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Sea turtles as a non-consumptive tourism resource especially in Australia

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Abstract

There is substantial economic potential for exploiting wildlife resources for non-consumptive wildlife-oriented recreation (NCWOR) tourism and this type of tourism if well managed, can result in the long-term conservation of wildlife resources. This is especially important in cases where wildlife resources are declining due to habitat destruction, poaching and other human threats, as is so for sea turtles. In this paper, relevant ecotourism literature outlining the economic values of NCWOR activities is reviewed to show that a significant potential exists for developing sea turtle-based tourism. Duffus and Dearden's (1990. *Biological Conservation*, 53, 213–231) conceptual framework for the development of wildlife tourism and its extension and application by Higham (1998. *Tourism Management*, 19(6), 521–531) is analysed to see if it might be applied to sea turtle-based ecotourism in Australia at Mon Repos Conservation Park. Threats to sea turtle populations are growing especially as a result of

human activities and these underline the importance of finding an economic rationale to conserve the remaining species. Economic benefits from turtle-based tourism can provide such a rationale. However, such tourism must be managed appropriately if it is to be sustained. Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service has adopted management strategies at Mon Repos Conservation Park with this in mind and these strategies are outlined.



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Keywords

Sea turtles; Ecotourism; Non-consumptive uses; Conservation and educational values; Sustainable tourism

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