

**Is ecotourism an appropriate tool to ensure sustainable
Mediterranean monk seal conservation in the Cilician Basin,
Turkey?**

**Evaluation report of the experimental Eco-tourism application
in
Bozyazi - Mersin**

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Review of the Current Monk Seal Conservation Practices in Turkey

Despite the wide spread Mediterranean monk seal sightings and distribution all along the Turkish coast, comprehensive conservation attempts have been confined to Foca, Karaburun and the west coast of Mersin.

Foca and Karaburun

“Foca Pilot Monk Seal Conservation Project” initiated by WWF-International is the first and the most renowned monk seal conservation practice in Turkey. The mayor of the town was one of the first person’s proposing the species’ protection. Coupled with the support of the community, the monk seal turned into a symbol for the town.

The highest level of jurisdictions, which are permitted by the Turkish law, protects the area. Foca is designated as a Specially Protected Area by the Ministry of Environment, Archeological and Natural Asset by the Ministry of Culture, and a Fishery Regulation Zone by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs. There is a strict ban on large-scale fisheries within the coastal zone. A unit composed of the municipality, the local government, fisheries co-operative and an NGO effectively controls illegal activities. Nevertheless, there is nearly no limitation for the artisanal fishery within the protected area. Although fishing with stationary gill nets poses a significant threat to the newborn pups, the fishermen are free to set their nets in front of the breeding sites. Eventually, 2 pups born in the region within last 10 years were entangled in the fishing net; a fisherman rescued one, and unfortunately the other drowned.

Furthermore, being close to one of the largest cities of the country, Izmir, and the international Adnan Menderes airport, the ancient town of Foca (Phokai) has become a favored holiday destination, both by national and international tourism. This has turned the small town and its vicinity into a mass tourism area. During the summer months, which essentially coincide with the monk seal’s whelping season, tour boats freely deluge even the most sensitive parts of the seal habitat. So far, the conservation team working in the area, mainly to elude hostile reactions, refrained from setting limitations for the artisanal fishery and the ill-practiced tourism activities. However, the consequence of this hesitation has been severe; since 1998, no whelping has been observed in the site. Due to similar concerns, the only known breeding cave along the Karaburun Peninsula was left uncontrolled to the free use of bathers and fishermen. When the imminent surrounding was finally closed to fishery, two of the three pups born in the cave had already been trapped and drowned in fishing net.

It is evident that mass tourism and monk seal conservation can never go hand in hand, unless sufficient privacy is provided for the species (Johnson and Lavigne, 2001). The reactions against the restrictions by the local people, who have so far freely exploited the resources within their surroundings, are inevitable. The local people can hardly devote a part of their livelihood for the sake of the monk seal, especially in a country with a deprived economy. On the other hand, unless human activities can be restricted and regulated in these sensitive seal habitats, it will eventually ensure the loss of the remaining monk seals in the region, as already experienced along the Aegean coast of Turkey.

Kizilliman Marine Protected Area, Bozyazi - Mersin

The situation in west of Mersin (the Cilician coast) is different in many aspects when compared to the other areas where monk seal conservation projects are effectively running in Turkey. In the Cilician, scientific research has shown that the most significant problem facing the seals is over-exploitation, and thus, depletion of the fish stocks. Therefore, since 1999 a very large area (16x12 nautical miles) has been unhesitatingly banned to large-scale fishery. Furthermore, a network of small no-fish-zones was set in front of the breeding caves. 75 km coastal band was also set as 1st degree natural asset for terrestrial habitat protection, including the surrounding of some of these caves.

Shortly after the creation of Kizilliman Marine Protected Area (MPA) the coastal fish stocks signaled a very fast recovery. In the absence of a large-scale fishery, the landing of the artisanal fishermen has also started to increase (Gucu and Erkan, 2001). Today, the artisanal fishermen of the region are aware that the presence of monk seals is a guarantee for the exclusion of large-scale fishing boats from the fishing grounds, in turn, securing the future of their livelihood. Another promising sign is that, within the last two years, breeding rate of the Cilician monk seal colony has slightly increased (Orek et al., 2002). Consequently, the two former opponents of the marine ecosystem who competed for the same resource are now becoming allied within the MPA. Hence, one of the major aims of the ongoing conservation project (TUR-31/TUR-00-01: Ecological and socio-

economical significance of small marine protected areas) sponsored by the United Nations Development Program, which was to create a sense of ownership for the MPA, especially by the local artisanal fishermen, has been partially fulfilled. However, the income of a local fisherman is still below the welfare limit. Although, research results reveal an increase in the quality and quantity of fish within the No-Fish-Zones in and around the critical breeding habitat, these dense fish concentrations, unless economically utilized, will eventually lure the fishermen. This evident potential risk undermines the sustainability of the sense of ownership. Foreseeing the consequences, it is of utmost importance to address the economic losses of the local people and their families created by these regulations, coupled with over fishing, and research supplementary/alternative sustainable solutions to create direct/sufficient economic benefits to compensate for their loss; thus, avoid future pressure on the recovering ecosystem.

The quest for a sustainable solution: Why Ecotourism?

Many examples around the globe prove that if local people could gain sufficiently from the sustainable use of, in our case the MPA, they would be less likely to exploit the already over fished ecosystem and they would be more likely to protect their asset. In monk seal conservation, in order to involve the local people as a constructive partner and as of one generating sufficient economic revenues from the protection practices, there are only few alternatives that can be offered. One is ecotourism, in which, local communities benefit from nature conservation throughout the world. It is proven that in most of the fragile ecosystems, such as that of the Galapagos, well-run ecotourism is the only option, the only foreign exchange earning activity that does not lead to irreparable damage. In other instances, it is clearly more profitable than the alternative economic activities: for example a study of game farming in Kenya found that wildlife tourism was fifty times more lucrative than cattle grazing, a lion is calculated to be worth 575 000\$ and a single free flying macaw in Peru is estimated to be as much as 4700\$ per year in tourism dollars. In St. Lucia, South Africa ecotourism is calculated to have the potential to provide more jobs for a longer period of time without destroying the sand dunes and estuary. (Honey, 1999) "The Sea Lion Festival" in Nanaimo, generated 200 000\$ in revenue in 1992. (Patterson, 1997)

What is "Ecotourism" for us?

Over the past two decades, ecotourism activities have been expanding rapidly worldwide and further growth is expected in the future. The International Ecotourism Society (TIES), an international non-profit organization defines ecotourism as "responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and sustains the well-being of local people."
(www.ecotourism.org)

Although still there is little consensus about its meaning, we adopted the definition given by the World Tourism Organisation (WTO) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). General characteristics of the definition are summarized in WTO-UNEP CONCEPT PAPER - INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF ECOTOURISM 2002 (www.world-tourism.org) as follows:

1. All nature-based forms of tourism in which the main motivation of the tourists is the observation and appreciation of nature as well as the traditional cultures prevailing in natural areas
2. It contains educational and interpretation features
3. It is generally, but not exclusively organized for small groups by specialized and small, locally owned businesses. Foreign operators of varying sizes also organize, operate and/or market ecotourism tours, generally for small groups.
4. It minimizes negative impacts upon the natural and socio-cultural environment
5. It supports the protection of natural areas by
 - generating economic benefits for host communities, organizations and authorities managing natural areas with conservation purposes,
 - providing alternative employment and income opportunities for local communities,
 - increasing awareness towards the conservation of natural and cultural assets, both among locals and tourists.

Over the years, it has also become clear that some concerns still need to be wholly addressed in ecotourism, such as: land tenure and control of the ecotourism development process by host communities; efficiency and fairness of the current concept of protected areas for protection of biological and cultural diversity; the need for additional precautions and monitoring when operating in especially sensitive areas; and indigenous and traditional rights in areas suitable for ecotourism development.

Kizilliman and Ecotourism:

In the above context and definitions, and by pre-examination of the available natural / scenic / historical / accommodation resources in and near the critically endangered Mediterranean monk seal habitat, a trial attempt of ecotourism trip has been planned and implemented in the Kizilliman marine protected area. The main aims were:

- to examine ecotourism as a viable sustainable income option for the local community, hence, enhance the sense of ownership for the marine protected area as an asset, and
- to examine its applicability to the area as a potential conservation tool with minimum impacts and manageability.

Phase 1: Research and planning

Ecotourism ventures, in comparison with conventional tourism operations, face unique challenges. The ecotourism ethic requires adherence to stringent environmental standards therefore, obliges additional planning. Marketing an ecotourism product differs from that of conventional tourism products. The needs of ecotourists are greater in the areas of interpretation, variety and quality of experience, and group size. Daily operations present special difficulties. Maintaining the highly trained and diverse workforce requires sound human resource management. Hence, a demanding client base, a high level of commitment to conservation, and often, the need to operate in remote locations, require extra effort (Patterson, 1997).

Evidently, planning is essential for determining the ecotourism potential of an area and will lay the groundwork necessary to make proper decisions before starting in a venture. Also, it will help identify possible negative impacts in time to mitigate them. In our trial project, we followed the strategic planning and development strategy proposed by Carol Patterson, in “the Business of Ecotourism”, 1997.

A preliminary research was carried out in the protected monk seal habitat, to establish a view of the local community life style and environmental/other attitudes, current tourism practices, a resource inventory (natural/scenic/historic attractions, accommodation, catering, etc), relevant government regulations and possible risks/threats/negative impacts.

Setting (Where to base the operation?)

The monk seal habitat in the Cilician basin covers a long coastal stretch extending from Tasucu to Gazipasa and comprises 5 provinces, namely Silifke, Aydinçik, Bozyazi, Anamur and Gazipasa. Amongst them Aydinçik and Bozyazi are the two towns in the periphery of the Marine Protected Area.

Aydinçik (Kelenderis), being closer to Tasucu – Silifke (85km) and international Adana airport (250 km), and being an ancient town of commerce since 2000 BC, is an established and accessible town. It has a population of 8760 people. Major income is from agriculture and artisanal fishing. Furthermore, tourism is encouraged and investors are welcomed. Already for sometime, adventurous cavers and wreck divers, mainly by the members of student clubs from the Middle Eastern Technical University, have preferred this site as a good holiday destination. In the town there is also a School of Higher Education in Tourism, with 200 students. Due to these characteristics, the town could be more inclined to exploit tourism opportunities. Therefore, to reduce the risk of misinterpretation/exploitation of the aims of ecotourism and this trial trip, and to reduce the risks in its future management, the town was not used for accommodation purposes, but used on a daily excursion basis.

Bozyazi, on the other hand, with a much recent history of settlement and its remoteness, is a more conservative town. After preliminary research and further a strategic planning process described below, Bozyazi was selected as the base site.

Research on traditional lifestyles and attitudes in the vicinity of Bozyazi

Face-to-face interviews were carried out with community leaders of 6 coastal villages (and their nuclear families). The interviews elicited information on the general demographics and social structure of the locality, past and present livelihoods, environmental awareness and attitude towards the protected area, use of nature within the protected site and future projections on economic development.

The local community has a pastoralist background. They are the descendents of “Yoruk” nomads. They have settled and started agriculture around the 1920 –30s in the area.

Today, most of the economy depends largely on the yield from greenhouses, in which they cultivate bananas where water is ample, or else, vegetables. This is the main source of income for nearly all the local population (26,300) living in the periphery of the protected site. The sea, generally, is not seen as part of their culture and is traditionally foreign to them. Starting from May until September, after the yield from greenhouses is sold, the local population migrates to the ancestral sites in the highlands in the Taurus Mountains. There they continue subsistence farming, with few animals, fruit trees, and vegetables.

When questioned, majority stated that nature protection does not affect their lives; nonetheless it is to their benefit. For those who are not fishermen, the terrestrial part of the protected area only provides firewood, and a few seasonal products such as mushrooms and herbs. One family has goats grazing in a small area during winter and still continues to live according to nomadic traditions. Picnics and sport fishing by the coast in Kizilliman are also weekend leisurely activities preferred by a few locals. The community leaders, Gendarme and forestry department controls these activities as well as entry into the area.

In their view, the main factors stunting local economic growth and future development are: limited amount of irrigation water and suitable land for further cultivation. When questioned about how they view the future of the area, most did not welcome tourism as a development option. So far, the type of tourism experienced in the area is in the form of secondary housing sites. The local people, even those who sold their property to the investors, have been denied access to these areas. Social status conflicts between the owners of the secondary houses and the locals grew antipathy against “tourists/outsideers”. Furthermore, the economic gain from tourism is low, and except a few market owners and restaurants the community does not benefit significantly. The preferred line of business for the future involved investments, such as a vegetable processing factory, where they can process their yield from the green houses, and where the women could also be employed.

Fishermen are few (60 fishermen with 38 small fishing boats and 2 trawls). Amongst them only 26 solely depend on the sea for a livelihood while the rest also possess land for a greenhouse. The local fisherman families (both artisanal and trawlers) have been involved since year 1994 in the conservation project and are an integral part of the ongoing ecosystem recovery research. Therefore, the fishermen are thought to be the target group who could benefit most from this potential trial ecotourism trip.

Review of Local Business Capabilities: Existing tourism facilities, accommodation, etc. in Bozyazi

The region is not a preferred destination by tourists primarily due to remoteness and difficulties in transportation. Currently, the major type of tourism is in the form of secondary housing, commonly owned by average families with a relatively low income. Tourism season is restricted to a few summer months, between June and September with a peak between 15th of July and 15th of August.

Only very few local families stay near the coast and benefit from tourism during the summer months. Two families have small authentic pensions, and provide accommodation as well as catering.

One local pension owner attempted to promote nature tourism in the area between the years 1990-1995. The family restored an authentic village house in the mountains and planned to operate between Bozyazi and the Taurus mountains, offering nature tours and traditional life style experiences as their products. A French magazine, *Peuples Du Monde – Voyages insolites et Culturels*, advertised the operation in full detail. However, the business failed due to lack of interest.

Four hotels exist with a total bedding capacity of 470. However, they operate below their capacity. Off-season only two can afford to stay open. The owners are from the area, and are willing to promote conference or business type tourism.

Therefore, although investments exist, due to intrinsic factors, such as remoteness and lack of quality and number of facilities, tourism is limited, whether it is nature tourism or leisurely tourism. People who have attempted to promote larger numbers of tourists in the past have failed.

Interviews with visitors:

International:

A questionnaire survey was carried out with 45 foreign tourists/ families visiting the area during 1996-1997. The questions, besides visitor profiles, such as nationality, age, level of education and occupation, were aiming to elicit information on the incentives of travel and the level of environmental awareness. The results showed that majority were German visitors traveling on package tours. Most were aware that the area was a monk seal habitat. When asked, "if given the opportunity would you be willing to enter a cave" all refused and stated that under any circumstances they would not disturb the caves or the habitat of the endangered Mediterranean monk seal.

National:

National tourists, who own summerhouses, although their numbers are declining each year, return to Bozyazi in July and August. Over the past 8 years, throughout the duration of the project, the residents have been well informed about the monk seal project, Kizilliman marine protected area, the threats to monk seal survival, the laws that protect them and the penalties for disturbing them, through slide shows and conferences. Numerous educational, awareness raising activities have been carried out on site about the ecosystem as a whole, including activities such as beach cleaning, festivities with competitions and awards.

Compared with other tourist destinations in the country, recreational activities such as scuba diving, speed boats, water skiing, sailing, surfing, etc. mostly are non existing or negligible. Tour boats are not present. Most of the guests use private beaches in front of their summerhouses for sun and sea relaxation. There is not dispersal.

Legal regulations and restrictions:

According to IMMO's safety regulations, a boat licensed for fishery cannot be used for tourism purposes. This regulation provides an efficient legislative instrument to limit uncontrolled development of tourism and related activities. For research purposes, special permission from the coast guard was obtained for those fishing boats, which would be involved in the trial ecotourism application. The aims of the activity were explained in detail to the enforcement body. The permission was provided solely for this circumstance, and further uncontrolled and unauthorized repetitions of similar endeavors were made not possible.

Turkish law also prohibits entrance to the seal caves. By this prohibition, the seals and the most sensitive breeding habitats are secured against human disturbance.

Review of products: resource inventory and nature almanac

Keeping in mind that the ultimate aim of the trial is to secure the survival of the critically endangered monk seal and its habitat, and in order not to increase the existing human pressure on the species, more diverse resources were investigated and an inventory of alternative ecotourism products was prepared. Therefore, the species was used more as a symbol rather than the product itself, and its habitat, other wildlife, the people, archaeology and the protected area as a whole was considered.

The resource inventory (and numbers) included natural/scenic attractions (bird watching sites, nature trails, rivers, plants, etc.), historical attractions (museums, indigenous sites), cultural/social attractions (local bazaars, festivals, traditional events), accommodation, restaurants (casual, ethnic, specialty, etc), and transportation. The inventory would aid in defining and diversifying the products that can be offered, and dispersing the activities, thus, minimizing the impacts of tourists on a single area, for example the seal observation points. Also, it elicited the range of other environmental settings in the area and questioned if they were sufficient in terms of fulfilling the aims of the project.

A Kizilliman nature almanac covering one-year period was prepared and benefited in defining specific species that are also rare or endangered. Additionally, a poster was produced to highlight some of the wonders of the site as a souvenir.

The activities of the ongoing conservation project, such as habitat monitoring, were resources we planned to use as part of the attraction.

Market research

Since our aim was not to start a business in ecotourism, but rather, was to examine the outcomes of its application and future possibility as part of the main project, with a dedicated group of people, marketing was not of primary concern and part of this research.

Phase 2: Decision making depending on the results:

To endeavor any ecotourism operation, the business needs to be feasible and viable. The findings of the above preliminary research suggest that, to venture in a business by a tour operator that involves a narrow niche,

- such as one offering only natural attractions, in a remote area with limited quality facilities, where even cheap sea/sun mass tourism couldn't sustain, with negligible interest from the locals in tourism;
- building and marketing the tours depending on a single marine animal species that is critically endangered and extremely rare to sight even by the experts,
- which is known by all the community members to be under protection by law, the habitat regularly patrolled by the Gendarme and the Coast guard, with penalties reaching imprisonment;
- under investigation by researchers of an ongoing conservation project since 1994, with additional terrestrial and marine habitat protection over a 16 x 12 miles coastal sea, with a regulated fishery;
- and furthermore, marketing it to a segment of an ecotourist group whose incentives are highly specific, who are willing to travel in poor conditions, and pay reasonable amounts of money,

the business must involve in extreme amounts of determination and expertise in the natural environment as well as in the tourism industry, good marketing research, background information, strategic planning; involves qualified personnel who can implement the objectives of the business; and involves high risks due to legal restrictions and big investments to organize/implement/ and maintain.

It seems highly unlikely that many agencies could be willing to confront all the above risks and bring tours to the area. Even if there were agencies interested, to expect a tourist boom following one example, and with no guarantee to sight any monk seal, would be overestimating the potential in Bozyazi. Perhaps, the risk exists in other monk seal habitats with fewer restrictions, and where mass tourism is already in operation.

We believe all the above disadvantages to a tour company could be used to our advantage in Bozyazi and Kizilliman marine protected area.

Carrying Capacity

Carrying Capacity, which is the number of visitors a protected area can sustainably accommodate over the long haul, and the question of how to measure it are globally debated issues. Although, efforts have been made to limit visitor numbers in many places, including the Galapagos and Costa Rica's Manuel Antonio National Park and Monteverde Cloud Forest Reserve, in recent years many scientists have come to realize that the very concept of setting fixed visitor numbers is flawed. As scientist and former president of the Charles Darwin Foundation argues, "pure numbers are not the answer". MacFarland says that park officials and scientists in the United States, Canada, Australia and South Africa "have all been independently found the same thing: that 90 % of visitor management is not controlling numbers *per se*, it's controlling what behaviours, activities, and equipment you allow and the time of the day or time of the year you allow them in a particular place". They note that a handful of unruly tourists can do far more damage to a park than would large numbers of environmentally sensitive and carefully managed ecotourists. (Honey, 1999)

In our attempt, the calculation of the carrying capacity was based on our previous experience during the 9-year data collection on monk seal behavior (working also with volunteers from Green Volunteers Network). The planned activities that will be offered to the visitors were listed and ranked according to the level of potential disturbance on the seal. The activities with very high risk of disturbance, such as seal watching in the near vicinity of sensitive breeding sites, were disregarded. For each activity, again depending on field experiences, maximum number of people that will be allowed to participate was presumed (Annex 1). Since these estimates

are empiric, and their accuracy will be subjected to further test, they were kept intentionally few. In order to provide fair participation to each activity, replicability of each activity in a certain time were then assessed. For instance, in case of seal watching at cave "Charlie's", maximum number of people allowed is only 2. However giving each visitor a 5 minutes, this activity can be repeated 10 times within an hour, which is the standard observation duration applied so far by the research team without any sign of disturbance.

Three separate land based proximal vantage points were selected as seal watching sites that can be used conveniently for this activity. Each point was capable of hiding 4 people maximum without any disturbance to the seals and furthermore, providing a higher chance of sighting. This was the criteria and limiting factor used in deciding the optimum visitor numbers. Land based sites were chosen since it is almost impossible to sight a seal from the sea in a boat. Therefore, in addition to the above limits, having in mind the availability of two guides/visitor management and generating reasonable amount of revenues, ten people was the manageable number we decided to take on the trip.

Timing

First season, March/April/May and second season, September/October/November, were selected as the best months to visit the Cilician monk seal habitat. The reasons behind were mainly aimed at minimizing the pressure on the monk seals and

- include botanical and other wildlife, such as avifauna, attractions and better divert the activities with increased choices,
- increase the chances of seal sightings since the months coincide with the seasons when the seals can be observed in groups outside the caves,
- when the weather conditions are optimal,
- and when it is off-season for other types of tourism in the Cilician Basin.

Summary of guidelines, which were followed where applicable in the preparation of the trip ((The International Ecotourism Society, North Bennington Vermont, USA. Copyright 1993 www.eco-tour.org) – for complete guidelines see Annex 2.

Ecotourism guidelines for nature tour operators, published by The International Ecotourism Society, were reviewed in the preparation of the trip. The guidelines were prepared from reviews and evaluations of survey responses from 39 outbound tour operators in the United States, 40 consumers interested in ecotourism, 68 World Congress on Adventure Travel and Ecotourism participants, 18 travel agents and inbound tour operators working in Costa Rica, and 15 travel administrators from universities and major non-profit organizations in the United States. The summary is as follows:

A) Predeparture Programs: Visitor Information And Education Guidelines to prepare travelers to minimize their negative impacts while visiting sensitive environments and cultures before departure
Prepare travelers for each encounter with local cultures and with native animals and plants.
Minimize visitor impacts on the environment by offering literature, briefings, leading by example, and taking corrective actions.

B) Guiding Programs: Prevention Of Cultural Impacts

- Minimize traveler impacts on local cultures by offering literature, briefings, leading by example, and taking corrective actions.
- Use adequate leadership, and maintain small enough groups to ensure minimum group impact on destinations. Avoid areas that are under-managed and over-visited.
- Ensure managers, staff and contract employees know and participate in all aspects of company policy to prevent impacts on the environment and local cultures.
- Give managers, staff and contract employees access to programs that will upgrade their ability to communicate with and manage clients in sensitive natural and cultural settings.
- Be a contributor to the conservation of the regions being visited.
- Provide competitive, local employment in all aspects of business operations.
- Offer site-sensitive accommodations that are not wasteful of local resources or destructive to the environment that provide ample opportunity for learning about the environment and sensitive interchange with local communities.

C) Guiding programs: Prevention of environmental impacts:

- Help visitors to minimize their negative impacts by enhancing their understanding of the fragility of the environment.
- Minimize visitor impacts on the environment by offering literature, briefings, leading by example, and taking corrective actions.
- Company guides should pursue the following procedures:
- Provide a set of environmental guidelines, created by the company, specific to the area being visited.
- Obtain and distribute available guidelines for each natural area visited.
- Allow protected area staff to introduce guidelines if possible.
- Brief visitors on proper behavior - on trails, in camp sites, around wild animals, around fragile plants - and with trash, with human waste, with fires, and with soaps.
- Advise all travelers on the level of difficulty of each excursion to prevent damage to the environment caused by lack of experience or ability to maneuver in unfamiliar terrain.
- Discourage unrealistic expectations of observing rare wildlife and plants by interpreting all aspects of the ecosystem.
- Advise against collecting souvenirs from natural areas, such as feathers, bones & shells, unless it is specifically condoned by local authorities.
- Advise against purchasing specific crafts that are produced from threatened natural resources.

Visitor Benefits: Learns how to travel without leaving footprints. Gains a greater understanding of travel's impact on the environment. Is informed of the rules and regulations of natural areas and the need to follow them.

Phase 3: Implementation, outcomes and recommendations

Within the main framework of the conservation and monitoring project, we wanted to take the opportunity to launch a trial trip, with a special group of people whose incentive primarily was to support the conservation of the monk seal. By doing so, we would be able to answer the earlier mentioned objectives of the potential ecotourism application in Kizilliman (see Phase 1) as a sustainable option, as well as:

- What is a manageable size?
- What is the carrying capacity of the area?
- Were the guests satisfied with the tour?
- What are the weaknesses, strengths, threats in, for example legal regulations, and others parameters?
- Were the community involvement and economic benefits satisfactory or need to be improved?
- How much of the revenue returned to the conservation of the area and was it reasonable?
- Is ecotourism an option suitable for the area or should we venture into other sustainable solutions?

Visitors and timing

The conservation project team acted on demand from the Gruppo Foca Monaca and took the opportunity to execute the considered experimental trip. In total eight enthusiasts, lead by Dr. Luigi Guarrera, who is one of the initiators of the ongoing Cilician seal conservation project, was to be our participators.

The experimental trip took place between 25 October and 3 November 2002; effective 9 days.

Pre-departure programs:

During the correspondence period, detailed pre-trip information was provided to aim at preparing our guests to minimize their negative impacts while visiting the sensitive environment and culture before departure, and covered:

- the itinerary of the journey (see Annex 3),
- what equipment and clothing is necessary for a safe and enjoyable nature experience, codes of conduct (see Annex 4), and
- information on the Cilician monk seal colony (see Annex 4),
- the relevant literature on the ongoing conservation project (see Abstract in Annex 5),
- what to expect and not to expect during wildlife viewing. Here, it was clearly highlighted that seal sighting was not guaranteed and the main aim was to learn / experience the seal habitat and contribute to its conservation.

Also before the arrival of our guests, during the development phase, project members who would be executing the trip prepared guidelines to follow

- on how to give briefings on each site,
- the content of the briefings foreseeing and aiming to minimize environmental/cultural impacts and,
- distribution of responsibility in the areas which will be visited.

Community involvement

Community involvement was encouraged and established as much as possible. The locals who were keen to participate were organized prior to the trip and were informed in detail about the aims of the project and on ecotourism.

The main lines of contribution were:

- **Local accommodation.** A locally owned hotel and a family owned pension was used.
- **Transport.** A minibus and a driver were hired throughout the journey from the local Bozyazi driver's co-operation for all land journeys. In addition, local artisanal fishing boats and their captains who were in most cases the owner of the boat, were hired for all sea journeys.
- **Catering.** Three families wanted to be involved in catering and created their own menus of local dishes. Special nights were organized to taste a variety of choices in home cooking. On one occasion fish was purchased from the local fisheries co-operation. Other meals were set at several restaurants, which also served authentic dishes and kebabs. The hotel was used only for breakfasts.
- Purchase of local herbs, artifacts, and crafts from local markets, in Anamur and Bozyazi.

Local guides. Two local guides escorted the guests during the visit to Mirrored Lake Cave in Aydincik.

The local government authorities such as the Municipality, gendarme, and the coast guard were informed, both prior and during the trip, especially for sea trips. Before each departure, the relevant authority was informed and asked for permission. To have visitors seemed to encourage their patrolling activities.

Sites visited

Our guests visited the Mediterranean office in Bozyazi working for the protection of the monk seal. Here, a slide show took place, introducing the identified seals of the Cilician Basin, the methods we use in research and monitoring, and general behavioral and biological findings were discussed.

Boat trips into the monk seal habitat were to areas regularly used by the fishermen. These were educational activities to learn about the coastal structure, marine and other life, threats, the project, etc.

The monitoring part of the ongoing conservation project was also one of the attractions. On two occasions, while the research team did regular cave checks, our guests waited in a nearby beach to hear the results and experience the excitement. Entering the caves is forbidden by law, so no guests were allowed to join in during the research.

Seal observations were carried out only from land. The vantage points are at a walking distance to Bozyazi, within the residential area boundaries; therefore, farmers and herdsmen regularly use these areas. The groups arrived in these points before sunrise and sunset on the first half of the trip and hid behind rocks and bushes for two to three hours.

Archaeological sites within the coastal belt were selected, from where previous seal sightings have been recorded. Therefore, while enjoying history our guests would also have a chance to observe any possible seals in the area. Tisan / Aphrodisias, Anamurium and Mamure castle were amongst these sites.

One coastal cave in Aydincik, the Mirrored lake cave (Aynali Gol Magarasi) was visited. This cave can only be reached from the sea. The boat journey is 1 hour from the sea and the cave is reached after a climb of 50 meters into the steep rock face. Since it is locked, to enter it, permission is necessary from the municipality and two local guides are hired.

The river Dragon was the only inland activity, where a forest hike and a picnic took place.

Drawbacks encountered, lessons learned and recommended solutions:

During the trip all went as planned except a few cases of visitor management problems, and misguidance in some activities.

During the monk seal observations:

The group of 8 guests was divided into two separate groups for the land-based seal watching operations, which would take place from set vantage points. However, during one of the first operations, one group sighted a seal and the other couldn't. This uneven observation resulted in

- a slight disappointment, and an increased desire from the unfortunate group to observe a seal;
- the point where the seal was sighted, misleadingly, to be attributed as a better site for observation, despite the fact that both were equally advantageous points; and
- an increased wish from the research team who were guiding the affairs to be able show a seal next time to all the guests.

Also, during a boat journey to the archaeological site of Tisan / Aphrodisias, the boat slowed down in front of an abandoned seal cave to describe its characteristics and inside a Black Adult Male appeared to all our surprise. The boat owner recognized the animal and claimed that he always followed his boat after the days catch.

To avoid such undesirable situations, briefings need to be improved and focus more on practical applications, such as providing step-by-step and clear instructions on behaviour in expected/unexpected situations during monk seal observations.

It is clear that even once categorized abandoned caves must be avoided or approached with greater caution, since over time they may be used again.

During the Hikes:

In events involving hikes, some of the paths were difficult to penetrate due to thorn bushes and some were difficult climbs. The group at times had to split and wait. To avoid such mismanagement and discomfort, pre-evaluation of the paths and depending on the difficulty, more detailed instructions on clothing and equipment are necessary. Also, depending on the guest profiles, other choices of attractions should be made available.

Visiting Special features:

In events involving visits to extraordinary natural phenomena, such as the Mirrored Lake Cave, more detailed information on the formation, the time required for descent and ascent, etc. must be provided and attention to the guests special abilities/disabilities, such claustrophobia, must be addressed during the briefings, prior to entering a cave.

Schedule:

Depending on the weather conditions the sequence of activities, especially those involving long boat journeys, sometimes needed to be arranged. This did not cause discomfort, as long as it was made clear before departure.

Additional areas that need strengthening

1. Local guides who are interested in the activities must be trained, to encourage community involvement and the sense of ownership. The training must be of high quality to secure proper implementation, in managing and minimizing visitor impacts on wildlife, environment and culture. Also, by doing so, the workforce will be diversified and strengthened.
2. Briefings need to be improved, especially on field practices, describing step-by-step instructions.
3. A general species checklist, as requested by our guests, to use throughout the journey could be prepared and distributed as a handout.

4. Along with the general itinerary for a single journey, more alternative plans need to be planned in case of bad weather, adjustments depending on guest profiles, etc. In addition, to increase the variety seemed necessary to elevate the quality of experience during the trip, rather than narrowing it to a single objective to sight a seal. This after a few days felt routine. Few suggestions that emerged during the trip for future activities were, to spend a night on board, fishing with the artisanal fisherman and experience their life style to visit Goksu Delta, a specially protected area, which is one of the ornithologically most important wetlands of the eastern Mediterranean.

5. The artisanal fishing boats may be equipped with rigid stairs for swimming, climbing up or down on to a beach, etc.

6. The bus used for the long journey from the airport to Bozyazi may be one with more space and air conditioning, if available.

Revenues generated by the local community

The breakdown of the revenue returned to the local people is given below.

Type	# involved	Days	Σ Revenue (Euros)
Accommodation	2 hotels	8	1 500
Transport	1 minibus	10	750
Fishermen	5 fishermen	5	750
Catering	7 restaurants	9	750
Shopping stores:	5 stores	-	500

The tour took place in off-season when the trading within the town was reduced significantly. Therefore, extra earnings were quite important for the locals. For example, statistics show that artisanal fishermen of the region catch 10 kg of fish daily on average, which is, approximately equals to 50 Milyon TL (~ 30 Euros). During the tour each fishermen earned 150 Euros daily, which is almost 5 times the amount earned daily from fishing. The boat trips were at noontime, so that normal fishing activity of the boat owner was not prevented. Moreover, due to remoteness of the region, fish prices go sharply down during off-season, significantly influencing the daily income of the fishermen. Consequently, fishermen who are involved in the tour found their participation economically beneficial.

A part of the total budget was the donation of each visitor to the project and this amount was returned to conservation.

Conclusions

The experimental ecotourism trip in and near the critically endangered Mediterranean monk seal habitat, Kizilliman marine protected area, was implemented between 25 October and 3 November. The main aims were to examine ecotourism as a viable sustainable income option for the local community, hence, enhance the sense of ownership for the marine protected area as an asset, and to examine its applicability to the area as a potential conservation tool with minimum impacts and manageability.

Visitor numbers were fixed to maximum ten people for a single journey, which proved manageable and to be within the carrying capacity.

The trip was satisfactory for all parties involved. Our guests enjoyed the trip as well as the sense of being part of a conservation project and contributing to the survival of the monk seal. The locals involved in the operation were empowered by the enjoyment and enthusiasm of our guests in the natural habitat, wildlife, its protection and local lifestyles. Furthermore, they gained economically from the protection of the marine habitat. All wanted to be involved again. The trip was both enjoyable and educational for the conservation team. Sufficient revenue was generated that returned back to the conservation project, which is another crucial point for the continuation of the conservation activities carried out in the area. It was also apparent that the visits encouraged the local authorities to take better care of the sites, especially concerning litter and patrolling of illegal activities.

However, we have not been underestimating the risks, not only for the survival of the monk seal but for all the wildlife, and are not in favor of opening the protected area to an international ecotourism market, before the

necessary infrastructure is secured. Especially to offer it as an additional income for the local people, the trips have to be made more than once a year. It is clear that even with such a small group of dedicated and environmentally sensitive people, on a single trip, visitor management is significantly important and pressure may arise to observe a monk seal, despite preconditioning that it is not guaranteed. Furthermore, reducing the environmental/cultural impacts to a minimum is largely at the hands of the field guides. In this case, they were expert marine and conservation biologists, and part of the ongoing conservation project. It might be a different matter with a foreign tourism agency and other guides with different aims, perhaps with more economic incentives.

It is clear that tourism development, regardless of its type, is a hope for the economic deficit Turkey faces today, and it is promoted with an increasing rate. Therefore, the Ministry of Tourism is one of the most powerful members in the government. Although, tourism in the Cilician coast has not yet been developed into one serving masses, the region is only a 100 km away from one the major and most popular holiday destinations, Alanya. As soon as the planned Antalya-Mersin highway is accomplished, the cleanness of the untouched nature will inevitably attract tourism investors, so far, without any restrictions on the type of development. There is no current legislative way to protect the monk seal against the impact of expanding practices of mass tourism, as clearly being experienced in Foca, and which is at the doorstep of the Cilician monk seal habitat. On the other hand, ecotourism is the fastest growing segment of the tourism industry worldwide and is proven on many occasions to minimize the undesired impacts of tourism on sensitive habitats/species/cultures; rather, it is used as a conservation tool. Foreseeing the future of the Cilician, it would be advisable to work on establishing ecotourism, hasten the preparation of the relevant legislation and restrict tourism development in the area to this low impact type, before mass/nature/adventure, etc tourism arrives.

It is also certain that there will be increasing demand and pressure on the government to pursue and promote ecotourism applications in the very near future in such pristine environments. For instance, Turkey is one of the 182 Governments, which adopted Agenda 21 in the Earth Summit, 1992 and its implementation requires the full integration of sustainable development in the tourism industry in order to ensure that travel and tourism provide a source of income for many people; that travel and tourism contribute to the conservation, protection and restoration of the Earth's ecosystem; that international trade in travel and tourism services takes place on a sustainable basis; and that environmental protection is an integral part of tourism development. Moreover, on a recent Final report of Qubec Ecotourism summit in 2002, it was reported that the Mediterranean receives some of the largest volumes of tourist arrivals in the world, concentrated on the coastal belt, which is an area of rich biodiversity and also immense cultural resources. The report from the conference in Greece identified the opportunity for ecotourism in the coastal hinterland and more remote inland areas, as a way of improving the image of Mediterranean destinations, diversifying the offer, reducing seasonality and bringing economic benefits to areas suffering depopulation. Careful planning will be essential.

With this view in mind, we suggest that if small groups up to ten people, on a regular basis in off-season, could continue to visit the Kizilliman MPA area within the organization and supervision of the ongoing conservation project, this might provide a working example for the government and managers of protected areas to prepare and make legal adjustments for an ecotourism infrastructure for the near future. Legal definitions and status of Marine Protected Areas, as well as, legislations for ecotourism could be developed simultaneously, and the process could be fastened by such a working example. To start the process, after the completion of the trial trip in the Cilician MPA, a letter of gratitude for the current conservation efforts in the visited sites, with emphasis on ecotourism definitions, its correct application and the way for the future was posted to the relevant Ministries, and the Coast Guard Headquarter.

Next step:

Over the 9 years of research in the Cilician, it has become clear that the local community has, for the most part, misinterpreted the success and the following international financial support for the conservation of the Mediterranean monk seal and "Ecological and socio-economical significance of small marine protected areas" projects. Often, the project members are viewed as the only economic benefactors, and the seals, the conservation efforts only a *façade* to secure their income. While the farmers, greenhouse owners, fishermen are living in relatively primitive conditions with low incomes, remote infrared camera systems with satellite dishes, computers, offices, etc. are established in their orchards, with little or no economic revenues returning to them. In the past, there were attempts to encourage their involvement in the project by providing them with raincoats, cellular phones to report illegal activities, by integrating the fishermen in data collecting and monitoring activities etc. But, these attempts were not sufficient enough to give them a sense of ownership neither for the project nor for the MPA.

Many examples around the globe prove that if local people gain sufficiently from the sustainable use of protected areas, they see it more as an asset and protect it. Therefore, in the coming up section of the second trial ecotourism trip, the primary objective will be to enhance, to secure and to research areas where more involvement of the local community in both planning and implementation phases could be integrated and that they do benefit economically. Initially, the main area we will focus on building local capacity, and discover and train those who are interested in the ecotourism activities as qualified field guides. The training will involve information on the ethics of ecotourism and codes of conduct, the MPA, variety of natural resources, interpretation and briefings, quality service, etc in order to secure the proper implementation and visitor management, minimizing impacts on wildlife, environment and culture. Also, by doing so, the workforce will be diversified and strengthened. In later stages, if adequate involvement is present, a local co-operative may be formed to ensure careful consultation and participation of all stakeholders in planning and policy development processes with direct benefits.

The local people of the area are the main stakeholders. It is important for the success of the sustainability of the conservation project and the survival of the critically endangered Mediterranean monk seal, that they feel an integral part. We hope that ecotourism will be the effective tool to ultimately reach that point where the habitat will accommodate both the monk seal and its human populace in peace.

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Annex 1 – Table used to assess maximum group size. Planned activities, Risk levels (**VH** = Very High, **H** = High, **M** = Medium, **L** = Low, **VL** = Very Low, **N** = Negligible) and replicability of each activity in a day.

Activities WITH disturbance risk				Activities WITHOUT disturbance risk
Seal watching from	Risk	Max #	Repl.	A night time moon lit hike to Kizilliman
Cave “Charlie's”	H	2	10	
Observation point	M	4	3	
Mamure Kalesi	N	-	-	
<i>Anamurium</i>	N	-	-	
Ovacik	L	10	2	
Boat trips to				Anamur’s traditional market place
Kizilliman Marine Protected Area	L	-	-	
Aydincik	L	-	-	
Ovacik	L	-	-	
Mellec	L	-	-	
Line fishing	N	-	-	
Bird watching Kestrel Elanora’s Falcon.	L	10	2	Climbing to the Softa Kalesi
Swimming and snorkeling	L	10	2	Journey to the Dragon River
Participation to research surveys				A night time boat trip to Kizilliman.
Cave surveys - by the project team member only	L	10	-	
Visit breeding caves of the seals - by the project team member only	L	10	-	
Abandoned monk seal cave will be visited	VL	-	-	Boat trip seal sighting trip to some important monk seal habitats.
Picnic on the beach.	VL	-	-	Lunch will be held near the archaeological site of Tisan, Aphrodisias.
Seal watching around breeding caves	VH	no	-	Mirrored Cave

ANNEX 3 - Itinerary of the journey

Informative note: One of the major aims of our ongoing Mediterranean Monk Seal Conservation Project is to create a sense of ownership for the Marine Protected Area by the local people, especially by the fisherman. Therefore, during this trip local involvement is hoped to be encouraged whenever possible. Primarily, the coastal trips will be done with fishing boats, although in simple ordnance, rented from the artisanal fisherman.

Day 1

Arrival to Adana airport. A minibus will be ready there to meet our guests and this vehicle will be available throughout the trip.

From Adana to Bozyazi the journey will take approximately 6 hours (~ 310 km). On arrival to Bozyazi, the group will check into Hotel Vivanco, and the afternoon will be free to rest, etc.

Day 2

Breakfast at the Hotel.

An early morning boat trip from Bozyazi to Kizilliman Marine Protected Area will be organized. During the journey our guests will not only enjoy the spectacular scenery of a mixture of steep coastal cliffs, pristine beaches, and pine forests, but also will be informed and familiarized with this important Mediterranean Monk Seal habitat. The boat will stop at some of these beaches for swimming and snorkeling. During the journey an abandoned monk seal cave will be visited to give an idea of the preferred structures and conditions. Also, information on the behaviour and habits of this rare and very shy animal will be given in brief.

Lunch will be a picnic on the beach. After lunch we will have a return journey to Bozyazi.

The afternoon will be spent seal watching along the coast.

Day 3

Breakfast at the Hotel.

Seal watching will continue throughout the day especially from two coastal archaeological sites that provide the best seal sightings. The first site is *Anamurium* located 20 km west of Bozyazi and 8.5 km west of the town Anamur. The point where the ancient city is also the southern most tip of the Mediterranean Anatolia. From here, in clear days it is even possible to view Cyprus.

The historic site, founded by the Phoenicians, is thought to be flourished through the Roman Period and had its Golden Age around 250 AD. Today, it is an authentic Byzantine ghost town with well preserved baths and a necropolis perched eerily on the rocky hillside above an unsullied pebble beach. Appropriately, it was named Anamurium since, in Latin, anem defines point and orium wind, translating into Windy Point. So, it is a windy and steep climb to the top of the hill for the best monk seal sightings. The cliffs also allow those interested in bird watching to observe some Kestrel behaviour and if lucky view the threatened Elanora's Falcon.

Following the visit lunch will be held at a local restaurant in the vicinity.

After lunch, the second site that will be visited is the Mamure Kalesi. Here, also monk seal watching and archaeology will continue hand in hand.

The castle is located 7 km east of Anamur and is a maze of crenellated walls and towers with one foot in the Mediterranean. *There has been a fortress since the Romans built one in the 3rd century AD, but the present structure dates from the time of the crusades when it was used as by the crusader rulers of Cyprus and later in the 13th century by the Karamanoglu emirs.*

Dinner will be Lahmacun. It is minced meat, onions and spices spread on a thin dough and cooked in an oven. So, this dish is actually the grand father of pizza.

Day 4

Breakfast at the Hotel.

The group will be driven to Aydıncık by the minibus. Here, a boat trip will be organized to Yılanlı island for some snorkeling and swimming. During the journey, some caves will be visited. First one will be for monitoring purposes on the island and carried out by the project team member only. Another one that will be visited is the region's famous limestone – karst cave with a large turquoise pool inside.

Lunch will be held at Unlu, the local restaurant in Aydıncık.

On our return journey to Bozyazi another monk seal cave named “Charlie's” will be visited to have a closer look at the seals, watch them dive and if lucky even listen to their breathing.

Day 5

Breakfast at the Hotel.

The month of October is the season for Dolphin fish *Coryphaena hippurus* and Yellowtail *Seriola dumerilli* fishing. So, for those interested an early morning line fishing boat trip will be organized.

Return to Bozyazi and preparation for Anamur.

Following a leisurely lunch, Anamur's traditional market place will be visited. The market allows some insight into the local ways of life and traditional uses of herbs. Here one can find the most aromatic kinds of oregano and thyme collected from the Taurus mountains, fresh vegetables, fish and the famous small and sweet Anamur banana's.

Return to Bozyazi for dinner.

After dinner, a night time moon lit hike to Kizilliman will take place. The walk takes approximately an hour and is partly through red pine forest - (*Pinus brutia*) and partly through patches of maquis on a rocky terrain until it reaches the breathtaking steep cliffs of the monk seal habitat. From this 80 – 100 m high cliff tops a bird-eye view of the moon lit sea where once Pirates preyed on coastal shipping and where still the seals roam is vast and spectacular. Drinks will accompany the scenery.

Day 6

Breakfast at the Hotel.

The minibus will take the project team and our guests to Mellec. Here, a boat trip will be organized to visit some of the breeding caves of the seals. We will take caution in this trip since this is the most fragile period for the mother and the pups. Therefore, only a member from the project team will investigate the caves and hopefully record and photograph, if any, the newly born seal pups. It will be an exciting day for all of us.

Lunch will be held at a traditional *Yoruk* (nomad) style restaurant with a spectacular view, sitting on a *talfar* (a wooden terrace covered with carpet and pillows) and served *kavurma*, a stir fry dish of chicken or meat.

Return to Bozyazi.

Day 7

Breakfast at the Hotel.

This day is organized in a different manner to the rest of the program. It will generally involve more terrestrial sight seeing activities and relaxation with a final destination to the River Dragon. On route to the river, an

approximately 2 hour visit, involving some walking and climbing to the Softa Kalesi will take place. Although the Castle, built by the Romans and later used by the Seljuk Turks is now fairly ruined inside, the walls and the situation are quite still impressive. From Softa the journey to the river Dragon will continue for another 2 hours through winding roads into the Taurus Mountains leaving behind the heavy coastal development of holiday homes, and penetrating into the fresh pine forests and plateaus. Trout will be purchased from a local fish farmer and a delicious lunch will be served by the river. The site is ideal for short hikes, bird watching and generally relaxing.

Later in the afternoon we will return to Bozyazi. Dinner will be followed by a night time boat trip to Kizilliman.

Day 8

Breakfast at the hotel.

In the morning the minibus will drive the group to Ovacik. Here, a boat trip will be organized to take the group on a seal sighting trip to some important monk seal habitats.

Lunch will be held near the archaeological site of Tisan, Aphrodisias. The ancient Roman ruins and mosaics will be visited.

Return to Bozyazi.

Dinner.

Day 9

A repetition of the favourite day's program.

Day 10

Departure from Bozyazi to Adana airport... Arrive derci

Annex 4 – Information about the project, codes of conduct

**Kizilliman Marine Protected Area Project
in the Cilician Basin**

Cooperation

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INTRODUCTION

The Cilician Basin exists in the North Eastern part of the Mediterranean Sea between the island of Cyprus and the Turkish mainland. The intact coast and the aquatic habitat host significant numbers of species, which most are endangered and/or rare. The world's eighth most endangered mammal, the Mediterranean monk seal (*Monachus monachus*), which has in the area some of its last remaining breeding caves, two endangered species of sea turtle (*Caretta caretta* and *Chelonia mydas*), the endangered long-spined sea-urchin (*Centrostephanus longispinus*), the sea horse (*Hippocampus ramulosus*) and two globally threatened habitats, the fragile calcareous red seaweed trottoirs (reefs) of *Lithophyllum* spp., and the meadows of the threatened endemic sea-grass (*Posidonia oceanica*) are some examples. The presence of these important species, especially the endangered mammals, indicates towards a well-established food chain. The fact that most of the last surviving species use the fragile habitats as for breeding and refuge it is a very rare and unique ecosystem in the Mediterranean Sea.

In the establishment of the Kizilliman Marine Protected Area, the Mediterranean Monk Seal was used as the umbrella species, embracing all the other components of this unique ecosystem under its canopy. Its conservation yielded the establishment of the countries largest Marine Protected Area, with a 16 nautical miles by 12 miles No-Trawling-Area, a 1 nautical mile by 0.1 mile No-Take-Zone, as well as a 75 km stretch of 1st Degree Natural Asset coast set for land protection. The project aims, apart from species protection, to achieve restoration of the ecosystem and to create a managed fishery reserve within its boundaries. We hope that the project will set the first working example that will be repeated in other parts of the Turkish Mediterranean where marine protection is in need.

In the Cilician Basin, Turkey, we offer you the possibility to join the Kizilliman Marine Protected Area Project as a volunteer. You will be involved in working with motivated people who are doing their best to save and restore a refuge marine ecosystem with holding one of the last surviving colonies of the Mediterranean monk seal. We hope that with your and our combined efforts we will be able to give them a chance of survival that will last for many generations yet to come.

ON MONK SEALS

In the Mediterranean, there are approximately 500 monk seals left. Along the coast of Turkey, their number is around 100 seals. The fur colour of an adult monk seal varies from dark brown to almost black often marked with white patches on the belly, and display sexual dimorphism. The natal fur colour of the pup is black, also with a white belly patch. At birth, it has a length of about 1-meter and it weighs 18 to 20 kg. Seals eat daily 5 percent of their own body weight; the food consists of demersal fish like grouper and sea breams, and cephalopods like octopus and cuttle-fish. Usually they will not dive deeper than 30-meters to catch their prey.

For several equally important threats, their number is declining rapidly. These are deliberate killings mostly by fishermen, incidental catches in fishing nets, habitat loss or damage, depletion of their shared food source by over-fishing, disturbance and inbreeding depression. Law in Turkey protects the monk seal since 1977. However, a law alone does not guarantee the safety of an endangered animal. Therefore, in 1994 this project was initiated in the area with the support of WWF (World Wide Fund for Nature).

KIZILLIMAN MARINE PROTECTED AREA PROJECT IN THE CILICIAN BASIN

The organisation

In 1995, a small team of marine scientists from The Middle East Technical University, Institute of Marine Sciences (METU-IMS) has initiated the Kizilliman Marine Protected Area Project in the Cilician Basin. Later in 1998, they collaborated with the Underwater Research Society, The Mediterranean Seal Research Group (SAD-AFAG). This national NGO has been supported by the Ecovolunteer Programme, as well as the WWF (World Wide Fund for Nature) Mediterranean Programme Office, The PADI Foundation (USA), The Dutch Embassy (NL), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Henry Ford Conservation Awards, the Van Tienhoven Foundation (NL), and the Lucie Burger Foundation (NL) since July 1993.

AFAG was established within the Sub-aqua Society of the Middle East Technical University in Ankara in 1987. In November 1994 this joined organisation AFAG-SAD became an official nature/culture protection organisation according to the Turkish law. Its aims are;

- To conduct research to gain biological data about the Mediterranean monk seal such as current status, habitats, behaviour and movements and to use this information to design conservation programmes.

- To introduce the "Mediterranean monk seal conservation concept" in Turkey.
- To force the relevant GO's for the implementation of the existing conservation and fisheries laws and to declare the important Mediterranean monk seal habitats as protected areas.

The objectives of the Kizilliman project are:

- Set an example that will demonstrate to the decision makers of Turkey and the Eastern Mediterranean, the role and the necessity of the Marine Protected Areas as a tool for fisheries management as well as a tool for conservation of biological diversity.
- To create a small scale fishermen community benefiting economically from a well managed use of the marine resources, and at the same time understanding and defending - through the direct involvement in its protection - the added value of a viable population of monk seals to the local economy via potential ecotourism.
- Stimulate and forward proposals to the local authorities, and to the related ministries, on the legislature aiming at the effective long-term conservation of seals in the study area and the vicinity.
- Continuation and enlargement of public awareness programs on a regular basis and active involvement of more local people in monk seal conservation.

The working area

The Cilician Basin is situated in the northeast Mediterranean Sea and lie between the Turkish mainland (Anatolia) and the Northern Cyprus. You will work in this coast, around Bozyazi, and, Kizilliman, which are about 200 kilometers west of Mersin.

The coast of Mersin is where the effects of the ever-extending urbanisation are immensely felt and habitat loss is out of proportion. Travelling west towards Bozyazi, habitat destruction relatively decreases and the rest of the coast has been developed mainly by national tourism in the form of secondary housing. When you reach Kizilliman you will find that the protected area is the last intact habitat, which not only provides natural resources for the local people, but also a refuge for the monk seal and for the other animal species. This protection zone has been publicized locally and internationally, and the WWF announced the creation of the protection as a "*Gift to the Earth*".



The research

Scientific research and monitoring surveys on the multi-species interactions are carried out in the area. The coastline has already been searched for suitable caves for the Mediterranean monk seal. Infrared detectors, set in two of these caves, aid in the monitoring of the annual reproductive success of the monk seal and ensure healthy growth of the pups. The rest of the caves are checked regularly by the team, especially during the breeding season. Fisheries research, community involvement and sustainable use of the protected area are other parts of the ongoing research programme.

Weather

It is extremely hot and humid in the summer months. Day time temperatures may exceed 40 °C and still hot at night in July and August. The winter is moderately cold (10-12 °C) and rainy. Spring and autumn are the most pleasant seasons. Sea surface temperature varies between 15 °C in winter and 36 °C in summer.

Conditions for participation

This ecovolunteer project is suitable for everyone:

- * Who is 18 years or older
- * Who is healthy and fit
- * Who is tolerable to high temperatures and humidity in the summer.
- * Who is a good swimmer. People with dive experience, boat skills, and marine biology students are very welcome
- * Who is to be able to work in a team, be tolerant, be patient, and have a flexible attitude towards different habits and customs of the Turkish culture
- * Who is able to speak good English.

Flights

You will have to make your own flight arrangements to Antalya or Adana International Airport. We advise not to make any flight reservations before your participation has been confirmed. Of course, you can plan your participation to the project as part of a more comprehensive tour in Turkey.

Passport / visa

For several European nationalities nowadays a valid tourist visa is necessary for a stay in Turkey, for some other European nationalities this may not be necessary. Check this out on beforehand with your booking agency.

You may buy the visa on entry in Turkey, although that may cause some inconvenience because of queuing. Please check at your booking agent or the Turkish embassy in your own country on the specific regulations, prices etc and changes in that for your nationality and for how to arrange applications for visa in your own country before you go to Turkey.

Insurance's

You are required to carry both travel insurance and cancellation insurance; these insurances should cover for all medical-, rescue- and repatriation costs.

Health

No vaccinations are required to enter Turkey from any country. However, it is recommended that you check about six weeks before departure at your local Public Health Department for up to date medical advice as situations concerning the spread of diseases might have changed.

YOUR PERSONAL EQUIPEMENT

Not much of equipment is needed for participation; the recommendations are:

- Swimsuit, wet suit, snorkel, fins & goggles (not a must but won't be provided)
- beach shoes or bootee
- towels
- sunglasses
- sun hat / cap
- sun protection cream
- small rucksack
- pocket knife
- torch
- Alarm-clock
- Binocular (when available)
- waterproof stopwatch (when available)
- Wind / raincoat
- Strong and warm clothing
- Long trousers (for instance jeans)
- Good hiking shoes (suitable for rocky coast)
- Sleepers
- Mosquito net and insect repellent (in the summer months)
- Sleeping bag or bed linen (if accommodating at the project house)
- First-aid kit - water resistant bandage
- Necessary medicines

For more information on the Mediterranean Monk Seal, please visit <http://www.monachus-guardian.org> and

For more information on the country, please visit www.turkeyguide.com

CODE OF CONDUCT

- Please, be culturally sensitive. Acquaint yourself with local customs. What is courteous in one country may be quite the reverse in another. The project team and the local people here will be happy to help you.
- Please, respect the religious sensitivities of the country. As mostly a Muslim country, we may have different beliefs and ways.

Annex 5 – Scientific information on Cilician Monk Seal

Habitat use and preliminary demographic evaluation of the critically endangered Mediterranean monk seal (*Monachus monachus*) in the Cilician Basin (Eastern Mediterranean)

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Abstract

Over the last few decades a dramatic decline in the number of Mediterranean monk seals (*Monachus monachus*) limited scientific studies on the biology, behaviour, and ecology of the species. This lack of information impaired the effectiveness of conservation strategies. Thus, any further information gathered on the monk seal has utmost value in the work to halt and reverse the plight of the species.

A hitherto unknown Cilician Basin colony of the Mediterranean monk seal has been investigated during a six-year period between 1995 and 2001. Results of direct in-cave surveys and land based seal-watch observations enabled the evaluation of habitat use and preliminary demographic information. A total of 39 caves were discovered among which only 3 were used for breeding. Common features of the breeding caves are described. Supplementary data obtained from infrared monitors installed in 3 actively used caves were used to assess the number of individuals. Throughout the study period, 25 individuals were identified and 11 newborn pups were found. Evaluation of the results suggests the presence of sub-regions inhabited by an individually identified sub-group of monk seals. Breeding habitat and food were discussed as the primary factors limiting survival of the species.

Recommendations for conservation guided by this information is a Marine Protected Area consisting of two zones; a restricted core zone prohibiting any human activity securing breeding habitat and a restricted fishery zone securing sustainability of the food source.

Key words: *Monachus monachus*, habitat use, demography, conservation, Cilician Basin,

Suggested running title: *Habitat use and demography of Monachus monachus, the Cilician Colony*

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T.C. Turizm Bakanligi (Ministry of Tourism)

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Dear Sirs,

I am the leader of a group of 8 persons belonging to the "Monk Seal Group" of WWF Italy, mainly researchers, journalists and biologists working at different levels within the Italian society, but all united by the common interest into preserving for future generations a rare, endangered marine mammal, the Mediterranean monk seal, as well as other important sea inhabitants, while saving the values of local traditions and populations.

We have recently decided to spend 10 days in Turkey in the beautiful region along the west coast of Mersin, where we knew that a very important and interesting monk seal conservation project has been underway since 1994. The trip in the project area took place at the end of October. We visited Kizilliman/Bozyazı Marine Protected Area where the critically endangered Mediterranean monk seal has been used as the umbrella species to secure both fish stock recovery and habitat protection. The managed fishery in the area secures the sustainable livelihood of fishermen as well as the survival of apex predators, such as the monk seal and dolphins, etc. Similarly, both terrestrial and marine habitat protection provides refuge for rare wildlife to exist and breed, and gives man a chance to appreciate and interact with wildlife as well as untouched landscapes.

The primary purpose of our visit to Kizilliman Marine Protected Area was to test the possibility of watching, enjoying, and learning from the pristine marine environment and wildlife under protection, with a desire to minimise the negative impacts of mass tourism. We took extreme care to behave in ways in accord with the definition of ecotourism. Implicit in our approach it was not only to safeguard the integrity of the ecosystem, but it was also to secure the involvement of the local community, in particular the small-scale artisanal fisherman, to make sure they too benefited from our visit. Subsequently, we believe that, as it is widely experienced in other parts of the globe where eco-tourism is applied, if the local community could gain sufficient revenue from the maintenance of species, in this case the critically endangered Mediterranean monk seal and its habitat, they would than value and protect their wildlife heritage area as a source of additional income.

In an era, where throughout the Mediterranean urbanisation has invaded much of the coastal stretch and where detrimental fishing practices such as trawling has destroyed much of the sea bottom, the existence of such pristine coastal environment, rare wildlife, and healthy meadows of sea grass are a rare phenomena; and for us to be able to observe and to have an enjoyable holiday in such a rich area was priceless. We believe our pioneer ecotourism visit proved successful. Both us and the local community appreciated the existence of the monk seal, the marine protected area and had a full and satisfactory experience. In our view, Marine Protected Areas therefore, should not be viewed as wasted tourism areas. On the contrary, especially in the Mediterranean where pristine areas are becoming extremely few and always rarer, when well managed and controlled, they provide unique and invaluable resources for tourism, and provide multi - dimensional benefits for all involved. Furthermore, since conservation is at the heart of all investment and actions in protected areas, the benefits may be passed on to the next generations and such conservation projects must deserve full support.

We therefore would like to congratulate you and all the authorities for the results achieved with the sea protection measures undertaken in the Cilician region, and the support to this unique monk seal conservation project.

Please accept our best wishes for your future work and conservation initiatives,

Yours sincerely,

Luigi Guarrera
(on behalf of the WWF Italy - Monk Seal Group)

Annex 2 - Ecotourism Guidelines

www.ecotourism.org/bus.html (eco-professionals, business page)

ECOTOURISM GUIDELINES FOR NATURE TOUR OPERATORS

**Published by The International Ecotourism Society, North Bennington
Vermont, USA. Copyright 1993**

INTRODUCTION

by Megan Epler Wood

Some outstanding ecotourism guidelines have been written in the past. But no organization had attempted to bring together leading conservationists, tour operators, and academics to thrash out what the state of the art of delivering ecotourism services should be in the 1990s, until this project was undertaken. This document delivers the most comprehensive view to date, not only on what guidelines should be observed by tour operators working in natural areas but also how these services should be delivered, with what objectives, and for whose benefit.

One of our leading participants commented that these guidelines are still idealistic, despite a careful review process. Perhaps this is because so many want to share their most optimistic view of what benefits ecotourism can deliver. Scepticism does not often play a role in the development of guidelines. Developing guidelines involves the preparation of a road map for top performance, given the right tools, circumstances, expertise, and funds are available. These guidelines should not be seen as threatening or discouraging to companies, particularly those in developing countries that may not be achieving all these objectives now. The point is to have a road map. This is a brand-new, heavily researched road map that provides nature tour operators and lodges with the information they need to begin pursuing the full agenda of objectives listed here. Now that a road map is available, it will be up to the private sector to obtain the guidelines and follow them wherever possible. Suggestions on the guidelines are also welcome.

The guidelines will have to be revised every few years, because new perspectives will inevitably reveal important objectives to be met and techniques to be used. An evaluation form at the back of this booklet provides readers with space to write down new ideas and to provide feedback. Many companies, conservation organizations, government offices, developers, hotel and lodge owners, the press, and consumers will benefit from this document. It offers such a broad array of recommendations that a responsible traveller, business person, or land manager will easily be able to glean the facts needed to select a tour, develop an ecolodge, or manage a responsible visitor program. Of course, individual documents would be wonderful for each of these groups, and perhaps they will be written. But monitoring programs in the field of ecotourism are still in their infancy, and funding to support them is presently not available.

In the future, monitoring programs should be factored into the development of ecotourism projects both large and small scale. Ecotourism monitoring projects need the full support of corporations, governments, consumers, and conservation organizations if the ecotourism revolution is to result in the benefits described here. Many participants gave their time and their best ideas to this project. They deserve our warmest thanks. Survey responses from 39 outbound tour operators in the United States, 40 consumers interested in ecotourism, 68 World Congress on Adventure Travel and Ecotourism participants, 18 travel agents and inbound tour operators working in Costa Rica, and 15 travel administrators from universities and major non-profit organizations in the United States were reviewed and evaluated.

In all cases, the ratio of respondents represents a sample exceeding 20 percent. Three interdisciplinary committees were established in the United States and Costa Rica to help interpret the results of these surveys and to review the draft guidelines. The interdisciplinary committee members wrote many of the techniques listed here, and they discussed how a consumer evaluation form for travellers using nature tour operators should be drafted. The International Ecotourism Society is proposing that a consumer evaluation program, called the Green Evaluations Program, follow the publication of these guidelines.

**ECOTOURISM GUIDELINES FOR NATURE TOUR
OPERATORS: MAIN DOCUMENT
by The Ecotourism Society 1993**

PREDEPARTURE PROGRAMS -- VISITOR INFORMATION AND EDUCATION

Guideline:

- Prepare travelers to minimize their negative impacts while visiting sensitive environments and cultures before departure.
- Offer visitors the educational materials they need to learn about the places and people to be visited and introduce the importance of contributing to the conservation of places being visited.
- Educate visitors about the full range of natural and cultural phenomenon to be observed.
- Educate visitors to consider the effects of their visit in advance and to modify their behavior while traveling, with the objective of minimizing impacts.
- Provide introductory information on the people and ecosystems to be visited in predeparture packages. Stress the importance of reading pre-departure information, such as selected bibliographies, and review additional resources for each destination.
- Keep information objective and well-grounded using examples of phenomenon visitors might encounter.
- Provide general travel ethics addressing standards for behavior in natural areas and with local cultures.
- Provide information on the equipment, clothing and personal supplies suitable to the regions being visited.
- Warn against bringing disposable goods that contribute to the solid waste burden in the region.
- Provide information on products to avoid that are illegally traded.
- Provide information, as required, on avoiding the accidental transport of foreign, exotic species into isolated ecosystems being visited.

Visitor Benefits:

- Visitor is attuned to the full range of opportunities for viewing wildlife and learning about different cultures.
- Awareness of personal responsibility to minimize impacts on the environment and local cultures before departure.
- Visitor has proper gear and clothing for environments and cultures to be visited.

GUIDING PROGRAMS -- GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF GUIDING TOURS

Guideline:

Prepare travelers for each encounter with local cultures and with native animals and plants.

Objectives:

- Pave the way for reciprocal sensitivity between cultures by teaching tourists to be unobtrusive while they are encountering environments and cultures.
- Provide visitors with the opportunity to learn more about the social and political circumstances of the region being visited.
- Provide visitors with the opportunity to learn more about local environmental problems and conservation efforts.

Techniques:

- Provide quality orientation and enough leaders to manage the group according to the sensitivity of the environment visited.
- Give quality interpretation at all times; explain local cultures and describe natural history. Encourage interaction with local people while overseeing contact to avoid cultural errors.
- Conduct briefings before each stop, including behaviors to avoid, restricted practices and zones, special alerts for fragile and endangered species, specific distances to maintain with local wildlife, and local regulations.

- Use of time on road and in cities for educational discussions of all kinds including balanced discussions of local issues.

Visitor Benefits:

- Awareness of how to encounter cultures and environment with minimum negative impact.
- Insight into the visitor's own role and potential contribution to local conservation and sustainable economic development efforts.

GUIDING PROGRAMS -- PREVENTION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

Guideline:

Minimize visitor impacts on the environment by offering literature, briefings, leading by example, and taking corrective actions.

Objectives:

Help visitors to minimize their negative impacts by enhancing their understanding of the fragility of the environment.

Company guides should pursue the following procedures:

- Provide a set of environmental guidelines, created by the company, specific to the area being visited.
- Obtain and distribute available guidelines for each natural area visited.
- Allow protected area staff to introduce guidelines if possible.
- Brief visitors on proper behavior - on trails, in campsites, around wild animals, around fragile plants - and with trash, with human waste, with fires, and with soaps.
- Advise all travelers on the level of difficulty of each excursion to prevent damage to the environment caused by lack of experience or ability to maneuver in unfamiliar terrain.
- Discourage unrealistic expectations of observing rare wildlife and plants by interpreting all aspects of the ecosystem.
- Advise against collecting souvenirs from natural areas, such as feathers, bones & shells, unless it is specifically condoned by local authorities.
- Advise against purchasing specific crafts that are produced from threatened natural resources.

Visitor Benefits:

- Learns how to travel without leaving footprints.
- Gains a greater understanding of travel's impact on the environment.
- Is informed of the rules and regulations of natural areas and the need to follow them.

GUIDING PROGRAMS -- PREVENTION OF CULTURAL IMPACTS

Guideline:

Minimize traveler impact on local cultures by offering literature, briefings, leading by example, and taking corrective actions.

Objectives:

Protect the integrity of the cultures being visited by minimizing visitor contribution to acculturation and the decline of local values. Enhance visitor understanding of local cultures but avoid improper intrusions into the private lives of others.

Techniques:

Company guides should be aware of the following procedures:

- Interpret local cultural values and history of local cultures.
- Provide a set of cultural guidelines created by the company, specific to the area being visited. Where available, obtain and distribute guidelines written by local communities.
- Advise visitors to accept differences, adopt local customs, and be unobtrusive. Discuss appropriate behavior when photographing.
- Discuss appropriate behavior when purchasing goods, tipping, and responding to begging.

Visitor Benefits:

- A better understanding of local values and cultures and how to behave with local peoples to minimize cultural impacts.
- The ability to look, listen and learn from others without intruding.

MONITORING PROGRAMS -- PREVENTION OF ACCUMULATED IMPACTS OF TOURISM**Guideline:**

Use adequate leadership, and maintain small enough groups to ensure minimum group impact on destinations. Avoid areas that are under managed and over visited.

Objectives:

- Diminish accumulated effects of tourism on sensitive sites.
- Avoid overloading local visitor management capabilities if there are inadequate funds and staff to manage visitors in sensitive sites.
- Contribute to an effort to disperse tourism, and lighten the load on popular destinations during peak seasons.
- Recognize sites, in advance, that are inappropriate for tourism, or need assistance with existing damage.

Techniques:

- Be sensitive to total number of groups visiting sites simultaneously. Informally census the number of groups encountered on trails or roads within protected areas and keep track of sites with rapid increases. Notify authorities or landowners if the number of groups is growing rapidly.
- Monitor negative environmental impacts, including trail erosion, improper waste dumping, littering, water pollution, species harassment, illegal collecting of plants or animals, feeding of wildlife, or wild animals that have become abnormally tame or aggressive. Notify authorities or land owners both verbally and, if need be, in writing.
- Assist land managers in monitoring key, indicator species, or offer logistical assistance to researchers working on tourism impacts.
- Design itineraries and promotions to avoid overselling popular sites, particularly those that are inadequately managed for visitation during peak seasons.
- Watch for accumulated cultural impact and work to prevent or buffer them. Indicators include; inflated prices for goods in communities; hostility towards tourists from local communities; black markets, drug dealing and prostitution catering to the tourist industry.

Visitor Benefits:

- Avoids contributing to the destruction of sites visited.
- Learns to recognize the negative impacts of tourism and the importance of notifying the authorities when this occurs.
- Learns to avoid overloading popular sites, by making trips in off-season or avoiding peak visitation hours.
- Learns to recognize cultural impact and avoids contributing to the decline of local values.

MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS -- PREVENTION OF NATURE TOUR COMPANY IMPACTS**Guideline:**

Ensure managers, staff and contract employees know and participate in all aspects of company policy to prevent impacts on the environment and local cultures.

Objectives:

Make the nature tour company as environmentally and culturally sensitive as possible, both in the office and in the field.

Techniques:

- Establish an environmental code and objectives manual for the company.
- Confidence in the personnel who are leading the organization and the tours.

MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS -- TRAINING

Guideline:

Give managers, staff and contract employees access to programs that will upgrade their ability to communicate with and manage clients in sensitive natural and cultural settings.

Objectives:

Offer meaningful opportunities for staff and contract employees to work within a sustainable economy.

Techniques:

- Establish clear guidelines for staff regarding opportunities and company support available for training, via internal training programs (natural and cultural history) and via training programs available locally (language skills and first aid, accounting, mechanics).
- Establish an operators consortium for training. - Establish a relationship with a local educational facility and work to integrate needed training components into the curriculum. - Work with nongovernmental organizations to establish an ecotourism training program.

Visitor Benefits:

Opportunity to contribute to a local sustainable economy that offers local people opportunities to be employed in increasingly responsible positions.

MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS -- CONSERVATION CONTRIBUTION PROGRAMS

Guideline:

Be a contributor to the conservation of the regions being visited.

Objectives:

- Put tourism-generated revenues into the hands of local environmental organizations and protected area management agencies for conservation initiatives.
- Ensure that tourism revenues cover the costs for the management of tourism on wild lands and protected areas.
- Help parks and protected areas generate revenue, thereby providing economic impetus to a conservation agenda on the national level in destination countries.

Techniques:

- Provide corporate contributions to local non-profit conservation initiatives and protected areas through direct corporate donations, partnerships, technical assistance, education programs, publicity, facilitation, direct staff involvement, and becoming involved in joint initiatives*
- Facilitate visitor contributions to local conservation initiatives during the trip by: providing literature on projects in the regions being visited and guidelines for in-kind contributions; arranging briefings and visits to local projects with project staff; or offering opportunities for visitors to volunteer.
- Facilitate visitor contributions to local conservation initiatives after the trip by: sending follow-up mailings to clients with local nonprofit membership literature, brief descriptions of projects that need assistance, upcoming opportunities to do volunteer services, or opportunities to work at home by being an ambassador or fund raiser or organizer for local projects*
- Encourage writing to government and corporate organizations whose policies are damaging to the environment or local cultures in the areas visited by providing addresses and contact names.

Visitor Benefits:

- A better understanding of how tourism can be a net contributor to the conservation of cultures and environment visited.
- A chance to be a part of the effort to conserve a beloved place on a long-term basis and preserve biological diversity and cultural heritage worldwide.

* This may not apply to non-profit organizations running tours

MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS -- LOCAL EMPLOYMENT & JOBS PROGRAMS

- Provide competitive, local employment in all aspects of business operations.
- Make ecotourism beneficial to local communities.
- Provide local people access to jobs that are not destructive to the environment.
- Provide local people with a full range of opportunities beyond the service employment sector.

Techniques:

- Hire locally-owned businesses including transport (vehicle and boat rental services), accommodations (hotels, lodges, camps), and restaurants.
- Buy local supplies from food and craft vendors and avoid all products made from endangered or threatened species.
- Hire local office and field staff. Pay competitive wages, above minimum wage for the region, and offer acceptable benefits.
- Contribute to community enterprises and development efforts that support a wide variety of local residents, with special sensitivity to indigenous groups.

Visitor Benefits:

- Opportunity to contribute to a sustainable market economy, e.g. to provide job opportunities that are not destructive to the environment.
- Awareness that the choices visitors make affects the lives and livelihoods of others.

LOCAL ACCOMMODATIONS CHECKLIST

- Offer site-sensitive accommodations that do not waste local resources or destroy the environment and that provide ample opportunity for learning about the environment and sensitive interchange with local communities.
- Ensure all aspects of the visitor's experience are in harmony with the natural and cultural environment.
- Review the following check list of considerations when booking new accommodations.
- Select accommodations that are in compliance with environmental regulations.
- Review facility's level of destruction to natural surroundings.
- Consider facilities efforts to maintain a scale in keeping with the local environment and to reflect national or local cultural design motifs in architecture and interior design.
- Review facility's use of energy saving devices and renewable energy resources.
- Review facility's treatment of solid and organic waste. Ensure that solid waste is safely disposed of and that recycling programs are in place where possible. Ensure that all waste products are treated to prevent effects on natural resources.
- Determine if restaurant is composting and using other techniques to reduce waste such as avoiding paper products and styrofoam.
- Determine if facility is offering meaningful opportunities for locals.
- Check into training programs offered by lodge.
- Review opportunities for locals to have sensitive cultural interchange, on their own terms, with visitors.
- Look for locally produced craft and food items available for sale on the premises or used in facility restaurants, and ensure that all products from threatened natural resources are avoided.
- Check for the interpretive/educational materials inside the facility that are available to guests. Look for field guides, videos, books, pamphlets, and check lists of species found locally.
- Check for availability of interpretive services outside, such as self-guided trails and guide services.
- Check for the facility's sensitivity to interpretive opportunities; i.e. how well the facility has interpreted its own land's natural features and natural resources, or the local cultural backgrounds and perspectives of its own staff, for visitors.
- Ask if owners contribute to conservation or community development efforts with financial, technical or logistical support.
- Avoid sites that bait animals, or that keep exotic species on the property that were trapped in the wild, especially threatened or endangered species.

Visitor Benefits:

- An appreciation of the possibilities for sustainable living.

- Greater sensitivity to the role of the resort in a community, its impact and contribution to locals, and how to select resorts that are environmentally and socially sensitive.
- Better opportunities for sensitive cultural interchange and enlightening field trips accompanied by staff or representatives of local communities.