

Book Review

MARINE WILDLIFE AND TOURISM MANAGEMENT: INSIGHTS FROM THE NATURAL AND SOCIAL SCIENCES. Editors: James Higham and Michael Lück. Oxford University Press, Oxford, UK, 2008. ISBN 978-1-84593-345-6, 416 pp.

In recent decades, there has been a rapid growth in demand for marine wildlife experiences, yet conservation of the marine environment, as well as legislative and management responses aimed at sustainability, have not kept pace. This book draws from disciplines of marine and conservation biology, behavioral ecology, and social science to examine the effects of human disturbance on marine wildlife as well as to present management approaches. This volume is structured into four parts with 21 chapters, written by leading scientists whose work focuses on sustainable wildlife-based marine tourism, and draws upon studies of penguins, pinnipeds, sharks, and whales, to name a few. The introductory chapter written by the editors establishes that the book's purpose is to advance an understanding of the complexities of marine wildlife and tourism management as well as to offer the "take home message" that resource managers and decisionmakers must be responsive to the outcomes of rigorous science.

Part I (seven chapters) provides the reader with an understanding of the changing patterns of tourist demand in respect to assessing and experiencing free-ranging marine animal populations. Focal discussions include watching whales and polar bears, as well as shark encounters. A notable challenge mentioned here is the need to manage visitor desires for close interactions with marine wildlife and to minimize human impacts on marine wildlife and their environment. The presented research demonstrates that in order to create a public that is knowledgeable and supportive of the intricacies of managing and sustaining an ecotourism activity, as well as one that is more informed about conserving resources in general, we need to consider the varying degrees of specialization in any given tourist (ranging from the ordinary vacation-goer to a seasoned ecotourist) and provide appropriate education and experiences. This section of the book ends on a discussion of the costs and benefits surrounding facilities with captive marine wildlife—places where many people are able to view marine wildlife that otherwise would be inaccessible to them.

Part II (five chapters) points to the potential positive and negative impacts of marine wildlife viewing activities. Case studies include thoughtful discussions of the economic value of the environment, potential impacts on pinnipeds and penguins, as well as the effects of noise on marine mammals (though the latter is missing any reference to whale-watching from aircraft). Also considered here is how ecotourism activities are often individual-, species-, and contextually specific, making interpretation of how an activity might affect individuals and populations of animals challenging. It is tempting to attribute changes in a species' distribution or habitat use to tourism when actually other factors might be more to blame.

Part III (four chapters) presents some legislative and ethical contexts of marine tourism. An important message from this part of the book is that management and education need to go hand-in-hand to balance the use and conservation of the marine environment and ensure sustainability. Lastly, Part IV (five chapters) addresses tourism management as it relates to marine wildlife. This section of the volume includes a review of tourism management strategies for the polar bear in various locales and the impact of the viewing platform (land-based vs boat-based) on tourist satisfaction.

The book is well-constructed and printed on good paper stock, ensuring that it will be a solid, long-lasting addition to any library. This does not mean that the book does not have its flaws such as the literature cited sections, which sometimes do not contain correctly titled journals and present a plethora of Internet links (some of which, due to their ephemeral nature, are already no longer functional). The index to this book would have benefited from greater attention to detail and would have made the book more user friendly, especially for a novice to this topic. There are some minor errors such as a misspelled scientific name for the gray seal (incidentally, also misspelled in the text) and inconsistent handling of terms that appear in the list (e.g., "baleen whales" has a referral to pages within text, while "toothed whales" collectively do not; "permanent threshold shift" appears in the index, while "temporary threshold" does not), and referrals to page numbers are not always accurate. Lastly, the book's cost will probably place it out of reach of many of the researchers and decisionmaking entities

that would most benefit from its use, particularly in developing countries. Those quibbles aside, the organization and content of the book, along with its smooth flow, successfully achieves what Higham and Lück set out to accomplish.

Many people view marine ecosystems as the last great frontier on Earth. However, in loving nature, we may diminish it; and in the act of wanting to see it, tragically, we may destroy it. The open nature of the marine environment brings with it considerable problems of management. Decisionmakers should be environmental stewards and seriously take into consideration sound academic research, basing their decisions (regardless of how unpopular those might be) on those findings. This book should help steer the course in that direction.

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