Integrated Conservation and Management of Urban Wetlands

Value of wetlands in ecotourism

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Importance of wetland ecosystem, types of wetland and resources

Value of wetland in ecotourism

Issues and challenges, recommendations
Introduction

- Wetlands cover about 6% of land surface worldwide
- Invaluable components of environment, ecology, resource and biodiversity
- Ecological functions are significance to the society
- Ecosystem functions provide good and services that have an economic and social cultural value to the local community
- Considered as precious resources
- Benefits and key functions of wetlands are widely discussed and document, but values of wetland (ecotourism) is quite limited
The total economic value of 63 million hectares of wetland around the world was estimated at $3.4 billion per year.

Wetlands in Asia have the highest economic value at $1.8 billion per year.

Figure can higher if we take the estimate cited by Ramsar of global wetland area to be 12.8 million km square.

The total economic value of the world’s wetlands (based on the functions examined) can be estimated at $70 billion per year.
Economic value of wetlands

- values of wetland ecosystems: scientific, economics, aesthetic, spiritual benefits, ecotourism

- Decision makers often have little understanding of the economic value of wetlands

- Wetlands are often perceived as having little or no value compared with uses that yield more visible and immediate economic benefits (Schuyt and Brander, 2004).

- Growing recognition that natural benefits of wetlands have real economic value

- Natural benefits and economic value of wetlands are increasingly being recognized by decision makers

- Economics values of wetland can be linked to ecotourism
Benefits of Wetlands

- Wetlands are amazing habitats for ecotourism
- Home for an exceptional high level of biodiversity

- Diversity of wildlife and dramatic seasonal changes in wetlands landscapes make them an ideal platform for nature-based tourism.

- Wetlands are now recognized as important features in the landscape that provide numerous beneficial services for people, fish and wildlife.

- These beneficial services, considered valuable to societies worldwide, are the result of the inherent and unique natural characteristics of wetlands.
Benefits of wetland ecosystem

■ Wetland is one most productive ecosystems with high level of biodiversity and productive environments in the world ((Thompson and Hollis, 1995)

■ Critical part of our natural environment and provide benefits to society

■ Interdependent of wetlands and people

■ Invaluable components of environment, ecology, resource potential and biodiversity

■ an integral part of local ecosystems, cultures and socio-economic conditions

■ Support important economic activities creating a link between economics and natural resources, which acts as the driving force for the transformations of wetlands (Ndetei, 2006)
Wetland types and potential ecotourism product

- Complex wetland
- Mountain range / national park
- Coastal resource / rivers
Wetland Resources

- Ecotourism attractions and sites /landscape
- Heritage /economics values
- Unique experiences: nature environment, landscapes and atmosphere
- Leisure and recreation activities: landscape
- Education and learning
Value of wetlands in ecotourism

- Natural benefits of wetland: ecological functions, source of substantial biodiversity, its landscape
- Key components of wetlands: environment, ecology, resources and biodiversity
- Valuable resources in the ecotourism context → wetland experiences to visitors

Visitor perception and experiences:
Educational Opportunities
Values of wetlands ecosystem in ecotourism

- Rich environments provide ecological interest and diversity.
- The scenic vistas of wetlands - an ideal area for nature photographers or painters.
- Writers, artists, and photographers have been drawn to wetlands to capture the beauty.
- High wildlife habitat with aesthetic pleasing environment see wildlife.
- Increasing valuable for open space (municipal, regional and state).
- Wetlands along streams provide natural green belts and corridors for wildlife.
- Provide substantial recreational values or economic benefits.
- Wetlands include plant and animal communities that increase the diversity of the landscape.
Values of biodiversity and wildlife habitat for ecotourism

- Wetlands offer habitat for wildlife
- Wetlands protect biodiversity, pristine habitat
- Many migratory birds and other wildlife depend on the ecological setting of wetlands for their survival
- Wetland areas and its habitats: unique sensory experiences and learning and educational activities.
Recreation, aesthetic and education and research values

- aesthetic value, recreational and educational value from wetland resources and landscape are excellent for ecotourism.
- Valuable open space and create wonderful recreational opportunities.
- Offer unique and rich recreational opportunities—hunting, fishing, canoeing, hiking, boating and bird watching.
- Opportunity to preserve open space near developed areas.
- Wetlands and the wildlife they attract are increasingly viewed as appealing by landowners and communities.
- Wetlands may be of value to transport, recreation and tourism.
- Wetlands—subjects and locations for education and research.
In short, value of wetlands in ecotourism

1. Amazing habitats for tourism: diversity of wildlife
2. Value to tour operators – nature-based tourism tours: unique images of wetland, wildlife viewing, recreational activities to attract visitors
3. Learning and educational experiences: conservation and appreciation
4. Range of economic benefits and opportunities for local communities
Concept of ecotourism in wetland

- Wetland is a remarkable biodiversity hot spot with the direct economic and environmental importance in the ecosystem → conversation and sustainable development
- “Ecotourism involves visiting natural areas with the objectives of learning, studying or participating in activities that do not bring negative effects to the environment; whilst protecting and empowering the local community socially and economically” (Cristina, 2004).
- Ecotourism is referred to as “sustainable tourism” – set of guidelines and principles on environment, economy and socio-culture
- Ecotourism helps to protect and conserve wetland, landscape and biodiversity
- Ecotourism ensures wetlands are protected in the long term
- Education, awareness and research are crucial to sustainability of wetlands
Ecotourism helps to conserve and protect wetland

- Ecotourism can educate landowners and businesses with regard to the functions and values of wetlands.
- Provide landowners, local governments, and local businesses with economic and cultural incentives for conservation of wetlands and other resources.
- Provide local economic benefits and incentives to local businesses and landowners for protection and restoration of wetlands through sales of gas, food, lodging, and gifts to ecotourists drawn to a wetland area.
- Develop local pride in community resources and a sense of uniqueness in the area.
- Education programs to educate businesses, landowners, students, and the general public with regard to the functions/values of wetlands and techniques available to manage and protect such areas locally, regionally, and nationally.
- For example, more people may walk the specific wetland; they learn about wetlands and the importance of protecting such areas.
- This helps develop support for protecting the wetlands in other areas.
Issues and challenges

- Fostering sustainable management of wetland ecosystem

- Promoting responsible ecotourism - balance and harmony between people and nature in wetlands

- Indigenous species and wild animals are important ecotourism attractions and vital need to protect the animals’ habitats

- Construction of tourism infrastructures - extra accommodation facilities, harbours, parking areas, and roads have been affecting the aesthetic values of the wetlands natural ecosystems.

- Lack of financial and human resources directly affects conservation and protection of wetland and its resources
Some recommendations...

1. Conservation, protection and restoration of wetlands as ecotourism attractions/sites
2. Promoting responsible consumption in wetlands through tourism
3. Wetland interpretation centre and professional guides
4. Strong political interference in effort to formulate comprehensive policies for ecotourism development in the wetland heritage sites, ecologically sensitive areas and national parks.
5. Identify types of specific/suitable ecotourism and activities for wetlands
6. Guidelines and responsible practices for sustainable wetland
7. Research related to wetland experiences and expectation, assessing the values and benefits of wetlands from tourism perspectives
CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT OF WETLANDS THROUGH NATURE-BASED TOURISM OR ECOTOURISM

Further research work and education program
Thank you