Science's Contribution to the Sustainable Management of Wildlife Tourism

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Research question guiding this study was:

How does science contribute to the sustainable management of wildlife tourism?

The research objectives were to:

- Describe how science is used
- Describe how science could be used

Definition of Science

Science was defined by using Caldwell's (1982) framework that classifies science into four categories:

- Science as method
- Science as knowledge
- Science as occupation
- Science as application

Research Design & Methods

- Principal research strategy that was decided upon was case study analysis
- Multiple case study

Consumptive and Non-Consumptive Wildlife Tourism

Karakamia Sanctuary

- Privately owned and managed wildlife attraction situated approximately one hour out of Perth that was established to help save endangered wildlife

Dryandra Woodland

- A CALM managed woodland near Narrogin with focus on long term recovery and conservation of threatened species

Touch the Wild Safaris

- Privately owned and operated tour company based in Geraldton conducting eco tours incorporating field research

Yardie Creek Tours

- Private company operating specialised one hour boat cruises in Cape Range National Park to specifically view black footed rock wallabies and local bird life

Data Analysis

Data collection

1. Interviews
2. Documentation
3. Participant observation

<u>Theory building</u>

- All data were coded and re-coded to illustrate emerging themes
- Pattern coding

Results and Discussion

- Communication was included in Caldwell's framework of science

"*There is not much value in doing research and not disseminating the information afterwards*"

Results and Discussion

- Managers/tour operators - science as knowledge

  "I would define science as obtaining knowledge to provide answers to questions that you've got"

- Scientists - science as method

  "It is a process. It has to follow the accepted grounds of scientific methodology…"

Results and Discussion Cont.

<u>MANAGED ATTRACTIONS</u> -

- The conservation of threatened species

"*The work I have done is largely conservation or recovery of endangered marsupials…*"

- Scientific knowledge on impacts of tourism are primarily unknown

"*…we don't really know how the tourist will impact on the animals*"

Results and Discussion Cont.

- Communication is lacking between scientists and managers and general public

"I think our biggest problem is getting the stuff communicated"

"The main problem is disseminating the information"

Results and Discussion Cont.

<u>Managed Attractions Cont</u>.

- Concerns regarding the scientific method were raised:

  "*I mean it is unrealistically simple*"

  "We do very little monitoring and without monitoring you don't know if you have a problem"

Results and Discussion Cont...

SPECIALISED TOURS

- Science and research is not being done

Knowledge wanted for -

- Managers want knowledge for decision making and education/interpretation
- Want knowledge on the impacts of tourism on the wildlife

Conclusion

- Science is used at managed attractions – primarily as knowledge for the conservation of threatened species
- Science makes little contribution to the management of specialised tours

Recommendations

- **<u>Managed Attractions</u>** –
- To investigate impacts of wildlife tourism
- Investigate threatened species interaction in absence of predators
- Include monitoring in the scientific method
- Increase communication between scientists and managers and the public

Recommendations Cont.

<u>Specialised Tours</u> –

- To conduct science and research

The End