EDITORIAL: PROTECTED AREA TOURISM AND THE AICHI TARGETS

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ABSTRACT

In 2010, the Convention on Biological Diversity developed a new strategic plan to enhance international efforts at stopping degradation and promoting sustainable use of the world's biological heritage. These twenty 'Aichi Targets' are to be attained by 2020. Domestic and international tourism and visitation to protected areas is significant, growing, and can generate both positive and negative environmental impacts. This issue of *PARKS* is focused on the potential contributions to achieving the Aichi Targets from tourism and visitation. Tourism is highly relevant to biodiversity conservation and protected area management and planning, and can contribute to several of the Aichi targets. Authors in this issue explore how, for example, tourism can help achieve public awareness of biodiversity values and opportunities for conservation, keep impacts within safe ecological limits, increase global coverage of protected areas, and promote fair and equitable sharing of benefits from tourism and biodiversity.

The conference of the parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) met in Nagoya City, Aichi Prefecture, Japan in October 2010 in part to develop a new strategic plan to enhance international efforts at stopping degradation of the world's biological heritage. This new plan, termed the 'Aichi Targets' identified a series of goals to be attained by 2020 (CBD, 2011). These targets are designed to motivate parties to the Convention to accelerate their efforts to protect the world's remaining biological diversity. The targets are organized into five strategic goals that seek to: 1) address underlying causes of biodiversity loss by mainstreaming biodiversity across government and society; 2) reduce the direct pressures on biodiversity and promote sustainable use; 3) improve the status of biodiversity by safeguarding ecosystems, species, and genetic diversity; 4) enhance the benefits to all from biodiversity and ecosystem services; and 5) enhance implementation through participatory planning, knowledge management and capacity building. Each strategic goal has a series of 3-6 Targets, for a total of 20 Targets.

It is difficult to estimate the global volume of tourism and visitation in protected areas, but guidelines are available for estimating this with increased accuracy and consistency (Hornback & Eagles, 1999). International travel for tourism has reached one billion arrivals, an increase of 4 per cent from last year (UNWTO, 2012) and is projected to increase at an annual rate of 3.3 per cent per year out to 2030 (UNWTO, 2011). A significant, but yet unknown proportion of this travel involves visits to protected areas of all kinds, presenting not only well known opportunities for funding, education and employment, but also well documented challenges to protection and management. While a small proportion of protected areas receive the bulk of visits, even the most remote and undeveloped protected areas receive visitors or are influenced by visitation.

Tourism and visitation in protected areas can generate both positive and negative environmental impacts (McCool, 2006). This issue of *PARKS* is focused on the potential contributions to achieving the Aichi Targets from tourism and visitation. However, it is important to recognize that tourism and visitation in protected areas can generate negative outcomes, such as changing behaviour and physiology of wildlife and promoting development that alters natural habitats (Newsome et al., 2005; Green &

Giese, 2004). Considerable research, monitoring, management, and planning efforts have emerged in recent years to minimize those negative impacts on natural systems (Roe et al., 1997; Epler & Wood, 2000; Hall & McArthur, 2000; Hvenegaard, 2012).

As papers in this issue argue, tourism is highly relevant to biodiversity conservation, and can contribute to several of the Aichi Targets (CBD, 2011), and in doing so, help protected area management and planning. One Target in particular (11) sets an objective of 17 per cent of the terrestrial surface of the globe to be located within formally designated protected areas by 2020, an increase of six million km^2 from the 12.7 per cent figure of 2010 (Woodley et al., 2012). Much of this increase will likely come from places that are already inhabited by people, and thus require new strategies, innovative programmes, and creative approaches to integrating people and protected areas in order to achieve the necessary social acceptability and political support needed for designation. It is likely that public use and tourism will be a significant component of these policies. Target 11 also calls for an increase in effective and equitable management (Woodley et al., 2012), requiring many more managers equipped with conceptual and practical skills needed to meet 21st century challenges.

Other potential contributions to the Aichi Targets can be phrased as questions for protected area stakeholders. For example, with respect to Target 16 ('fair and equitable sharing of benefits'), what financial benefits flow from tourism in protected areas and how are those benefits distributed to local, regional and national constituencies? What is meant by fair and equitable under the provisions of the Nagoya Protocol also negotiated during the CBD Conference of the Parties in 2010? Similarly, what is the tourism and economic development potential of additional lands protected to help meet Target 11? Given that those lands may be already occupied, inhabited or used, what is the role of tourism in convincing local residents to support protection? Aichi Target 1 speaks to the need to increase public awareness of biodiversity values and opportunities for conservation or sustainable use. To what extent can park interpretation and environmental education contribute to environmentally-friendly behaviour within and beyond protected areas?

Target 8 seeks to bring pollution emissions down to levels that are not detrimental to ecosystem function and biodiversity. How might tourism, particularly its greenhouse gas emissions from transportation and solid and liquid waste, be better managed to reduce impacts on biodiversity? With respect to Target 6 (sustainable management and harvest of biodiversity), recreational hunting and fishing are often significant activities in many protected areas. How might these activities be better managed to reduce impacts on biodiversity? Referring to Target 5 (sustainable consumption and keeping impacts within safe ecological limits), and given increased demand for tourism, how can we better manage tourism and visitation to reduce impacts? What tourism experience opportunities, activities, and uses are most appropriate in protected areas? Which analytical frameworks might be useful in strategic thinking, critical analysis, and more effective and equitable decisions? Given that many protected areas exist within a highly competitive tourism marketing environment, how can we enhance opportunities for high quality visitor experiences? How can visitor opportunities be better marketed (using and expanding the traditional components of marketing: price, product, promotion, and place; Constantinides, 2006; Wearing et al., 2007)?

This issue brings together a diverse set of authors from different global regions, ecosystems, protected area systems, and governance sectors. These authors were asked to discuss the implications, opportunities, and challenges that the Aichi Targets present to conservationists, planners, managers, activists, and scientists. This issue specifically explores the role of visitor use and tourism in helping achieve the targets, probes barriers foreseen in implementation of various targets, raises questions about how tourism can be effectively managed, and explores which conceptual and practical competencies managers will need in addressing accelerating tourism and visitation. The context for each paper is unique as efforts produce different biodiversity conservation outcomes.

The first theme of this issue explores ways that tourism can support biodiversity conservation, especially when they involve local communities and management authorities. Buckley provides an overview paper on tourism and the Aichi targets and argues that, since tourism has become a significant component of conservation efforts (e.g., funding from tourism contributes significantly to protected area budgets), it requires more attention from the conservation community. Building on this theme, Snyman examines how tourism in protected areas can offer an option for sustainable land use that promotes biodiversity conservation, helps reduce poverty, and stimulates local socio-economic development. In examining six African

Kaziranga National Park, India © Nigel Dudley

countries, she found that ecotourism employment resulted in more positive attitudes towards tourism and conservation, and that education played a key role. Similarly, Hussain and others assessed the contribution of tourism to local livelihoods in the region of Kaziranga National Park, a World Heritage site in India. Many nearby residents benefited from park tourism, and these benefits could increase if the leakages could be reduced through logistic support, proper marketing of local products, and strengthening of local institutions. Last, Salizzoni examines biodiversity conservation and tourism along the Euro-Mediterranean coast. Planning and management policies are needed to address the negative impacts of seaside tourism and to promote low impact tourism in the interior of this region.

The second theme focuses on stewardship by enhancing activities and increasing opportunities for engagement. First, King and others address the need for increased stewardship of protected areas by engaging constituencies beyond the realm of protected area managers. Branding can help connect people to protected areas by engaging emotions and promoting preferred behaviour. King and others urge more focused attention on brands – building brand awareness, teaching brand meaning, and growing positive brand equity over time – to support the work of protected area managers. Second, Waithaka and others describe efforts to increase capacity for biodiversity conservation through conservation volunteers, the bulk of whom, also visit protected areas. These conservation volunteer programmes engage people in conservation, broaden understanding and appreciation of biodiversity, and create a shared vision for conservation. Last, Jager and Halpenny document Parks Canada's efforts to ensure that protected areas remain relevant to Canadians by fostering visitation and greater appreciation and connection with Canada's parks. The paper discusses the Agency's work to improve visitor experience in protected areas and highlights how outcomes arising from this initiative are assessed.

Interpretation programming at Dinosaur Provincial Park, Canada © Elizabeth Halpenny

The third theme outlines competencies required for future managers of protected areas who seek to develop a tourism-conservation synergy. McCool and others stress the need to develop and nurture competent managers and leaders. They identified several needed competencies for leadership, in the domains of strategic thinking, planning, and operations. Fish and Walton also stress the need for capacity development for biodiversity conservation and tourism management in marine protected areas. They document examples of training programmes from around the world that can help sustainable tourism aid biodiversity protection, while promoting economic benefits and collaboration with local communities.

The last theme of this issue focuses on practical ideas for, and case studies of, integrating biodiversity conservation and tourism. Miller and others focus on community-based monitoring as a way measuring success in achieving the Aichi Targets, solving problems about costs and longevity of monitoring programmes, and creating a venue for civic engagement and capacity building. In their examination, these authors highlight infrastructure-based approaches (focusing on tourism facilities) and ecosystem-based approaches (focusing on natural resources that support the tourism experience). Balandina and others provide a practical tool for integrated development of biodiversity and nature tourism through the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism, as offered by the EUROPARC Federation. Finally, Otuokon and others use Blue and John Crow Mountains National Park, Jamaica, a case study to illustrate a sustainable tourism programme designed to support local communities and enhance conservation. This programme emphasizes governance, tourism coordination and marketing, product development, and environmental management.

A key cross-cutting issue is the need for integrated and coordinated efforts to link tourism and biodiversity conservation in protected areas. For example, visitor experience policies that are not based on sound research, or marketing that is not based on management capacity, are not likely to succeed and may do more harm than good. Management policies, community outreach and engagement, research and monitoring, legislation, industry linkages, and training and capacity building should be closely aligned to improve the potential for enhancing conservation through tourism. Current limitations include a lack of baseline information about visitors and protected area ecosystems and a dearth of partnerships (with local communities, the tourism industry, and environmental nongovernmental organizations). Nevertheless, there is opportunity to further tap the potential of tourism for biodiversity conservation, and to strengthen the ability of protected areas to fulfil their mandates.

In conclusion, the science of managing tourism and visitation is young relative to the other sciences involved in protected area stewardship and much remains to be learned. This issue is designed to raise awareness and stimulate dialogue about a challenge that impacts every one of the seven billion people living on this small planet. How can we better integrate tourism and visitation (including its potential to improve the quality of life of many people) with the protection and good stewardship of our natural heritage? This question drives much of our focus over the next few decades.

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RESUMEN

En 2010, el Convenio sobre la Diversidad Biológica desarrolló un nuevo plan estratégico para mejorar los esfuerzos internacionales para detener la degradación y promover el uso sostenible del patrimonio biológico del mundo. Estas veinte Metas de Aichi han de lograrse para el año 2020. El nivel del turismo nacional e internacional y las visitas a las áreas protegidas es significativo, va en aumento, y puede generar impactos ambientales tanto positivos como negativos. Este número de *PARKS* se centra en las posibles contribuciones del turismo y las visitas al logro de las Metas de Aichi. El turismo es de gran relevancia para la conservación de la biodiversidad y la gestión y planificación de las áreas protegidas, y puede contribuir al logro de varias Metas de Aichi. Los autores presentados en este número estudian, por ejemplo, cómo podría el turismo contribuir a crear conciencia con respecto a los valores y las oportunidades de la biodiversidad para la conservación, así como a mantener sus repercusiones dentro de límites ecológicos aceptables, aumentar la cobertura mundial de áreas protegidas, y promover la distribución justa y equitativa de los beneficios derivados del turismo y la biodiversidad.

RÉSUMÉ

En 2010, la Convention sur la diversité biologique a mis au point un nouveau plan stratégique destiné à accroître les efforts internationaux pour lutter contre la dégradation du patrimoine biologique mondial, et encourager par ailleurs son utilisation durable. Ces vingt 'Objectifs d'Aichi' devront être atteints en 2020. Le tourisme et la fréquentation des aires protégées au niveau domestique et international ont une importance significative et croissante, et peuvent avoir des effets positifs et négatifs sur l'environnement. Ce numéro de PARKS est axé sur les contributions potentielles du tourisme et de la fréquentation des parcs pour atteindre les Objectifs d'Aichi. Le tourisme joue en effet un rôle très important dans la conservation de la diversité biologique et la gestion et la planification des aires protégées, et peut participer à la réalisation de plusieurs Objectifs d'Aichi. Les divers auteurs participant à ce numéro étudieront comment, par exemple, le tourisme peut sensibiliser le public sur les valeurs de la diversité biologique et les possibilités de conservation ; comment garder les impacts du tourisme dans des limites écologiques raisonnables; comment accroître la couverture mondiale des aires protégées; et enfin comment encourager un partage juste et équitables des avantages issus du tourisme et de la diversité biologique.