

Monitoring and management of visitor flows in recreational and protected areas: use and abuse of nature areas in Taman Negara (National Park) Pahang, Malaysia

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Many developing countries successfully use the attractions of nature to promote tourism in protected and unprotected areas. The attainment of sustainable tourism requires careful management of tourists to prevent deleterious effects on the environment, the host community and visitor satisfaction. The emphasis on tourism management and sustainable development is based on the diligent usage of available resources, especially in the context of planning, commitment and the involvement of management as well as the interested parties. The sustainability concept evolves around elements; be it the development of urban, economic, culture and the like which should ensure the continuous sustainability of the next generation, even though the demand and change of development has becoming more challenging.

The focus is on 'Taman Negara' or National Park in Malaysia which is embedded with various tourism packages. Taman Negara is a protected area of international importance as reflected in its listing as an Association of South East Asian (ASEAN) Heritage Site (DWNP 1987, ASEAN 1988). Taman Negara comes under the protection of three Malaysian states of the states of Kelantan, Pahang and Terengganu by the Taman Negara Enactments of 1938 and 1939 (DWNP 1987). The park was established for the "propagation, protection, and preservation of indigenous flora and fauna, and of the preservation of objects and places of aesthetic, historical and scientific interest" (Anon 1971, DWNP 1987, Abdullah 1995). TNNP is also governed by the Wildlife Act No. 76 of 1972 which requires the conservation of indigenous wildlife and natural habitats within this national park (Wildlife Act 1972).

Thus, the main goal of this study is: To develop a visitor management strategy in order to realize the sustainable high quality nature based visitor experience that is promised by the Taman Negara. To achieve the mentioned goal, the following objectives will looked into: To investigate the characteristic of visitor to Taman Negara; Examine the motivations of visitor to Taman Negara; Explore appropriate activities and facilities that can be introduced in the Taman Negara, for preservation and to promote the concept of sustainable use of resources to ensure its sustainability both now and in the future in Taman Negara

This paper also will analyze elements of sustainability tourism which will be realized in the research area of effective management. This paper will specifically examine the management of various departments over this national park. Among the elements examined are the ability to increase the place integrity based on the location, to generate the local economy and to protect the nature. Without proper management, over the time the number of visitors might be decreased and very minimal sources of fund flow in. As a result, the beauty of the park would be left unappreciable.

Studies are normally conducted in order to add to an existing body of knowledge through new or different research methods, techniques or operations. In preparing this study, several approaches were used towards gathering data. At the literature search stage, information about visitor management in protected areas was gathered from relevant books, journals, government publications, conference papers and reports; theses and dissertations; and from international

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sources. During the initial study period, the researcher was based at the Department of Wildlife and National Parks, Jerantut Municipal Council, Tourism Department, Kuantan Municipal Council and Forest Department to find the relevant data. As for the collection of primary data, several different instruments were used. Firstly, a self-administered questionnaire was used to collate important information and data on visitors to the park. The use of a questionnaire is basically a process of asking questions to visitors who are believed to have the necessary information relevant to the study.

Based on the analysis of the results, the following conclusions can also be drawn from this study.

- The protected area must have a visitor management plan which is implemented, regularly evaluated and updated;
- The protected area provides a wide spectrum of nature-based activities and facilities for different target groups;
- Visitors are offered good opportunities to observe and experience wildlife and other natural features of the area, such as the emblematic charismatic species, attractive landscapes and serenity;
- Good information is provided to visitors with the aim to increase support for nature conservation.

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