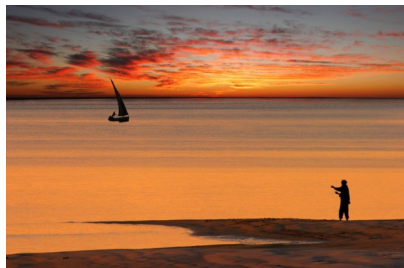


# ECOTOURISM - DEADLY DANGER TO ECOSYSTEM AND NATIVES



Ecotourism is seen as a response to the growing harm that tourism causes to the environment. Ecotourists travel to sites or regions of unique natural or ecologic quality and they should attempt to minimize the ecological impact of the tourism. So much for the theory. The reality is however quite different.

The ecotourism in fact might harm the yet preserved sites. There are new lodges and camps being build on the sites where forests used to be. Ecotourists in their strong vehicles can damage the soil and cause inevitable harm to both fauna and flora. As an example of ecotourism fatal impact, we can mention the Masai Mara National Park in Kenya and the Ngorongoro Conservation Area in Tanzania. In both areas, lodges and camps have heavily deforested the small riverine forests that existed here with their hunger for firewood for cooking and heating. A local person in Masai Mara reserve said: "Tourism has been allowed to develop with virtually no controls. Too many lodges have been built, too much firewood is being used and no limits are being placed on tourist vehicles. They regularly drive off-track and harass the wildlife. Their vehicle tracks crisscross the entire Masai Mara. Inevitably the bush is becoming eroded and degraded."

The environment is not the only thing that suffers from ecotourism. The inhabitants of ecotourism destination suffer as well. They are often relocated without compensation because there is a need for another game park or tourism facility. The ecotourism also damages the traditional values of local people and it usually has no positive effect for natives. Especially the young are affected as they adapt to the new situation. This results in increased promiscuity leading to prostitution, and the spread of AIDS from mass tourism sites to ecotourism destinations. Hence, the ecotourism sometimes does not preserve or enhance local cultures.

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