





Eco-tourism

A gift of Creator

- The concept of eco-tourism.
- The management and operation of eco-lodges.



The concept of eco-tourism

Eco-tourism is a modern idea. It arose as a way of conserving the natural and cultural heritage of peoples and countries, and contributing to sustainable development.

As defined by the World Conservation Union, eco-tourism is environmentally responsible travel and visitation to relatively undisturbed natural areas, with the aim of enjoying and appreciating nature (and any accompanying cultural features, both past and present), which promotes conservation, has low negative visitor impact, and provides for the beneficially active socio-economic involvement of local populations. (Ceballos-Lascurain 1996)

This definition shows that eco-tourism is based on three principles:

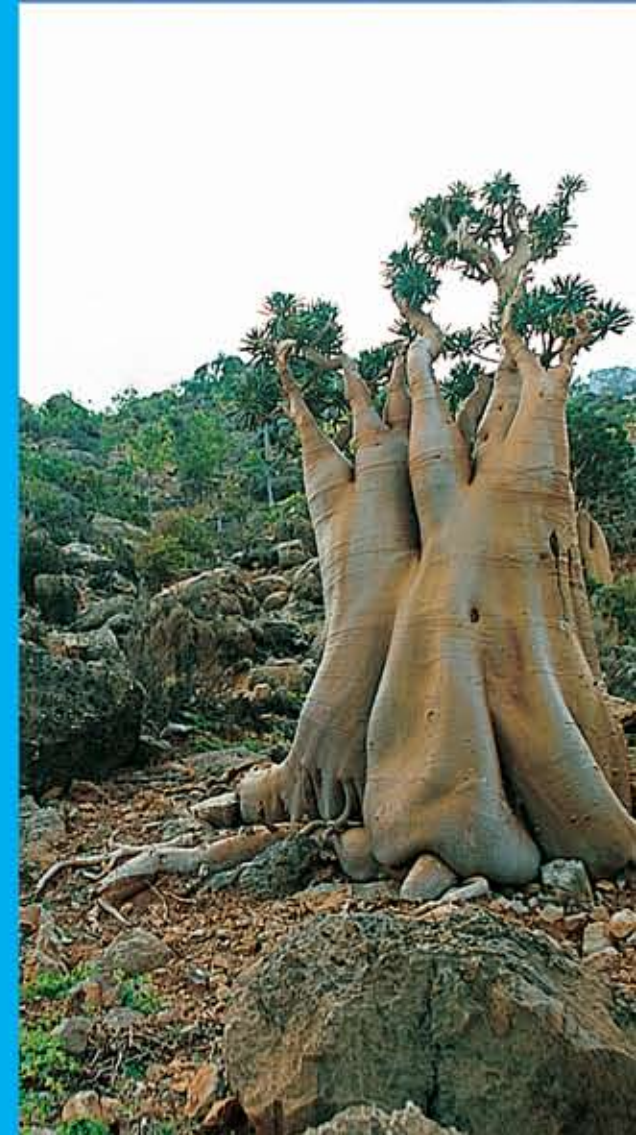
- 1- A purpose of enjoyment, learning and appreciating nature for itself.
- 2- Reducing adverse environmental impact of the visit (and repairing damage).
- 3- Including local inhabitants in its activities so that they benefit economically and socially.

The areas of eco-tourism

Eco-tourism takes place in areas of nature, and in particular protected areas, whether the protection extends to the landscape and its natural variety (life on land, plant life, marine life) and/or to elements of cultural and historical heritage.

Eco-tourist activities

- Walking and hiking
- Bird-watching
- Nature photography
- Safaris
- Camping and sleeping outdoors
- Horse riding
- Mountain climbing
- Fishing
- Rowing and boating on rivers and lakes
- Diving
- Swimming
- Enjoying sea views
- Botanical studies



The benefits of eco-tourism

- 1- It is a source of income which can help to cover the costs of protected areas.
- 2- It is a source of income for local inhabitants, either directly or indirectly.
- 3- It helps to obtain greater support for nature conservation from decision-makers and local communities, which in turn can lead to greater political support .
- 4- It provides an economic justification for the presence of protected areas of nature.
- 5- It is an instrument for raising the level of visitor awareness of the issues surrounding the conservation of nature and of cultural traditions. It also raises the level of awareness of local inhabitants about the importance of the protected area and the need to preserve its elements, and demonstrates the direct benefits to the communities.
- 6- It encourages the use of the products of marginal lands not fit for agriculture, and so it favours the preservation of the natural plant cover and limits the expansion of habitation.
- 7- It assists the creation of recreational facilities which may be used both by local people and by visitors.



The eco-tourist

The eco-tourist has the following characteristics:

- 1- He/she has a strong desire to learn about places of natural or cultural interest.
- 2- He/she is keen to have a genuine experience.
- 3- He/she is eager for personal and social experience.
- 4- He/she does not welcome being with large numbers of tourists in natural areas.
- 5- He/she welcomes travel, can put up with hardships and difficulties and accepts a challenge.
- 6- He/she interacts with the local inhabitants and becomes involved in their cultural and social life.
- 7- He/she does not mind coping with even basic tourist services.
- 8- He/she tolerates discomfort and walking, and can face difficulties in good heart.
- 9- He/she is positive and not emotional.
- 10- He /she is willing to spend money in order to get experience, not just for ease and comfort.



The management and operation of eco-lodges

1-The management of eco-lodges

Eco-lodges differ from traditional hotels because the eco-tourism is all about people's interaction with nature and traditional cultural heritage and customs. The interests of eco-tourists are essentially concentrated on the primary sources of attraction (nature) and then the complementary sources (culture and traditions). As a result, eco-lodges must be managed in a different way to the management of ordinary hotels.

Management methods:

- It is best if owners can manage their eco-lodges themselves, or use another person they know and trust. Most eco-lodges are managed by families who can make tourists feel that they are at home.
- Lodge managers must keep the management constantly under their control and monitor every detail of the operation. They must take into consideration the importance of the environmental sustainability of the camp or lodge, because the tourists are in close contact with the natural environment and also to the lodges.
- The lodge management should be planned so that tourists do not remain in their room for long periods, especially during daytime, passing their time watching television or in playing cards, because eco-tourists have come in order to observe nature and traditional heritage and to live with, and within, this environment.
- Generally tourists get up early, from 0500 to 0530, particularly those who have come for the bird-watching. The eco-lodge has to prepare a light breakfast of coffee and cake for these early risers, and a further breakfast on their return at 0900 to 0930. Tourists also go to bed early and there must be no music groups in an eco-lodge.



- The tourist guides who work with the eco-lodge should be well-trained, so that they know a great deal about the natural and cultural environment, and are able to communicate this knowledge. They should if possible be competent in two foreign languages, including English. The tourist guides should be offered attractive salaries, reflecting the importance of their work, and helping to ensure that they do not move to another place.
- The lodge management must be aware that eco-tourism is not seasonal in the way of alpine or sea-side tourism. It can continue throughout the year, and the management must be ready to meet this.
- The lodges' cook ought to be from the people of the area, and to know all the local methods and specialities.
- The eco-lodge should provide comprehensive printed matter to introduce guests to the special features of the natural and traditional context.
- There must be a designated first aid post.
- Both guests and staff and all visitors must be aware of standards of cleanliness, and the lodge should make sure that there is sufficient information for all on this matter.
- The eco-lodge has a part to play in raising awareness about the problem of rubbish, especially among young people.
- The management of an eco-lodge must market and promote the lodge effectively.
- The manager of an eco-lodge must maintain a register to record the impact of the activities of the establishment. This register is for the use of supervisors and monitors who ensure conformity to what is recorded in the register and who can conduct inspections.

2-The operation of eco-lodges

The operation of an eco-lodge must conform to the objectives of eco-tourism:

- 1- Tourism with a purpose of enjoyment, learning and appreciating nature for itself.
- 2- Reducing adverse environmental impact of the visit (and repairing damage).
- 3- Including local inhabitants in its activities so that they benefit economically and socially.

The following are some of the ways in which the eco-lodge can ensure that they operate in a principled way:

Water:

- Encourage your guests to be economical in the consumption of water by placing a card in each bathroom, explaining the importance of water in your region and asking them to use water with due care.
- Limit the quantities of water in the washbasin, showers and baths by introducing water consumption regulators in all washing and toilet facilities.
- Limit the need for excessive laundry and water use practical changes to towels and bed covers by putting a card in the room explaining the lodges' policy on water, and requesting the clients to place towels on the floor if they required them to be changed. If bed covers are not dirty or marked, they do not need to be changed more than once a week.



- Use cleaning materials that are environmentally friendly, and choose ones which are free from strongly alkaline materials and do not contain sulphates or strong bleaches. Natural materials such as olive oil soap or vinegar or lemon can be used as cleaning materials.
- Avoid the use of fabric softeners because they cause skin sensitivity for some people. Instead of these, add a little vinegar to the last wash. The use of air fresheners must be avoided.
- If you have to use disinfectants, hot water at a temperature of 92 – 98 degrees centigrade mixed with sodium hydroxide¹ is considered sufficient to disinfect the cooking area. Substances with alcohol added to them are suitable for hand-washing and the cleaning of bathrooms. Water with steam or hot water is sufficient and effective.
- Avoid the use of precious drinking water for the irrigation of gardens; instead, store rainwater for this purpose.
- Swimming pools are among the attractions of eco-lodges. Do not add too much chlorine to the water as this can affect underground water. Also, the water in the pools must not be changed too often. You can maintain the temperature and cleanliness of the pool by covering it, even if this requires special equipment. This is it is essential to conserve and to recycle water..
- Ensure that the use of water will not adversely impact the neighbouring communities.

The treatment and disposal of waste:

- Convert composted rubbish to fertiliser for the soil and bury the compost at anaerobic depth in the ground.
- Choose materials that do not harm the environment for the day to day operation of eco-lodges – especially as regards cleaning and maintenance materials and tools, and when you are purchasing products and preparing food.
- Use environmentally friendly cleaning materials and soap.
- Use gas for refrigerators and air conditioning, as this is the least harmful method as regards damage to the ozone layer.
- Ask your clients in advance not to bring excessively packaged foodstuffs and commodities.
- Do not consider any item to be rubbish until it is thrown in the waste bin. If it is possible to re-use any item do not consider it to be rubbish. Always remember that items that can be reused are better.
- Liaise with your neighbours, if any, and participate with them in the costs of transporting rubbish to keep the area relatively clean.
- Build and support training programmes on standards and methods of ensuring cleanliness for guests, staff, and people in general.
- Take part in training for awareness of the reduction of rubbish and waste, especially for young people.
- Organise campaigns for cleaning up the environment, in which tourists and local communities can participate.
- Do not impact your neighbouring eco-systems by maintaining the cleanliness of your lodge while converting neighbouring land into a rubbish tip.



Economising on power

- When buying new machinery or equipment, consider its consumption of power, and be sure to maintain equipment regularly in order to avoid wasting electricity. This applies in particular to cooling or heating equipment.
- Use long-life lights in rooms as the kitchen, restaurant and bathrooms. The bulbs themselves may be expensive, but they last for a long time, and will also recover their cost by reducing electricity consumption within one or two years of use.
- Air conditioning must only be used when absolutely necessary. Try to be satisfied with natural ventilation. Air conditioning can be used in rooms that contain electronic equipment.
- Turn off all lighting and air conditioning equipment in places and rooms that are not occupied.
- It is essential to make use of natural power in heating and warming, and to benefit from the wind and trees to freshen the air.

Food and transportation

- Eco-lodges will always be in remote areas. It is therefore possible to produce food for self-sufficiency, within certain limits, by growing plants in gardens close to the kitchen.
- Keep bees, poultry and rabbits and so on for this purpose.
- Buy what provisions you need from the local communities.
- Hire all the means of transportation you need from the local communities.

Some points for our visitors:

- Please pay attention to the traditions and culture of the local communities, and act accordingly.
- Do not leave behind any tin cans or plastic materials, or anything that would pollute the area you visit.
- Do not leave any litter which could add to the waste and increase the burden on the area.
- Do not bring in or leave anything which could disturb the ecosystem.
- Avoid taking photographs of local inhabitants without their prior consent, and respect their wishes in this.
- Consider supporting local crafts industries by buying locally-made handicrafts.
- Be sensitive to the privacy of local inhabitants.
- The cleanness of the area is everyone's responsibility.
- Take care of the environment.
- Try to make a contribution to official efforts to conserve local cultures and the environment.
- Do not damage wildlife and birdlife, and don't try to make close contact.
- Do not damage natural plant life.
- Do not damage marine life forms.
- Do not hesitate to make any suggestions to help us to improve or conserve the places you are visiting.

Please do not hesitate to report any negative aspects you might notice in the places you visit. Your information will be useful to us, and we will appreciate your co-operation.



CONSERVATION RULES



Do not collect or damage or destroy any natural items (coral, shells, fish, etc), living or dead, in protected areas.



You must not feed the fish - this damages the ecological balance of the coral reef.



Vehicles must not leave designated routes. Motor vehicles must not drive on any beach.



Fishing or using a spear gun is prohibited in protected areas.



Do not put up tents anywhere other than in designated locations.



All visitors must leave the preservation area before sunset, except for people staying in designated camping areas.



No littering. Put waste in designated containers, or take it away with you.



Please enter diving areas only through designated entry points. This minimises the damage to the coral.



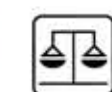
You must not enter closed areas.



Please comply with the preservation regulations which are posted in the area.



You must not walk (or use a hook) in areas of coral. Please use the specified entry points.



Anyone breaking these rules will be held accountable in accordance with the law.

TAKE NOTHING WITH YOU - LEAVE NOTHING BEHIND



Nature preservation



Plant life



Nature footpath



Waiting area



Underwater swimming



Toilets



Visitor centre



Beach



Information



No littering



Photograph point



Swimming area



Monitoring point



Wildlife



www.yementourism.com

