

A Call for Tourism Studies: Wildlife Experiences that Maximize Visitor Satisfaction and Minimize Impact on Wildlife

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The protection for wildlife of interest to tourists and visitor satisfaction with wildlife tours are both critical for the long-term sustainability of the wildlife tourism industry. To solve the dilemma between these potentially conflicting goals, research is needed on wildlife experiences that minimize impacts for wildlife and maximize visitor satisfaction. We present two studies in the Australian rangelands that showcase that less intrusive viewing behaviour allows for a more rewarding wildlife experience with closer and longer-lasting observations of a more natural wildlife behaviour.

(1) The first study compared the results of nocturnal wildlife observation achieved with different observation techniques and used a questionnaire-based survey to assess visitors' preferences for nocturnal wildlife observation in Australia. The findings from the wildlife observation and visitor survey were consolidated to recommend an optimal tour design. (2) The second study determined the typical properties of visitor approaches to Red Kangaroos (*Macropus rufus*) and Euros (*M. robustus erubescens*) and simulated these to identify the least intrusive approach behaviour under different environmental conditions with the highest potential for visitor satisfaction.

We discuss the critical factors for conceptualising such studies including the cooperation between scientists and tourism practitioners.

Preference: Spoken Paper

Student. No

Nominated theme: Human Dimensions of Wildlife Management