him go through to become the beautiful boy he is now.

I really wanted to raise awareness of the trouble that koalas face, and educate the kids in my community as they hold the future of the koala in their hands. In writing this book I hope that the next generations can get a real understanding from a young age of what they can do to help keep koalas in the wild forever.”

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"How wildlife tourism can benefit the local communities living with wildlife in Kenya"

Daniel Sambu and Paul **Sadera** Predator Compensation Fund, Big Life Foundation Kenya - *Skype presentation*

Wildlife tourism benefiting locals and involving them in anti-poaching operations: the case of Big Life Foundation.

Big life foundation (BLF) was started in 2002 but it was known as Maasailand preservation trust up to 2012 when they merged into big life foundation. It runs a community rangers project that covering slightly over 2 million acres in the Amboseli-Tsavo ecosystem providing among other conservation actions general security, anti-poaching and rapid response units for wildlife security operations. The main goal of big life foundation is to ensure that benefits from conservation trickles directly to the communities living with wildlife under the banner; community support conservation, conservation support community.

The region is predominantly occupied by Maasai community who are pastoralist in nature. However, some of them have now tried to settle for agriculture resulting to blockage of wildlife migratory corridors and hence high level of human wildlife conflicts. In collaboration with other partners big life foundation engaged local communities in conservation and anti-poaching using various strategies linked to effective law enforcement networks. In returns to this, providing employment to the local Maasai community as rangers, intelligence providers, staff in lodges and as decision makers.

As a result of collaborative anti poaching strategies, and involvement of the local communities, poaching in the landscape has decreased significantly.

Between 2013-14 the Kenyan side recorded a 54% decrease, while there have been no known elephant poaching in Tanzania. This success is attributed to the joint cross-border anti-poaching collaborations and increased network of wildlife security agents.

BLF is registered as an NGO in Kenya and headquartered in Mbirikani in the heart of the Maasai community operating in six community ranches in the Amboseli-Tsavo

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Round Table Discussions

“International wildlife travels: opportunities”

What are the main wildlife features attracting Australia to other countries and vice versa?

What lesser known wildlife and regions could be better promoted?

“International wildlife travels: challenges”

What are some of the problems involved in opening up new regions to tourism? (e.g. access and facilities for tourists, increasing pressure on natural resources, changes to local lifestyle, illegal wildlife trade) and how can these be tackled by the tourism industry and governments?

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How do we assure valid and useful data are collected?

How do we assign different tourists to different tasks?

How useful are bio-blitzes and how do we involved tourists in them? How can we improve WTA’s research network?

What more can wildlife tourism do to enhance biodiversity conservation?

What can large operators and micro-businesses do?

What can tourism organizations and government departments do?

What are some of the obstacles to emulating success stories elsewhere, and how do we overcome them?

How close should we get, both in the wild and in captivity?

What do already know and what do we need to know to assess what kinds of interaction are acceptable in terms of both animal welfare and conservation?

What do we know and what do we need to know about interactions with animals leading to support for their conservation?

What are the real wildlife problems that people face (danger to crops, human safety, limited access to protected and private areas etc.)?

What problems may be exaggerated?

How do we get accurate information to all stakeholders (local residents, politicians, tourism operations, NGO's)?

How can wildlife tourism contribute to solving the problems?

General summary of conference and voting on priority actions.

Suggested actions to follow the conference: lobbying of governments, information to be sent to tourism organisations, travel agents, tourism operations (wildlife or other), new projects, research priorities etc.

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Poster Presentations

“Conservation in zoos: Assessing visitor understanding, attitudes and conservation behavioural intentions toward marine wildlife entanglement in response to two zoo-based education approaches”

Sarah Mellish^a, Dr Elissa Pearson^a, Ben Sanders^b, and Dr Carla Litchfield^a

^aUniversity of South Australia, ^bZoos Victoria

Marine debris poses a significant threat to marine biodiversity. Given this is driven by human action, to reduce the amount of debris and rates of marine wildlife entanglement [MWE], it is essential to educate the public, inspire concern for the marine environment and its inhabitants, and to foster greater conservation behaviour. One pathway to achieve this is through zoo-based conservation education.

The present study evaluates two different learning opportunities at Melbourne Zoo's seal exhibit as part of their 'Seal the Loop' [STL] program, which focuses upon the issue of MWE. Specifically, the research compares the outcomes of viewing a traditional exhibit featuring static displays (N= 87), against viewing a specially designed interactive educational show (N=85) on: visitor learning, awareness of MWE, attitudes toward marine animals and their conservation, and future behavioural intentions.

Findings revealed very positive attitudes for exhibit and show visitors (mean >40 out of a possible 45) and a sound awareness of MWE, with 73.5%-78.2% of visitors able to correctly explain what MWE is.

However, show visitors were significantly more likely to report learning something new from their visit than exhibit-only visitors (75.8% and 16.1%, respectively), and were the only group to report learning about conservation issues (13.0%).

This may have influenced differences in behavioural intention measures, with show visitors more willing to change their future conservation behaviour (M=85.09, SD=20.10; M=78.18, SD=23.47 respectively), as well as perceiving a greater likelihood they could make a difference through such behavioural change (M=71.35, SD=25.00; M=60.77, SD=28.70).

Results provide further evidence that zoo experiences are contributing to public education, inspiring concern and desire to act. The apparent benefits of the show also highlight how novel zoo-based conservation education strategies (particularly interactive shows containing storytelling) and various layers of interpretation (i.e. not just static displays) can facilitate stronger conservation outcomes.

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Poster Presentations

Wildlife Tourism Australia's Wildlife Research Network

Dr Peter Wood and Dr Ronda Green

Wildlife Tourism Australia

Wildlife tour operators and others working in wildlife tourism are often in excellent positions to make regular observations of wildlife in regions where scientists would find it difficult to get sufficient funding to visit frequently, and many are engaged in research in one way or another without always knowing of each others' projects.

Wildlife Tourism Australia is developing a Wildlife Research and Tourism Network (WRTN) to assist communication between tourism personnel (e.g. owners and staff of tour operations, ecolodges and wildlife parks), professional researchers and postgrad students, and (where appropriate) tourists who wish to volunteer as research assistants.

It is hoped that this communication will enhance and generate significant wildlife research and conservation monitoring outcomes.

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