

WILDLIFE - WATCHING TOURISM OF ROMANIA AND ITS IMPACT ON SPECIES AND HABITATS

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Abstract

Wildlife-watching tourism from Romania starts to become more popular among foreign tourists, who want to see the large carnivores from Carpathians or the rare birds of the Danube Delta.

Romania is a privileged country, as the second largest population of large carnivores in Europe is concentrated in the Carpathians (Predoiu, 2010), and the Danube Delta is a paradise of birds. Romania occupies the second place in Europe after Finland among countries in which can be practiced bear-watching (Wildlife Worldwide, 2012).

The high biodiversity and the untouched habitats from these “sensitive” areas, makes the impact of the tourism to be more stronger, so it is required the sustainable management of this type of ecotourism. In order to have a healthy management of this tourism type, it is necessary to understand the behavior of species, habitat requirements of species and area limits where tourists can interact with certain species, so that neither species and nor tourists does not suffer.

Keywords: wildlife – watching tourism, biodiversity, ecotourism, biodiversity conservation.

Introduction

The extent wildlife-watching site in Romania is still low, although our country's potential is high. It is known that the highest levels of biodiversity are found in less developed countries, which offer the best destinations for wildlife-watching (Higginbottom, 2004).

Now many tourists prefer to see and interact with wildlife inside their habitat near as possible to experience authentic habitats. (Shackley, 1996).

Romania's main problem is that this type of tourism takes place generally punctual in two important areas of the country: the Danube Delta, Bucegi and Piatra Craiului. These locations are already transformed in brands of the wildlife watching tourism from Romania, those locations are getting increasingly affected by tourism in general and this kind of tourism in particular. Soon tourists eager to see specimens of wild animals will find habituated specimens similar to those from circuses or zoos, accustomed to the presence of people. Human influence on species changes the behavior first and then their natural adaptations, leading to degenerate specimens which are not longer a sample of emblematic species of the Carpathians and the Danube Delta.

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Wildlife watching tourism is a controversial issue. Some conservationists say that this kind of tourism adversely affect species and their habitats, while others argue that if well managed, this kind of tourism can be a tool for biodiversity conservation, (Corazon & Sinha, 2001).

The aim of this article is to discuss the basics of wildlife-watching tourism from a geographical perspective, by showing in which situation is this kind of tourism into Romania and assessing impact on species and habitats in regions where such tourist activities are carried out.

What is wildlife and wildlife watching tourism?

Wildlife tourism has emerged as a way to ensure sustainable economic benefits, while supporting local communities and wildlife conservation, (Shackley, 1996). Wildlife tourism is the type of tourism based on encounters with non-domestic animals (non-humanized). These encounters with animals can take place either in the wild or in captivity. This kind of tourism can also be classified as of consumption (examples: hunting or capturing wildlife and recreational fishing) or non-consumption (examples: wildlife watching, photographing, feeding), depending on the reasons of entertainment of visitors and the level of interaction, visitors – wild animals, desired (Corazon & Sinha, 2001).

Wildlife-watching tourism, being also the subject of this article will be among more detailed below. The term wildlife is a general term but from a technical standpoint it covers both fauna and flora, but used into popular meaning of this term refers particularly to wild animals. Wildlife-watching tourism is centered on wildlife viewing, free into their natural habitat, this fact just makes him different from other forms of wildlife-based activities such as hunting or fishing. Wildlife viewing is essentially an observational activity, although in some cases may involve interactions with animals seen as touching (caressing) or feeding them. This kind of tourism relatively easy to perform, has grown rapidly in recent years (Tapper, 2006), as proven by a simple internet search, after which you will have many examples of travel companies that are either focused on wildlife-watching tours or promote their tourism offers through wildlife-watching as an optional activity which may be enjoyed by their customers.

The tourism industry it tends to use the term of “wildlife tourism” instead of “wildlife-watching tourism”. In most of the cases the two terms have identical meaning, but wildlife tourism is sometimes used to refer to tourism focused on hunting and fishing, and sometimes is used for tourism based on observation of wild animals in captivity, where animals no longer live a wild life.

The way in which this kind of tourism and wildlife-watching is taking place in the context that is made, is variable and could be included the following activities:

- Accidental encounters with wild animals in protected areas (eg National Parks, Natural Parks), without any direct involvement of tour operators.

This is a popular wildlife watching method in the USA, Canada, Australia and some parts of Europe, here being included also Romania ;

- Specialized wildlife watching tours, such as bird - watching, bear - watching, safari tours;
- Visit of local attractions that sheltering a high density of wild animals, such as colonies of bats in caves, migration corridors of mammals or birds, feeding areas and breeding of wild animals (areas of reproduction of stags, nesting places of Western Capercaillie, etc.)
- Tours based on nature walks which include wildlife observation (a national park tour, tour of some protected areas, hiking areas with specific habitats (alpine, coniferous forest), which includes the component of wildlife;
- Tours of research, conservation or education involving wildlife, offered by organizations whose main aim is not tourism (examples: universities, schools, environmental NGOs and public institutions or private activities that interact with wildlife);
- Sightseeing tours that involves accidental encounters of wildlife;
- Accommodation in areas surrounded by wildlife (sheepfolds huts, shelters, farms, etc.) and other tourist activities (climbing, trekking, volunteering) which take place in areas surrounded by wildlife.

Notice so that wildlife tourism has various direct and indirect forms of expression, but the scope of this article is those direct, those are intended principally observing the wildlife in its natural habitat, wildlife-watching tours that specialized.

Wildlife-watching tourism of Romania

Still at the beginning, wildlife watching tourism is developing continuously and rapidly in Romania, with currently over 30 tour operators who are specialized in wildlife watching tourism, which are intended Romania. As figure 1, over half of them are foreign tour operators, mostly in Britain.

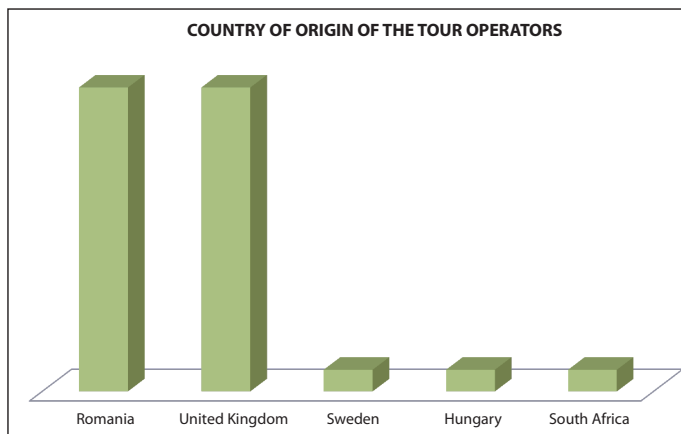


Figure 1

Wildlife watching tourism of Romania involves several interest groups (stakeholders). For wildlife watching tourism is among the stakeholders: local community, public institutions and private companies that manage the areas where it takes place wildlife-watching tourism, NGOs with interest in biodiversity conservation, tourism industry representatives here being included: tour operators, local operators, guides, suppliers of services (accommodation, meals) and of course tourists.

Each group, according to Table 1, has its own interests and responsibilities, and the tourism made on a medium to long term is highly dependent on the interest groups that must play their roles.

Stakeholders and their interest in to wildlife-watching tourism	
Stakeholder	Interest in the wildlife-watching tourism
The local community	Protect the environment and goods belonging to them, minimizing social and cultural disruption; Potential to gain benefits through tourism: improving local services and infrastructure, jobs, local business opportunities for income generation.
Administrators of public or private hunting grounds , conservation NGOs	Protection of wildlife habitats, biodiversity and the environment generally; Potential to generate revenue and greater public awareness through tourism to support conservation and demonstrate the importance of conserving habitats, local and public administration.
National and local government	The potential economic and tourism development at national, regional and local level.
Tour operators	Development potential of the company and development of a market based on wildlife-watching. This depends not only on market demand, but also the local conditions: infrastructure and access to site, lodging and meals, if there are local trusted business partners who provide services (guiding, accommodation, meals).
Operators and local guides	Development potential of a tourism market products based on wildlife-watching . This can be done only for a local or regional market, but to reach the international market, local operators should build links with international tour operators offering tours worldwide.
Accommodation	Wildlife-watching is a potential tourist attraction, thus increasing the number and length of stay.

Stakeholders and their interest in to wildlife-watching tourism

Tourists	Interest in activities of wildlife-watching, memorable experiences, good translators /interpreters and guides. For some tourists, this kind of tourism is an opportunity to experience local culture and interact with the local community, elements that should be considered in such tours.
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Table 1: Stakeholder groups and their interests in wildlife-watching tourism

Two areas stand out as the main destinations of Romanian tourism of wildlife-watching: the Danube Delta and the region of Brasov - Zarnesti with Bucegi and Piatra Craiului Mountains.

Romania has managed to create two major brands that are a “must do” for foreign tourists interested in wildlife in this country, they are bears and the birds of the Danube Delta. These two elements rare in Europe are the two strengths of the Romanian tourism.

It is noticed that most tour operators do not address the Romanian tourists but the foreign tourists, the offers and web pages are written exclusively in foreign languages: English, French or German rarely translated into Romanian. This is understandable, Romanians living in this wild country, but few of them enjoy the beauty of nature. Another reason is the high price of this kind of specialized tourism, ranging to around 1000 euros for 7 days.

For these amounts the tourists amateurs of wildlife can choose specialized tours: bird watching, bear watching, large carnivores watching, on the tracks of wild animals, combined ecotours.

The offer of tour operators is diverse, tourists can choose to observe in Romania between: 337 species of birds, 23 species of amphibians, 36 reptiles, 86 species of mammals, 140 species of butterflies and moths, 84 species of dragonflies, 50 species of trees and over 1500 species of flowers. Many of them are rare and protected species concentrated in protected areas and buffer zones strictly restricted.

Tourists can choose what species they want to see, so will enjoy personalized tours in different locations. The map in Figure 2, tours manage to cover so much biodiversity, only visiting the following locations: Bucegi Mountains – Piatra Craiului Mountains - Danube Delta - Black Sea Coast.

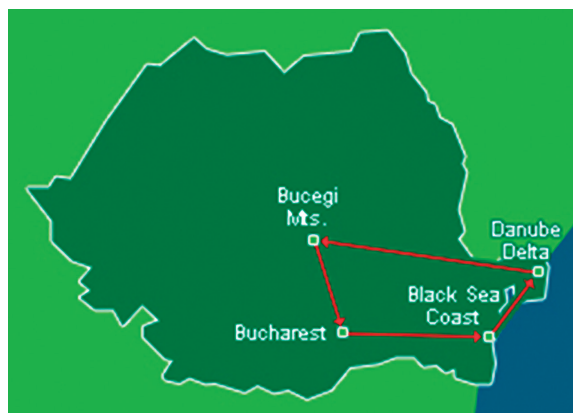


Figure 2: General wildlife watching tour from Romania

Most of the tours are conducted by the following scenario: start in Bucharest Henri Coanda International Airport, where the tourists are taken by the staff of tour operators. Then they are transported into Brasov or Zarnesti to the mountain where they can see birds of prey daytime and night, songbirds, chamois and bears into observatories of Zarnesti. Accidental wolves or lynx can be found, that are more rare and difficult to see which is due to their ethology, repulsive to man. After several trips in Bucegi and Piatra Craiului Massifs the group of tourists is heading to Tulcea where they will enjoy the bird paradise of the Danube Delta.

The tour continues on the Black Sea coast (Laguna Razelm – Sinoe Vadu and Histria) making observations on the avifauna. The tour ends with floral and bird observations into Macin Mountains and Babadag Plateau following then the return to Bucharest.

Since these areas have high biodiversity, the impact of tourism on them is also high. We will discuss in the following pages, strictly on the impact of wildlife-watching tourism without to consider another kind of tourism that would increase the list of impact on species and habitats.

No.	Tour Operator	Area Offered	Headquarters	Activities	Natural Attractions Offered
1	Roving România	Piatra Craiului, Bucegi, Podișul Târnavelor	Bod, RO	Large carnivores watching, Birdwatching	Bear, wolf, lynx, diurnal and nocturnal birds of prey
2	IBIS Tours	Piatra Craiului, Bucegi, Delta Dunării	Tulcea, RO	Large carnivores watching, Birdwatching	Bear, wolf, lynx, diurnal and nocturnal birds of prey, mountain birds, songbirds, waterfowl, insects, flowers
3	Absolute Carpathian	Piatra Craiului, Bucovina, Delta Dunării	Zărnești, RO	Large carnivores watching, Birdwatching	Bear, wolf, lynx, diurnal and nocturnal birds of prey, mountain birds, songbirds, waterfowl, insects, flowers
4	AVESTOURS	Piatra Craiului, Delta Dunării, Dobrogea	Odorheiul Secuiesc, RO	Birdwatching, wildlife watching, nature tours, combined ecotours	Bear, wolf, lynx, diurnal and nocturnal birds of prey, mountain birds, songbirds, waterfowl, insects, flowers
5	Romania Travel Centre	Piatra Craiului, Delta Dunării, Dobrogea	Tunbridge Wells, UK	Birdwatching, wildlife watching, nature tours, combined ecotours	Bear, wolf, lynx, diurnal and nocturnal birds of prey, mountain birds, songbirds, waterfowl, insects, flowers

No.	Tour Operator	Area Offered	Headquarters	Activities	Natural Attractions Offered
6	Naturetrek	Piatra Craiului, Bucegi, Delta Dunării, Dobrogea	Hampshire, UK	Birdwatching, wildlife watching, nature tours, combined ecotours	Bear, wolf, lynx, diurnal and nocturnal birds of prey, mountain birds, songbirds, waterfowl, insects, flowers
7	Atu Travel	Piatra Craiului, Bucegi, Delta Dunării, Dobrogea	București, RO	Birdwatching, wildlife watching, nature tours, combined ecotours	Bear, wolf, lynx, diurnal and nocturnal birds of prey, mountain birds, songbirds, waterfowl, insects, flowers
8	AviFauna	Piatra Craiului, Bucegi, Delta Dunării, Dobrogea	Morbylanga, SE	Birdwatching, wildlife watching, nature tours, combined ecotours	Bear, wolf, lynx, diurnal and nocturnal birds of prey, mountain birds, songbirds, waterfowl, insects, flowers
9	Tour Dust	Piatra Craiului, Delta Dunării	Tring, UK	Birdwatching, wildlife watching, nature tours, combined ecotours	Bear, wolf, lynx, diurnal and nocturnal birds of prey, mountain birds, songbirds, waterfowl, insects, flowers
10	Papyrus Tours	Piatra Craiului, Delta Dunării, Dobrogea	East Yorkshire, UK	Birdwatching, wildlife watching, nature tours, combined ecotours	Bear, wolf, lynx, diurnal and nocturnal birds of prey, mountain birds, songbirds, waterfowl, insects, flowers
11	ResponsibleTravel	Piatra Craiului, Delta Dunării, Dobrogea	East Sussex, UK	Birdwatching, wildlife watching, nature tours, combined ecotours	Bear, wolf, lynx, diurnal and nocturnal birds of prey, mountain birds, songbirds, waterfowl, insects, flowers
12	EcoTours	Bucegi, Delta Dunării, Litoral Marea Neagră	Budakeszi, HU	Birdwatching, wildlife watching, nature tours, combined ecotours	Bear, wolf, lynx, diurnal and nocturnal birds of prey, mountain birds, songbirds, waterfowl, insects, flowers
13	Carpathian Nature Tours	Bucegi, Piatra Craiului, Delta Dunării (partener)	Sat Măgura, RO	Birdwatching, wildlife watching, nature tours, combined ecotours	Bear, diurnal and nocturnal birds of prey, mountain birds, songbirds, waterfowl, insects, flowers

No.	Tour Operator	Area Offered	Headquarters	Activities	Natural Attractions Offered
14	CENTRE FOR MOUNTAIN ECOLOGY	Bucegi, Piatra Craiului, Leaota	Moeciu, RO	Birdwatching, wildlife watching, nature tours, combined ecotours	Large carnivores, diurnal and nocturnal birds of prey, mountain birds, songbirds, waterfowl
15	DELTA TRAVEL	Delta Dunării, Retezat	București, RO	Birdwatching, wildlife watching, nature tours, combined ecotours	Diurnal and nocturnal birds of prey, mountain birds, songbirds, waterfowl
16	Fundatia Adept	Târnava Mare	Saschiz, RO	Birdwatching, wildlife watching, nature tours, combined ecotours	Bear, wolf, lynx, diurnal and nocturnal birds of prey, mountain birds, songbirds, waterfowl, insects, flowers
17	INTER PARES	Transilvania, Dobrogea, Banat, Bucovina	Sibiu, RO	Birdwatching, wildlife watching, nature tours, combined ecotours	Bear, wolf, lynx, diurnal and nocturnal birds of prey, mountain birds, songbirds, waterfowl, insects, flowers,
18	KALNOKI GUESTHOUSES AND ESTATE	Brasov, Valea Oltului, Sighișoara	Micloșoara, RO	Birdwatching, wildlife watching, nature tours, combined ecotours	Large carnivores, diurnal and nocturnal birds of prey, mountain birds, songbirds, waterfowl, herbivores
19	TRIFOI GUESTHOUSE	Munții Nemira, Ciuc, Vrancei	Oituz, RO	Birdwatching, wildlife watching, nature tours, combined ecotours	Diurnal and nocturnal birds of prey, mountain birds, songbirds and plants
20	PROFESSIONAL TEAM	Piatra Craiului	Brașov, RO	Birdwatching, wildlife watching, nature tours, combined ecotours	Bear, wolf, lynx, chamois, diurnal and nocturnal birds of prey, mountain birds, songbirds, insects, flowers
21	TIOC NATURE & STUDY TRAVEL	Delta Dunării, Retezat, Dobrogea	Cisnădie, RO	Birdwatching, wildlife watching, nature tours, combined ecotours	Bear, wolf, lynx, diurnal and nocturnal birds of prey, mountain birds, songbirds, waterfowl, insects, flowers

No.	Tour Operator	Area Offered	Headquarters	Activities	Natural Attractions Offered
22	Avian Adventures	Delta Dunării	Stourbridge, UK	Birdwatching,	Diurnal and nocturnal birds of prey, songbirds, waterfowl
23	Birdfinders	Delta Dunării, Bucegi,	Cheselbourne, UK	Birdwatching,	Diurnal and nocturnal birds of prey, songbirds, waterfowl
24	Indri Ultimate Mammal Voyages	Bucegi, Piatra Craiului	Cape Town, ZA	Mammals Watching	Lynx, bear, wolf, badger, stag, roe deer, wild boar
25	Limosa	Delta Dunării, Coasta Mării Negre	Stalham, UK	Birdwatching	Diurnal and nocturnal birds of prey, songbirds, waterfowl
26	Ribble Bird Tours	Transilvania	Blackpool, UK	Birdwatching	Diurnal and nocturnal birds of prey, songbirds, waterfowl
27	Speyside Wildlife	Piatra Craiului, Delta Dunării	Aviemore, UK	Birdwatching , bear-watching	Diurnal and nocturnal birds of prey, songbirds, waterfowl, bear
28	Sunbird	Bucovina, Delta Dunării, Coasta Mării Negre	Potton, UK	Birdwatching	Diurnal and nocturnal birds of prey, songbirds, waterfowl
29	The Travelling Naturalist	Delta Dunării, Coasta Mării Negre	Dorchester, UK	Birdwatching	Diurnal and nocturnal birds of prey, songbirds, waterfowl
30	Wildlife Travel	Delta Dunării	Great Cambourne, UK	Birdwatching	Diurnal and nocturnal birds of prey, songbirds, waterfowl
31	Exodus	Piatra Craiului, Bucegi	London, UK	Mammals Watching	Large carnivores, herbivores, diurnal and nocturnal birds of prey, birds alpinesongbirds

Table 2: Tour operators of wildlife - watching of Romania and customer service

Tourism impacts of wildlife watching on species and habitats

Wildlife tourism can bring benefits to conservation of biological diversity, but also can generate many adverse effects. These can arise either directly caused by wildlife-watching activities or indirectly through the development of tourism infrastructure. These side effects can be avoided or minimized through effective management and development of this kind of tourism, the activities should be checked and should be set a limit of tourists. For example, limiting the number of

visitors and escorting groups of visitors by the guides, helps to minimize the direct impact on species and habitats.

For proper operation, wildlife-watching activities must be well planned, managed and monitored, so they will have a minimal effect on species and habitats which are observed by visitors and will also bring benefits of local communities.

Wildlife tourism operators must ensure that through their activities do not affect species and habitats because their business depends on them.

Negative impact

Wildlife watching tourism can have many negative effects. These may vary from short-term changes in physiology or behavior of the species to long-term effects such as increased mortality, reducing the rate of mating and habitat degradation. These effects occur not only to species on which the tourists focuses on, but also to other species, less charismatic, that have no interest for tourists.

Species that are disturbed will spend less time feeding or resting, and will use more energy to go away from sources of disturbance, they can often leaving the areas rich in food, can be affected by higher competition with other species, and may be more vulnerable to predators in areas where retreat to escape the tourists.

At the same time the species that hibernates may change hibernate behavior, when animals are lured to feeders near observatories, because the existence of food resources, animals do not hibernates or diminish their hibernation. Also because of their feeding some species become habitual and no longer hunts it apperas unavoidable disturbances in the ecosystem.

Disturbance of wintering sites of species that hibernates can cause serious physiological changes which can lead to death. For example induced awakening of bats from hibernation, it consumes energy that would have been necessary still for 50 days of hibernation, leading to death of individuals (Thomas, 1995).

Species are also affected during the mating periods, mating rituals elicit just such a special interest, for example the mating ritual of stags or of the mountain cock. Disturbance of the species during the breeding season has the effect of reducing populations and on long term, endangering the survival of the populations.

There are species with offspring, when disturbed by tourist activities, they will be forced to leave their offspring and they are exposed to hazards (starvation and predators), resulting also in diminishing of populations.

Recent studies have found physiological changes of species, generated by tourism activities, these changes relate to alterations in blood chemistry, due to high stress (Tapper, 2006).

Some sensitive species are susceptible to diseases carried by humans, diseases that they have not developed immunity. Interactions with tourists can arise the risk of disease transmission to these animals which are observed.

The destruction and disturbance of habitat occurs when are large flows of tourists, which produce large amounts of waste, illegally can collect rare plants, produce noise, emissions and light pollution.

Potential effects of wildlife watching tourism on species and habitats	
The factor involved	Effect on species and habitats
Tourist overcrowding	Stress and behavior change of animals
Excessive development of tourism	High density of human structures, unsightly development
Recreational activities: <i>a) Boat</i> <i>b) Trekking</i>	a) Disturbance of wildlife of their natural feeding behavior, mating and resting, noise pollution. b) disturbance of wildlife, destruction of vegetation and soil erosion on trails.
Pollution: <i>a) Noise</i> <i>b) Waste</i> <i>c) Vandalism</i>	a) Disturbance of natural sounds of certain animals (callings), the quiet of the wildlife. b) Degradation of the natural landscape, endangering the lives of wild animals and risks on the health of the travelers. c) natural attractions mutilation, removal of plants for private gardens.
Artificial feeding: <i>a) Feeding by tourists.</i> <i>b) Create artificial feeders</i>	a) wildlife behavioral changes, decreased confidence, danger to tourists. b) High density (which is not natural) of wild animals, destruction of vegetation in the area
Vehicles (speed, night driving and off-road driving)	Accidental mortality of wildlife, soil degradation and vegetation, wildlifedisturbance, air pollution.
Infrastructure: <i>a) Roads</i> <i>b) Power lines</i> <i>c) Storage of waste</i> <i>d) Supply of firewood</i>	a) Disturbance of wildlife, barrier effect, loss and fragmentation of habitats, aesthetic effects. b) loss of vegetation, aesthetic impact. c) The emergence of problem wild animals (habituated) which use to eat from garbage, health risk, danger to tourists. d) Disturbance of habitat, mortality among creatures, changing the biogeochemicalcircuits.
Other factors: <i>a) Collection of souvenir</i> <i>b) Introduction of alien species and plants</i>	a) extraction of natural attractions, encourage poaching, interruption of natural processes. b) competition with native species, habitat alteration, public confusion

Table 3. Source: Adapted from Thorsell, 1984

The positive impact

Wildlifewatching tourism is a good way of raising funds for conservation of species and habitats. Numerous economic studies have shown that wildlife-watching tourism brings economic benefits significantly higher than the capture and killing of certain species for meat, fur or trophy (Tapper, 2006).

In order to contribute to biodiversity conservation, wildlife watching tourism, must be applied some certain conditions (Tapper, 2006), for each area where is practiced:

- Cover the costs:
 - For tourism management in order to avoid or reduce to a minimum damage;
 - Insurance and maintenance of adequate facilities for tourists;
 - To increase awareness among tourists of the importance of conservation practices, and encourage a behavior that helps conservation;
 - To restore the damage that wildlife watching tourism it causes;
- Generate additional revenue from tourism, which can be used to support general conservation activities;
- The demonstration through wildlife tourism long-term an economic importance of the conservation, both nationally and locally, by generating real benefits for local communities, for example, jobs and stimulate private sector.

The main ways in which wildlife watching tourism can bring benefits to biodiversity conservation are schematized in Figure 3. This diagram shows the links between key components: wildlife, people and money. The ways in which wildlife tourism can bring benefits to conservation can be classified into several categories:

- Biodiversity management and supporting research. The involvement of operators and their clients in conservation activities of species and habitats as part of tourism activities.
- The use of income resulting from wildlife-watching tourism to fund conservation projects. Funds resulting are being used by operators to improve the conservation status or by organizations that have such initiatives.
- The provision of socio - economic inducements for conservation. Operators involved in wildlife watching tourism and communities that have economic benefits from this kind of tourism will assist nature conservation a resource on which depends their business.
- Educating the visitors, so that they support and increase conservation. This can be enhanced through political support and pressure for conservation by tourists and thereby influence the behavior of visitors to biodiversity, or prompting them to donate or volunteer for conservation.

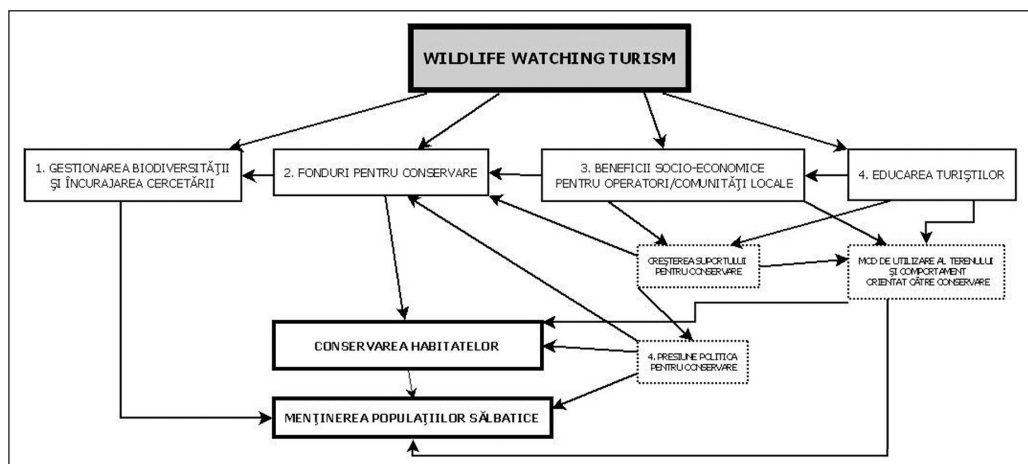


Figure 3: Positive consequences for wildlife – watching tourism , adapted from Higginbottom, 2003

To direct more funds to conservation from wildlife tourism we should limit the access to the sensitive habitats and we can use the following mechanisms:

- Entrance fees
- User fees
- Concessions and rentals
- Charges commercial activities
- Taxes
- Volunteering
- Donations

Most of the funds are made through entrance fees in areas where you can see a high density of wild animals (eg protected areas), user charges for those who practices certain activities in nature (eg, riding, cycling, use of wildlife watching observatories, etc.) and rental fees and concession of Infrastructure and sites, for tour operators who organize tours for wildlife watching (Higginbottom, 2004).

In areas with high tourist flow gathers significant funds for conservation, donations from visitors and the travel companies that offer some of the profit obtained from activities carried out in the area. Volunteering tourism (where tourists pay to participate in research, monitoring and conservation of species and habitats under the guidance of qualified persons), makes a double contribution to conservation, both financial support and volunteer manpower involved in activities conservation.

It is clear that there are a large variety of mechanisms by which wildlife watching tourism contributes to conservation, but it is hard to quantify these contributions on species and habitats, although there is an economic indicator of the scale at which it operates. However it is clear that it brings major benefit of wildlife conservation through tourism watching in Romania benefits is generally resumed to education and awareness of visitors.

Conclusion

This article showed that the impact of tourism in general and wildlife-watching tourism in particular on species and habitats is observable but is still less widely understood. The specialized literature studying this domain presents few quantitative studies, which are based on generalizations about the impact of wildlife-watching tourism on species and habitats. Most of the studies are descriptive and theoretical.

By searching for specific data, I wished to do a quantitative analysis of wildlife-watching tourism in Romania by identifying all the tour operators that offers tours of wildlife – watching in Romania and to create a realistic picture of the magnitude that has this kind of tourism, identifying the species and the habitats that are affected together with species identification I made a statistic about the geographic location where the touristic tour operators carry out the wildlife observation tours.

Continuous destruction of natural habitats and extinction of species within the habitats are serious environmental problems increasingly discussed. Many of these ecosystems in decline represents the development of tourism (beaches, deltas, mountains, forests, wetlands) and tourism activities (skiing, trekking, wildlife-watching). Through this article we showed that wildlife-watching activities overlap with these fragile areas with a high density of wildlife that is why these areas are very vulnerable to anthropogenic activities. We have shown that biodiversity is essential to ensure continuity of wildlife watching - tourism, resource which depends on.

I realized that this kind of tourism requires careful planning to avoid negative impacts on biodiversity, many of the factors causing biodiversity loss (land use changes, topoclimate change, pollution, etc.) is due to tourism development.

At the same time we have shown that tourism development driven by the principles of ecotourism can have positive effects on local communities and can contribute to biodiversity conservation.

A correct management of tourism, to ensure social and environmental benefits, requires a durable, collaboration between public institutions, private companies and local communities.

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