

PART II
Chapter 8

Wildlife and Nature-Based Tourism for Pro-Poor Growth

Nature-based tourism is one of the fastest growing sectors of the global tourism industry. At the same time, it is one of the few export or service sectors in which poor countries can develop a clear comparative advantage, given that they often possess a rich natural resource base. This chapter outlines strategies for maximising the poverty impact of nature-based tourism. It also explores the significance of the international wildlife trade and its potential for pro-poor growth, highlighting policies to combat over-exploitation and illegal trading in wildlife.

8.1. Overview

Wildlife performs an important safety net role for many poor people, *e.g.* providing food, fibre and medicines, and can also be a source of wealth creation. An estimated 150 million people (one-eighth of the world's poorest) perceive wildlife to be an important livelihood asset (African Conservation, 2003).

Nature-based tourism holds high potential for wildlife-based economic growth. It is one of the fastest growing segments of the global tourism industry, and one of the few export/service sectors in which poor countries have (or can develop) a clear comparative advantage as a result of their often rich natural resource base. Trophy-hunting can be a particularly lucrative sector of this industry for some countries, generating significant public revenues in countries such as Tanzania. Nature Tourism has also been an important source of income for Small Island Developing Countries, particularly in the Pacific.

Wildlife trade also deserves far greater attention – generating an estimated USD 15 billion per annum worldwide, excluding large-scale commercial trade in fish and timber. But overexploitation of species and illegal wildlife trade can be economically and ecologically very damaging. Better management, regulation and controls are needed to realise the potential of wildlife trade for pro-poor growth.

8.2. Wildlife and poverty: Safety nets and wealth creation

The benefits of wildlife management are rarely fully-valued in national accounts. Many poor countries have great biodiversity within their borders, yet appear to be unable to “capture” this value in ways that promote sustainable economic flows into the future. Indeed, in many poor countries the economic value that these natural resources generate for the country contrasts starkly with the political priority given to ensuring the sustainable conservation of these resources.

Wealth from wildlife can come from a number of sources including:

- nature-based tourism;
- investments by conservation organisations in protection of globally valued species and habitats;¹
- trophy-hunting;
- game-ranching;
- farming;
- wildlife trade – or zoo, pet, aquarium fish, medicinal and food markets;
- “bio-prospecting” for pharmaceuticals.

This chapter focuses on tourism as the industry with the greatest potential for wildlife-based economic growth. In Kenya, for example, wildlife tourism is estimated to generate more than 100 times the revenue of all other non-tourism wildlife enterprises combined (Ashley and Elliott, 2003). Not all of this wealth or the associated rents

necessarily accrue to the poor, or, indeed, to agents in the destination country. Trophy-hunting is part of wildlife-based tourism, but dealt with separately in this chapter, given its specific characteristics and its economic benefits which are considerably higher than those from wildlife viewing. Finally, issues related to wildlife trade are addressed, given the scale of this global industry.

8.3. Contribution of nature-based tourism towards growth and the economy

Tourism is often described as the world's biggest industry because of its contribution to global GDP and export earnings, the number of people it employs and the number of people it involves. This industry is growing fastest in developing countries. In Africa, where tourism is highly dependent on the natural and cultural environment, tourism as a percentage of total African exports grew from 2% to over 11% between 1980 and 2003. In countries such as Ethiopia, Tanzania and Gambia, tourism now provides 23%, 28%, and 30% respectively of national exports. Indeed, many countries in which tourism is an important industry are among the poorest and least developed in the world (ODI, 2006).

Furthermore, tourism is an efficient generator of employment in developing countries (ODI, 2006). About 6.3 million people work in the travel and tourism industry in Africa. However, since travel and tourism touches all sectors of the economy, its real impact is even greater. In Gambia, for instance, 30% of the workforce depends directly or indirectly on tourism. In small island developing states, percentages can range from 83% in the Maldives to 21% in the Seychelles and 34% in Jamaica (UNEP, n.d.).

Growth in tourism provides a direct increase in income among those who supply hotels, transport, food and other such services, as well as to the host country through increased tax revenues. It then provides indirect benefits to others through the spending of direct income. While increases in tourism revenue lead, eventually, to higher national income, the direct consequences for the distribution of this extra income among, and within, households are not necessarily the most favourable for sustainable poverty alleviation, and may even increase poverty for some. Increasing the poverty impact of tourism generally requires some form of policy intervention. It is also important to remember that even within relatively poor communities (by developed country standards) there will be a continuum of income from the very poor to the relatively wealthy.

Nature-based tourism is one of the fastest growing segments of the global tourism industry. As a result, it is one of the few export/service sectors in which poor countries have (or can develop) a clear comparative advantage as a result of their often rich natural resource base. Nature-based tourism encompasses a wide range of activities (trekking, wildlife viewing, diving and so on) in an equally wide range of destinations (islands, deserts, forests, mountains, savannas). In addition, opportunities exist to capture a larger portion of the total value of tourism for national economies visited by tourists.

Figure 8.1. **Employment in the travel and tourism industry in Africa, 2006**

Source: World Travel and Tourism Council (2006), *Travel and Tourism Climbing to New Heights – League Tables*. <http://wtcc.org/tsa1.htm>, accessed 2 October 2006.

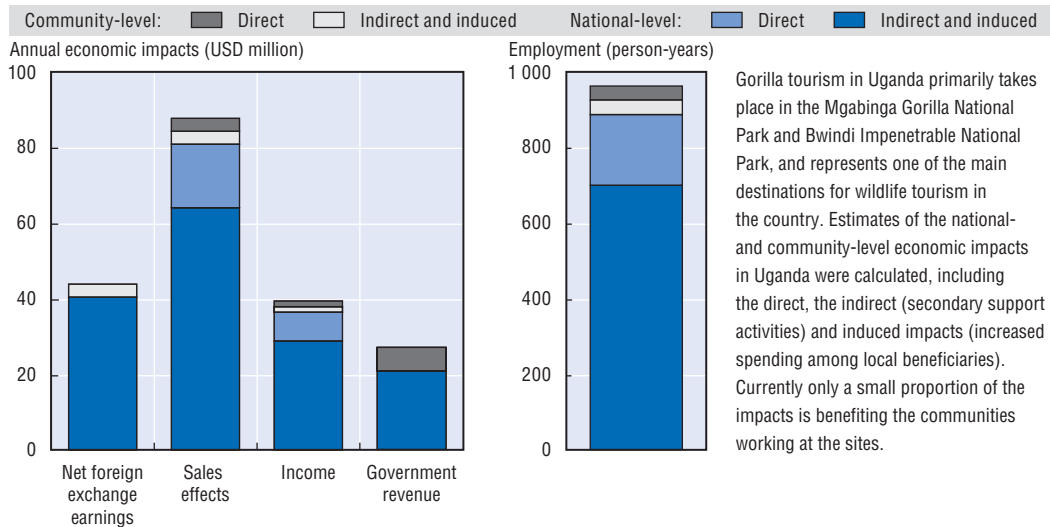
8.4. What is the potential for nature-based tourism to lift the poor out of poverty?

Nature-based tourism is unlikely to address the plight of the most disadvantaged/marginalised people. Nevertheless, tourism does appear to have very significant *potential* for pro-poor growth as noted below:²

- It brings consumers right to the product, generating huge marketing opportunities for local producers of goods and services.
- It creates demand for locally produced inputs, and this can contribute to economic development through indirect multiplier impacts – particularly in agriculture and fisheries.
- It provides opportunities for off-farm diversification.
- It provides relatively labour-intensive opportunities. It is often significantly more labour-intensive than other non-agricultural sectors.
- It employs a relatively high proportion of women and can contribute to gender equality.

- It is one of the few industrial sectors that use “master-plans” enabling governments to have direct influence on its domestic development by local stakeholders.
- Tourism products can be built on, and thereby help to preserve, natural resources and culture. These are assets that some of the poor have, even though they may lack financial assets. Adequate compensation for protection of land for nature-based tourism can serve as a safety net for some of the poorest communities.

Figure 8.2. **Economic impacts of gorilla tourism in Uganda**



Source: Moyini, Yakobo and Uwimbabazi, B. (2000). Analysis of the Economic Significance of Gorilla Tourism in Uganda. International Gorilla Conservation Programme (IGCP). www.mountaingorillas.org/files/ourwork/Economics%20of%20Gorilla%20Tourism%20in%20Uganda.pdf, accessed 4 October 2006.

The key issues to make nature tourism more pro-poor include the *form of tourism* (wildlife viewing, scuba-diving, trekking, and international, regional or domestic), the *extent of access to tourists by local people*, and the *volume of tourists*. These three factors define the opportunities available for pro-poor growth. If tourists arrive at a destination in the evening, drive straight to the hotel and eat dinner without venturing out, and then in the morning pack and depart by coach to visit a state-run protected area before driving on to their next overnight stop, then there will be very few opportunities for poor producers to sell to tourists, whatever volumes the tourists arrive in. “Enclave” tourism may bring limited benefits for surrounding areas.

Regardless of location, the contribution that tourism can make to rural economic development will depend on the extent to which tourist demands can be locally met. In areas with limited rural economic activities, even basic commodities tend to be trucked or shipped in, and high levels of leakage³ are common. However, current destinations hint at future opportunities, with successful tourism sector development providing a hub for future entrepreneurs to build upon.

The benefits from tourism must be greater than the losses borne by the poor, but this is not always the case. Local communities west of the Serengeti National Park in Tanzania have suffered losses of USD 1 million (USD 110 per household) because of damage by wildlife, but received only USD 75 000 (USD 8 per household) in compensation out of the very substantial revenue generated from tourism. In Bhadra Tiger Reserve in India,

compensation for livestock loss caused by tigers amounted to just 5% of the livestock value, and compensation for crop losses due to elephants was just 14% (Norad, 2007). However, there are examples where the local people could improve their livelihoods by establishing protected areas for tourism (Box 8.1).

Box 8.1. Pro-poor growth in Indian protected areas

India has, like many countries, faced challenges of how to reconcile local livelihoods with the establishment of protected areas. The approach adopted is known in India as eco-development and since the late 1990s many protected areas have had eco-development committees (EDC), often supported with global environment facility (GEF) financing. A confederation of these committees was created in 2002. While these EDCs have a mixed track record, there are some definite successes.

One such success is Periyar Tiger Reserve in Kerala, receiving 400 000 tourists a year, and able to generate sufficient incomes to support financial livelihoods and provide other related benefits for the neighbouring villagers. For instance, a shop has been established and villagers work as guides and forest stewards. Interestingly, the overall incomes of residents from eco-development are still below what they used to earn from smuggling and other illegal activities they used to engage in previously. Yet legitimacy breeds security, and the standard of living is higher today because local residents are no longer under the threat of being pursued by the police and under the coercive influence of middlemen and moneylenders.

Source: Kothari and Pathak (2004).

Strategies for maximising the poverty impact of tourism include:

- *Clear land rights for the poor.* It is crucial to ensure that rights and responsibilities for the poor are clearly delineated and enforceable. Clear ownership and user rights over land allow private-sector land managers and residents to make locally relevant choices over the form of tourism, and the structure of contracts, including the distribution of any benefits accrued.
- *Promoting local employment and the skills required.* Many tourism businesses employ expatriate workers, particularly in managerial positions. Nature tourism offers particular opportunities for local people as it relies on local knowledge and skills. A local workforce also enhances the feeling of authenticity that nature tourists seek. Unlike mass tourism, the success of nature-based tourism frequently depends on skilled guides and hosts. Workers often become an enterprise's most valuable asset and frequently play a major factor in repeat visits. Governments and trade associations need to invest in both vocational training and the promotion of mentoring. Policies that include individuals from indigenous, minority or disadvantaged groups are also fundamental.
- *Opportunities for direct sales of goods and services to tourists.* Tourists are often shielded from local people, e.g. beaches are fenced off for private use, hotel grounds are off-limits to local people, tours have fixed itineraries and stopping points. Special efforts have to be made to avoid such enclave tourism and to maximise complementary spending.
- *Sourcing goods and services from local suppliers.* Tourism enterprises can help stimulate linkages with other economic sectors – particularly agriculture, and can support local businesses by outsourcing services such as laundry, security, taxis and so on. For example the various “adopt a farmer”, and “eat local” schemes that exist in the Caribbean can be adapted in various ways in other localities and contexts.

- *Supporting local spin-off businesses, e.g.* local guiding businesses, community campsites, craft markets, and promoting small and medium enterprises. Nature-based tourism is particularly suited to small and medium-sized business involvement because of the close contact between the clients and the hosts, and the need for flexible working patterns. Successful SME development can be aided through the provision of credit facilities and technical support. One key issue is to avoid over-regulation, specifically with respect to foreign currency and imports. Entrepreneurs need to be able to react to changes in the market.
- *Encouraging voluntary giving by tourists or tourist business development.* This was a major benefit observed in Sri Lanka and Thailand after the 2004 tsunami.
- *Investing in tourism infrastructure* that also benefits poor people (roads, communications, healthcare etc).
- *Building “pro-poor” conditions into tourism developments, e.g.* as criteria in tender documents, as a tax on tourism profits, gate fees, wildlife auctions, and market-based trophy fees. Simply making benefit-sharing a precondition of sustainable wildlife investment is insufficient. Great care is needed in designing the schemes and ensuring that the asset base of the poor is enhanced rather than reduced by the schemes⁴.
- *Encouraging participation of poor people in tourism planning, e.g.* through the master planning process.
- *Developing partnerships between tourism investors and the poor* (as owners or rights-holders over land and wildlife resources). Successful examples of this include building pro-poor criteria into concessions for safari lodges on community-owned land in Namibia and South Africa. The real success is seen in Namibia where community members have taken a collective decision over a mix of financial promises and collective preference for an individual hunter.

Community-based wildlife conservancies in Namibia brought a range of impressive economic benefits to local communities, and many of these benefits reached the poor. First, important economic benefits could be realised through the development of the conservancies. Since the first conservancies registered in 1998, cash income, wages, and in-kind benefits (such as game meat) have rapidly escalated, and reached nearly USD 4 million, more than NAD 26 million (Namibian dollars) in 2006. Additionally, the private sector participants generated an estimated USD 13.9 million in revenues. The total estimated net economic benefits contributed by the conservancies and the related community-based natural resource management programme to the Namibian economy climbed to USD 27.5 million. Conservancy-related activities, including tourism, have provided 547 full-time and 3 250 part-time jobs. Second, in some cases, the poor have gained proportionately more than the less poor. In other cases, the benefits have been neutral with respect to income groups. Third, women’s livelihoods and status have improved. Women fill almost 3 000 of the new part-time jobs, and more than half the full-time posts. An analysis of the conservancies shows that such schemes can be designed to be at least “poor neutral” but with the possibility for them to be pro-poor as well (Pearce, 2005; WRI, 2005; WWF *et al.*, 2007).

Many of the above are strategies that any tourism business can decide to adopt. Others will require a supportive policy and regulatory framework (see below).

8.5. Trophy hunting

Trophy hunting is an additional means of generating revenues from wildlife, and can be conducted as a complement or alternative to nature based tourism. It represents a large and growing industry in several parts of Africa. For example, trophy hunting generates between USD 65.6 million and USD 137 million a year in South Africa, USD 18.5 million a year in Zimbabwe and USD 12.6 million a year in Botswana. These revenues provide economic justification for wildlife as a land use over vast areas, most of which are additional to protected area networks (Lindsey et al., 2006).

Despite the scale of the industry, little is known about the importance of hunting revenues in creating incentives for conservation or the impact of trophy-hunting on wildlife populations. This lack of information renders some governments, conservationists and foreign NGOs uncertain about the value of the industry for pro-poor growth and conservation, and opinion concerning trophy hunting has become polarised.

Advocates of trophy hunting point out that trophy hunters pay higher fees per client than conventional tourists. Therefore, revenues can be generated from lower numbers of people, resulting in potentially less environmental impact. Furthermore, trophy hunting generates revenues for conservation in areas that may not be suitable for tourism, such as those lacking attractive scenery or high wildlife densities. Additionally, trophy-hunters may also be less easily dissuaded than conventional tourists from visiting countries experiencing political instability.⁵

But a number of problems limit the potential of trophy hunting for pro-poor growth and conservation. These include the inequitable distribution of hunting revenues, inadequate involvement of communities, corruption and ecological problems such as setting quotas in the absence of adequate population data and overshooting of quotas. See also the box below on trophy hunting in Tanzania.

Box 8.2. Trophy hunting in Tanzania

The trophy-hunting industry in Tanzania generated an estimated taxable income of USD 28 million in 2001, out of which the wildlife division of the ministry of natural resources and tourism acquired USD 10 million in revenues. The average income to the wildlife division per hunting client is approximately USD 7 000. Income generation from all hunting areas of Tanzania is approximately USD 40/km², while it reaches approximately USD 70/km² in the Selous Game Reserve.

But the pro-poor impact of the wildlife industry is limited by an inefficient system of allocating hunting concessions and problems with quota management, poor rates of recovery of revenue, and an only limited participation of communities in the management of the hunting sector. Poaching remains a problem in some areas, notably outside the game parks and reserves. Furthermore, there is strong resistance to reform the sector by those who profit from the current situation.

Source: Baldus and Cauldwell (2004); DPG Forest Sector Policy Brief (document provided to the Development Partners Group of Tanzania (2006), www.wildlife-baldus.com/tanzania.html, accessed in May 2007).

8.6. The politics of increasing the role of nature tourism to promote pro-poor growth

The suite of policies that are required to promote nature tourism as a contributor to pro-poor growth include many that are applicable to all economic sectors (i.e. macroeconomic stability, good governance at all levels and a stable political environment). Stability is particularly important for the tourism sector; a single incident that leads to an increased perception of danger can significantly reduce visitor numbers.

Nature tourism needs to receive greater attention among key government agencies. The role of tourism is frequently absent or marginalised in sectoral (wildlife, agriculture, poverty) plans and *vice versa*.

Experience indicates that success in facilitating a genuine change of tourism to benefit poor people is complex and context-specific. Developing countries often require both financial investment and transfers of technology and skills to begin development of their tourism sector, often excluding the poor in the initial stages of development. Yet, as the tourism sector develops, greater opportunities exist to ensure ongoing development contributes to pro-poor growth.

The tourist industry, especially initially, tends to be closely linked with property-price speculation, high-risk investors and elite capture. Typically large-scale tourism businesses have greater political access than SMEs. There is also a convenience aspect for all levels of government in working with industry participants with good investment potential and the existing skills to develop a successful product. Yet experience in southern Africa has shown that NGOs can wield commensurate political influence, while combining wider developing country priorities, such as poverty alleviation, with tourism development.

8.7. Wildlife trade

Wildlife trade is any sale or exchange by people of wild animal and plant resources. Fisheries and timber dominate the international wildlife trade in terms of volume and value. Nevertheless, this chapter does not consider trade in fisheries and timber, because it is already covered elsewhere in the report.

8.7.1. The scale and significance of the international wildlife trade

Most wildlife trade is within national borders, but there is an increasing volume of wildlife in international trade. A large proportion of the harvest of wildlife products is for domestic rural to urban trade, covering a variety of products, *e.g.* charcoal and wild meat.

While international trade statistics do exist – through customs data and reports to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) – these are only broadly indicative of the global situation since much trade is unregistered or unreported, with quantity routinely collected, but not value. Iqbal (1995) values trade in NWFPs (non-wood forest products) at over USD 11 billion per annum.

8.7.2. Maximising the pro-poor potential of the wildlife trade

The overall direction of flow of the international wildlife trade goes from developing countries to developed countries. This trade is characterised by long supply chains involving a large number of intermediaries between the original collector of the wildlife and the final consumer. While many rural poor are involved as primary collectors, it is rare for a collector to be selling direct to an exporter. As described by Neumann and Hirsch

(2000), “the structure of relationships between collectors, middlemen, traders and wholesalers can be highly complex, involving various elements of exploitation, risk, co-operation, collusion and resistance...the character of these relationships can shift through time, from locale to locale and at different points along the marketing chain ... lack of access to information, transport, credit and storage facilities combine to keep collectors at a great disadvantage in the market place. And these conditions provide plenty of opportunities for intermediaries to position themselves as almost unavoidable links in the marketing chain.”

Shortening the supply chain is often seen as the easy answer to increasing income to collectors. But marketing collectives might be a better route, as intermediaries perform many vital functions, e.g. transport, packing and risk taking in the medicinal plant trade in Nepal. Removing intermediaries would expose collectors to the volatility of the industry.

Another approach to increasing incomes for the poor is the introduction of a private voluntary standard (PVS) into a wildlife trade supply chain that both facilitates trade and obtains decent returns for poorer industry participants. Examples include “fair trade” of non-timber forest products and recent proposals to produce sustainable exotic leather.

Such approaches have limited value when dealing with luxury goods. For example, consumers buy crocodilian leather produced from wild-sourced *Crocodylus porosus* from Papua New Guinea for its brand name, fashionable styling and longevity, but not for its inherent social or environmental value.

8.7.3. Combat over-exploitation and illegal wildlife trade

While most wildlife trade is legal and often economically useful, it has the potential to be very damaging. Some wildlife trade is conducted illegally, usually driven by a demand for rare, protected species, which need to be smuggled and/or a desire to avoid paying taxes and duties. Recent overexploitation of wildlife for trade has affected countless species. Besides raising concerns with regard to biodiversity, these forms of wildlife trade undermine developing countries’ efforts to manage their natural resources for the long term benefit of the economy and society, as they hinder the ability of the public and particularly poor people to benefit from wildlife management.

East and Southeast Asia are among the regions in the world where parts of the wildlife trade are particularly damaging. The illegal trade in these regions in wild animals and plants (including fisheries and timber) is estimated to be worth many millions of dollars. In the early 1990s, the illegal wildlife trade in Vietnam was conservatively estimated at USD 24 million annually. In 2002, it was estimated at USD 66.5 million. In Thailand in 2003 a one day raid on Bangkok’s Chatuchak market seized 1 000 protected species worth USD 1.25 million. In early 2004, Chinese law enforcement seized the skins of 31 tigers – today there are only 50 tigers estimated to be left in the wild in China – worth more than USD 1.2 million (World Bank, 2005a).

In the Mekong riparian states of Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam, and southern China, over-exploitation of wild plants and animals for trade (both legal and illegal) is considered to be the single greatest threat to many species, even more than habitat loss and degradation. Today, wildlife eradication happens even more quickly than deforestation.

Policies to address these harmful forms of wildlife trade should include a) a better understanding of the dynamics of the trade; b) regulatory controls at the national and

regional levels; c) incentives for better management of the species most under threat; d) improved awareness of the threats from the trade; and e) engagement of stakeholders at many levels and in different places.

Notes

1. A joint statement to the scientific body of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD SBSSTA) in 2004 noted that six of the biggest conservation organisations invest USD 500 million per annum in developing countries.
2. See www.propoortourism.org.uk for further details on the contribution of tourism to poverty reduction and to pro-poor growth.
3. The share of income from tourism which accrues to parties outside that particular destination (through, *e.g.* national taxes, payment for goods and services procured from outside the tourism area etc.) is called “leakage”.
4. For an extensive discussion see Emerton (2001).
5. For a discussion of other arguments for and against trophy hunting, *e.g.* ethical and biological considerations, see also Lindsey *et al.* (2006).

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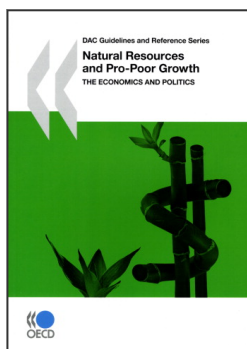
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