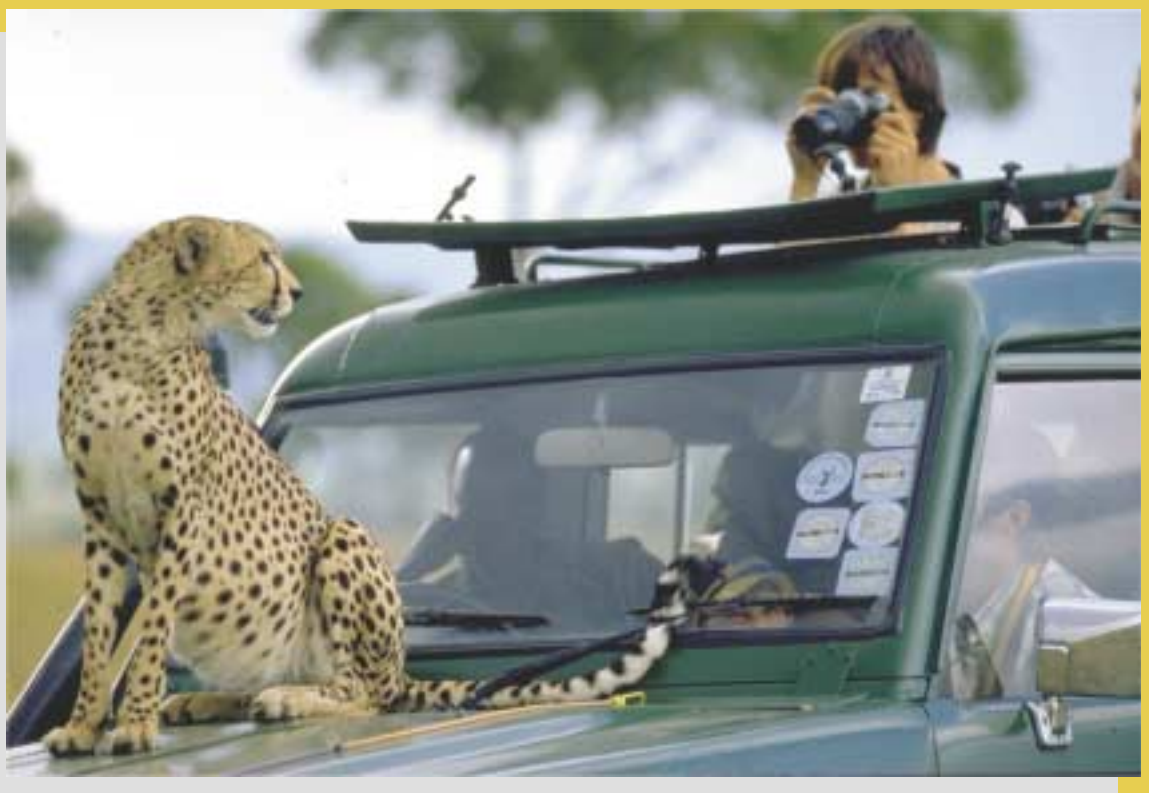
World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA)

Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas

Guidelines for Planning and Management

Paul F. J. Eagles, Stephen F. McCool
and Christopher D. Haynes

Adrian Phillips, Series Editor



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Guidelines for Marine Protected Areas. No. 3. Graeme Kelleher, 1999, xxiv + 107pp.

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Prepared for the
United Nations Environment Programme, World Tourism Organization
and IUCN – The World Conservation Union

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Foreword by the United Nations Environment Programme

Tourism is good business, as it produces 4.4% of the world's GDP, and employs around 200 million people globally. It can also help the sustainable management of protected areas, as a market-based alternative catering to the growing number of discriminating travellers trying to find, understand and enjoy a natural environment. Tourism can support the protection of natural resources, as local residents realise the value of their asset and want to preserve it.

At the same time, our global heritage of living species is threatened as never before, as the protected areas that harbour so much of our biodiversity are exposed to the pressures of unsustainable development. The precautionary approach urges us to be especially concerned about tourism in protected areas, given the risk of damage and destruction to this unique natural resource.

Visitor impact management is ever more important as the number of tourists increases, and their distribution is often concentrated in major tourism destinations in ecologically vulnerable areas. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has been actively supporting protected area managers, working with WTO, UNESCO and IUCN, for over 12 years, through technical assistance to key stakeholders, and capacity building in projects and publications. This publication is the latest in this series, and UNEP is proud to be a partner in this milestone reference work.

Ensuring that tourism follows a truly sustainable path, and that it contributes to the sustainable management of protected areas, whether public or private, will require enhanced cooperation and concrete partnerships among the tourism industry, governments at all levels, local communities, protected area managers and planners, and the tourists themselves. This book describes how this can be done, and UNEP is happy to present it to all interested parties, especially protected area managers, on the occasion of the International Year of Ecotourism 2002.

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