

# Ecotourism - Threat to Nature after All?



Ecotourism is a branch of the tourist industry that has been experiencing massive growth recently, with some studies revealing that this activity has attracted nearly nine million people across 87 nations and territories and has become a billion-dollar industry. Ecotourism tries to protect the environment and ensure the survival of many endangered species. Many developing countries are trying to promote themselves through the creation of special wildlife areas. At the same time, it has become apparent in the last few years that even strict rules designed to leave the animals at peace do not prevent some serious damage to their environment and way of life.

The most obvious threat to the animals is the transmission of disease. Even subtle, seemingly irrelevant environmental changes can significantly increase stress levels in some animals. The impact is serious; lowered survival and breeding rates are the most obvious negative results of ecotourism.

In Manitoba, Canada, tourists frequently come to see the polar bears. Specialized vehicles have been taking people to watch these magnificent animals during October and November. However, at this time, the bears are supposed to be resting. Already, they have become extremely cautious and no longer tend to rest during these months. Similarly, changes in the behavior of yellow-eyed penguins in New Zealand, the hoatzin of the Amazon rainforest, and even bottlenose dolphins have been recorded. Biologists are alarmed by this. Even though carefully limited observation may seem like a completely harmless though spectacular activity, it can still threaten wildlife. More and more ecotourism projects are starting and biologist have been trying to raise public awareness in order to slow down the growth of this industry. The point, after all, is animal protection.

Date: 2007-05-08

Article link: <http://www.tourism-review.com/ecotourism-threat-to-nature-after-all-news317>