

Wildlife Tourism

David Newsome, Ross Dowling and Susan Moore with Joan Bentrupperbaumer (Chapter 3), Kate Rodger (Chapter 7) and Mike Calver (Chapters 7 and 8), 2005.

Channel View Publications, Clevedon, North Somerset, UK.

299 pp + xiv. ISBN 1845410068

RRP US \$49.95

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THIS book is the 24th in the series on Tourism, but only the second on wildlife tourism. Its focus is viewing vertebrates. Tourism based on plants or invertebrates is specifically excluded. The book's audience are university and training programme students, tourist industry professionals, planners and managers, and government employees.

The authors have opted for an eco-centric and science-based approach to manage wildlife tourism. A science-based approach in this case means using applied ecology to understand the impacts and develop planning frameworks and management strategies. However, in this science-based approach, the authors' emphasis is on monitoring and interpretation. Significantly, monitoring and interpretation are components of an Adaptive Management approach which is advocated by the authors to manage wildlife tourism, with an aim to ensure the conservation of wildlife populations. An Adaptive Management approach makes it more likely that research will be targeted to address specific management problems and the findings will be directly applicable to managing those problems. The important role that the social sciences can play in managing wildlife tourism is recognized by the authors. Management usually involves manipulating how, where and when people interact with the wildlife, rather than managing the wildlife *per se*. Therefore, it is important to know what the expectations of tourists are from their wildlife encounters and whether those expectations are consistent with conservation.

The book is divided into three parts. The first part focuses on the ecology of human interactions with wildlife (Chapters 1 to 3). The second part focuses on aspects of wildlife tourism, specifically the interests of the stakeholders, government policies and management of its impacts (Chapters 4 to 6). The third part is about the role of science in managing wildlife tourism (Chapters 7 and 8). The emphasis is on a scientific understanding of wildlife through wildlife biology. However, the

future development of wildlife tourism depends on a synthesis of science and management. Chapter 9 presents the conclusions.

The structure and organization of each chapter facilitate understanding the text. For example, there are ample headings and subheadings within each chapter to guide the reader through the various aspects of the complex subject matter. Most chapters end with two sections: Conclusions and Further Reading on the topic. The Further Reading sections are particularly valuable because the authors steer the reader to relevant literature and explain why each suggested reading may be useful. The authors' use of tables and figures to summarize information is excellent. I found the frameworks deconstructed the process of managing wildlife and provided a systematic means of considering the relevant management issues. I also found the use of boxes to provide examples to supplement the text very useful. For me, this practice contributed to the continuity of the text, and provided more developed examples, which illustrated points being made in the main text.

Chapters 7 and 8 are the scientific heart of the book. Chapter 7 focuses on the nature of wildlife biology and its role in wildlife tourism, while Chapter 8 provides a quantitative approach to determine impacts of tourism on wildlife. A particularly salient point in Chapter 7 is that scientific knowledge can be used to enhance visitors' experience with wildlife. For example, if operators explain to their clients what the animals are doing and why they are doing it, it adds another dimension to the experience. Chapter 8 provides a research framework for answering questions about impacts of wildlife tourism. The emphasis is well designed experimental work which can provide strong inferences necessary for successful adaptive management: researchers should collect data that tests explicit predictions about the system being studied.

Although economics may be the driver of resource development, we need science to determine how to use wildlife resources sustainably. Wildlife biology has to move from simply being descriptive to being explanatory. In other words, theory has to be developed to explain phenomena and thus be a useful tool in guiding management decisions. This will enable managers and/or scientists to make predictions based on the theory and then test the validity and utility of the theory for management of

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wildlife tourism. Chapter 9 finishes with future directions for research in wildlife tourism. The authors advocate the continuation of empirical research in ecology to learn more about the relevant ecosystems.

My overall impression is that the book is very good. As an ecologist, who has conducted research in areas of high conservation value as well as made the occasional foray as a wildlife tourist in other countries, I easily relate to the biological content. What I find exciting about this book is its incorporating the social sciences into managing wildlife. I found Chapters 3 to 6 wonderful introductions into various disciplines of the social sciences that are highly relevant for managing wildlife. For me, these chapters are the strength of this book and make it a necessary addition to the library of anyone who is interested in wildlife management. The chapters on wildlife biology and experimental

design are useful, but I am more familiar with experimental design and statistics than I am with psychology, engaging stakeholders and policy. Thus, I learnt more from Chapters 3 to 6 than I did from the others. However, my kind, the wildlife ecologist, is not part of the intended audience of this book. Wildlife ecologists probably ought to be part of the target audience, so that we learn the significance of managing wildlife in a social and political context.

I particularly like the Adaptive Management Framework since it has the potential to operate effectively in the social and political context of wildlife conservation, as well as make effective use of observational and experimental research. This book provides a balanced view of the range of disciplines that need to be considered when managing wildlife. It will be a particularly useful resource book in your professional library.

Australia's Mammal Extinctions: A 50 000 year History

Chris Johnson, 2006
Cambridge University Press, Cambridge
288 pp. ISBN 13: 97805-21686600
RRP AUD \$49.95

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TIM FLANNERY'S *The Future Eaters* holistic ecological history invigorated Australians and took ecology to the dinner table and into the pub. It was a monumental achievement. The problem with *The Future Eaters* for many Australian ecologists was that despite the wonderful prose and apparently beautiful logic of the simple story many of the details did not seem to add up or were presented rhetorically. At the time of reading, I had just finished a survey of the dry rainforests along the eastern seaboard and there were many features of these ecologically tantalizing environments that were incompatible with them as the "relic" environments central to Flannery's story (Fensham 1995). The contribution of *The Future Eaters* as a provocateur of debate was immense, but it had ultimate shortcomings because Flannery could not afford the forensic scrutiny required, in a book that was packaged as a popular best seller.

Twelve years after *The Future Eaters* we have Chris Johnson's *Australia's Mammal Extinctions*. This amazing book does far more than just tell a convincing and coherent story of the fate of the mammals during quaternary history. In many ways it is a model science

story. I am not sure if it is Johnson's invention, but the central framework provides a superb way of sorting vast and complex, but ultimately patchy evidence. The framework is provided by three tests applied to the potential agents for each of the three major waves of mammal extinction in Australia; the Pleistocene megafauna, mainland marsupial predators in the mid-Holocene, and "critical weight range" mammals in the European era. The acid tests are: *Do they fit the spatial and temporal patterns?*, *Can they explain consistent morphological and ecological features of the target species?*, and *Is the mechanism logically consistent with the characteristics of the agent and target?* These three tests sort disparate evidence through space and time for mechanisms that will logically have different outcomes. The result is a compelling charge sheet pinning the primary agents for the three extinction events as people, people, foxes/cats respectively; or in short **predators**. The delivery of this process takes a neat 230 pages without being overly arduous, but also leaves barely a stone of important evidence unturned. Johnson provides the perfect balance between concession to uncertainties and the delivery of a decisive story. The only part of the book that I found convoluted was the presentation of the palynological evidence, for which without being selective it seems almost impossible to deliver a decisive story. Certainly there is plenty of room for the skeptic to wonder whether there were really very different trends of fire and vegetation history across the continent, or whether a selective

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