



To Dive or Not to Dive: Ecotourism's the Question

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Rise of Ecotourism

Ecotourism is an increasingly popular alternative to traditional travel. It is hailed as a sustainable, environmentally-friendly option that supports local communities and protects endangered species and habitats.

Marine tourism in Canada accounts for over \$4 billion CAD annually in profit. The majority of profits comes from coastal tourism such as diving, whale watching, kayaking etc. with recreational fishing and cruises making up smaller portions of profits.

Increased ecotourism can promote conservation efforts. People are more likely to visit pristine environments and put more money into the local economies, which can create a cycle of support for the marine ecosystems. Sal island, Portugal is an example of a success where the diving industry was transformed to be more sustainable

As the world becomes more accessible and more people are traveling, it raises the question of the impact of marine ecotourism and if more regulations or oversight are needed to ensure sustainable practices.

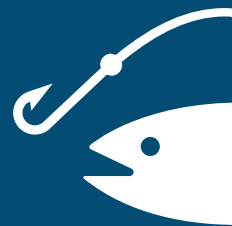
Impacts of Canadian Ecotourism



Cruises can increase pollution and can harm marine species and areas



Diving and other marine recreational activities can damage habitats and negatively impact local communities if improperly managed.



Recreational fishing can harm fish populations by removing mature fish and high mortality rates of catch and release fisheries

Is Ecotourism a Good or Bad Idea?

- Ecotourism can promote conservation of highly vulnerable regions and species and increase the funding that is allotted for conservation measures
- Uneducated tourists can be detrimental to local communities including First Nations and Indigenous societies
- Lack of quality management can increase illegal practices and cause more pollution and physical degradation to occur in the environment





Steps for Implementing Effective Ecotourism



Research demand for ecotourism in an area



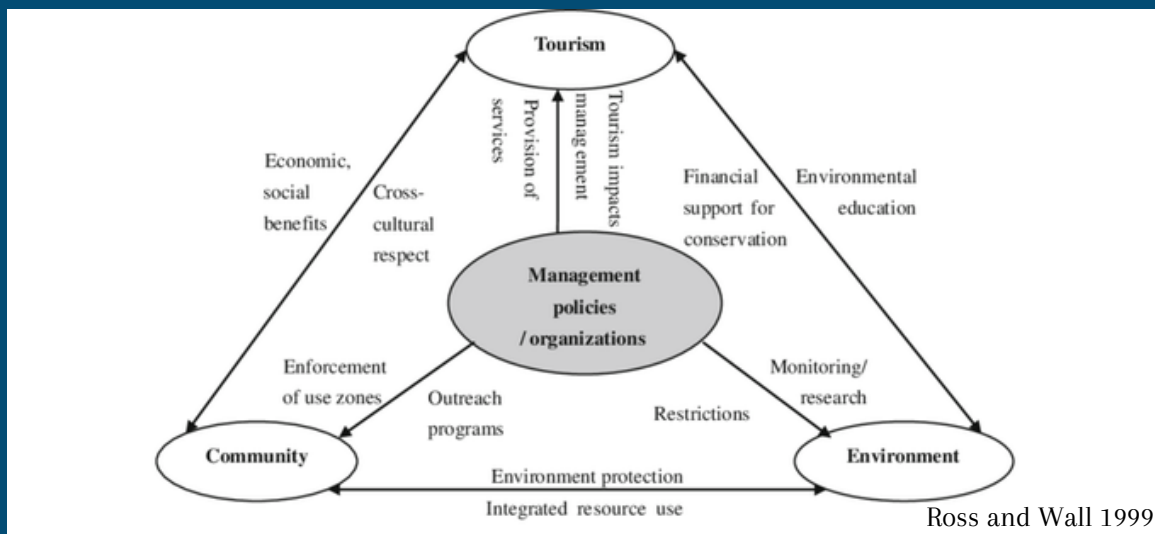
Meet with stakeholders to encourage community involvement



Create a plan for profits to go back into the community



Educate tourists about conservation and protecting the environment



Ross and Wall 1999

The three tiers of effective management in ecotourism

Combining the social, economic, and ecological priorities into a management plan is the best way to create a long-lasting, successful ecotourism venture. Increased community involvement allows for Indigenous local knowledge to guide the conservation decisions to make rational changes that have a positive outcome. Having an invested community also encourages the enforcement and long-term monitoring of policies and laws set by the community and discourages Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated fishing and other illegal behaviour.



References

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