

**ECOTOURISM IN SCANDINAVIA**  
**Lessons in Theory and Practice**

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## Lessons in Theory and Practice

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Edited by

**S. Gössling and J. Hultman**

*Lund University, Helsingborg, Sweden*

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# Foreword

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## Ecotourism as process

I find it interesting to read this book on Scandinavian ecotourism. As a practitioner, I have worked with the implementation of ecotourism in Sweden since 2000. Based on my experiences, I find many conclusions in this book that I would like to underscore – and others that call for a debate. For example, is there a need to promote ecotourism through certifications or labelling – or is Scandinavia a ‘natural’ ecotourism destination? And is it possible to talk about ‘ecotourism’ when ecotourists travel by air? The very concept of ‘ecotourism’ can be difficult to accept when most travel is, arguably, not sustainable. This book includes many thoughts on these and other topics. I am sure a debate on sustainable development of tourism practices must be taken further, and this is consequently something all stakeholders involved in ecotourism should look towards.

Over the last year, international interest in *Nature’s Best*, the Swedish ecotourism quality labelling, has increased dramatically. I would thus like to present some information on how the Swedish Ecotourism Association is currently working. From the very beginning we have strived for ‘more and better ecotourism’. This motto grew from the recognition that ecotourism had become a broad concept that held no obligations and that ecotourism work was mainly working in marketing. The implementation of ecotourism in a credible and functional way is hard work and often based on compromise. It took us 2 years of expert- and reference-group meetings to form Nature’s Best’s criteria, involving more than 100 experts and stakeholders. We have learned that good marketing is an essential factor for the success of a label. Our approach has been to help tourists find the best nature tours from both quality and sustainability points of view. This includes helping service providers committed to sustainability to reach the market. We felt that care for natural and cultural heritage, local economy and local

social relations had to be combined with first-class experiences, if labelled ecotourism was to work commercially in a high-cost country like Sweden. The promotion of Swedish ecotourism has thus been based on communicating quality, excitement, fun and knowledge rather than ecology, green destinations or green tourism – we want the ecotourism aspect to come across as something positive, natural and profound when visiting the labelled companies.

The parts of Sweden where ecotourism is needed most are remote areas with vast natural resources, high unemployment and conflicts surrounding the use of natural resources. In such areas, economic restructuring has often meant decreasing job numbers in traditional industries such as forestry, while the protection of species such as wolf, bear, lynx or eagle has been seen to be of limited value. Ecotourism can contribute to sustainable income in these communities and help to preserve threatened natural and cultural resources. However, such socio-economic change takes time, and ecotourism is thus a *process* towards sustainability.

Much remains to be analysed and discussed in the field of ecotourism, and this book is an important contribution taking discussions a step forward. Perhaps it will also help to make all tourism more sustainable, and we in the Swedish Ecotourism Association would certainly welcome it if the whole tourist industry could learn from the conclusions put forward by the authors of this book.

Dan Jonasson  
*President of the Swedish Ecotourism Association*

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# Preface

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The idea for this book was born in late 2004, out of the observation that there is – possibly – no region in the world that is more dynamic than Sweden in terms of its organized ecotourism development. In 2004–2005, new companies offering ecotourism journeys were certified almost on a daily basis, with arrangements including virtually any thinkable nature-based arrangement, ranging from organized mushroom picking to wolf and beaver safaris. Tourist numbers, it seemed, would grow with the number of ecotourism entrepreneurs, and success stories of Swedish ecotourism were frequently presented in the media. The Swedish ecotourism label, Nature’s Best, was of such attractiveness that even other countries thought about its implementation. Clearly, ecotourism had entered a boom and bust cycle of development.

Scientifically, this raised a number of questions: was this really genuine ecotourism, based on tough certification criteria, or just a green-washed branch of the rapidly growing experience industry? Why would ecotourism grow this rapidly in Scandinavia, which, after all, couldn’t offer the exotic experiences one had come to associate with ecotourism in countries such as Australia or Costa Rica? Could ecotourism journeys be implemented anywhere, and under which circumstances? And, last but not least, what was so unique about certified ecotourism in a region where most nature-based tourism could be considered as ecotourism anyway? These, and many other questions, led us to edit this book, with a widened perspective on Scandinavia as a whole.

We are happy to report that responses to the idea of an anthology on ecotourism in Scandinavia were very positive, and most Scandinavian researchers working with tourism and the environment have actually contributed chapters to the anthology. We are very grateful for your time, ideas and knowledge! In particular, we would like to express our gratitude to Klas Sandell, who has been very enthusiastic about the project from the

beginning, and made a number of suggestions that greatly improved the content of this book. Special thanks go as well to David Weaver for being very positive about the idea of a regional approach to ecotourism; his acceptance of this book in becoming part of the Ecotourism series by CABI, and his critical advice and many good ideas during the writing process. Thanks as well to CABI for giving Scandinavian 'Lessons in Theory and Practice' a worldwide auditorium and in particular Claire Parfitt and Nicola Williams for all their support.

Many other people have supported this book directly or indirectly. We would like to mention the following: Dave Fennell and Dieter Müller for their insightful comments on the proposal; Mathias Göbbling for being the brother of the bear; Michael Hall for his never-ending enthusiasm; Nadine Heck for her great work as copy-editor; Meike and Linnea Rinsche for energy and inspiration (you would never know how important you are); Robert Bockermann for the good mood; Io Skogsmyr and the Hultman-Skogsmyr clan – Kelly, Millie, Stella and Holly – for (as always) constructive critique and sunshine; and finally those colleagues who have in their own different ways contributed to a reflexive and fun working environment: Erika, Richard, Hérve, Szilvia and Carina in particular, but no-one should be forgotten, so please auto-include yourself.

Stefan Gössling and Johan Hultman  
*Helsingborg, November 2005*

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# 1

## An Introduction to Ecotourism in Scandinavia

STEFAN GÖSSLING AND JOHAN HULTMAN

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### Introduction

Ecotourism has lately been conceptualized as tourism that is environmentally and socially benign, contributing both to local economies and the conservation of protected areas, while educating the traveller about local nature and culture (e.g. Fennell, 1999; Honey, 1999; Weaver, 2002; Cater, 2004). Definitions such as the one used by the International Ecotourism Society – ‘responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people’ – are commonly found in the literature with some variation, i.e. regarding the educational element or the motivation of ecotourists (Fennell, 1999; Weaver, 2002), leading to distinctions of ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ (Weaver and Lawton, 2002) or ‘minimalist’ and ‘comprehensive’ (Weaver, 2005a) ideal forms of ecotourism. Consequently, ecotourists are understood as people with a profound interest in nature-based forms of tourism (see also Wurzinger, Chapter 11, this volume), and ecotourism has been advertized as a sustainable, ‘positive’ form of tourism (i.e. UN General Assembly, 2003).

Ziffer’s (1989) observation that ecotourism is an ‘activity, a philosophy and a model of development’ fits very well in the context of Scandinavia, where ecotourism has become an important economic activity fully exposed to market forces, even though supported by governmental bodies and tourism organizations as a model of regional and economic development (Hall, Chapter 17, this volume). However, while the motives behind the development of certified forms of ecotourism in Sweden might be largely idealist, ecotourism as a theoretical concept is generally not as well understood by the public as by tour operators in Scandinavia. In Norway, for instance, ecotourism is considered to be an irrelevant concept, as most tourism activities generally take place in natural settings and are implicitly being understood as sustainable and ‘eco’ (Viken, Chapter 4, this volume).

Likewise, Icelanders (Gössling and Alkimou, Chapter 5, this volume) and Danes (Kaae, Chapter 2, this volume) have developed an understanding of tourism that corresponds to 'ecotourism': sustainable tourism taking place in natural environments, where environmental conservation and learning about nature are self-evident components of the overall tourism experience.

A broad majority of Scandinavians, as well as tour operators and tourism organizations, thus generally conceptualize Scandinavian tourism as ecotourism. This view corresponds to scientific findings that many forms of tourism in Scandinavia meet the requirements of ecotourism. For instance, few of the many negative consequences of tourism described elsewhere (e.g. Matthiesen and Wall, 1982; Hunter and Green, 1995; Weaver, 2005b) seem to occur in this region, and Fredman *et al.* (Chapter 3, this volume) thus argue that a large share of tourism in Scandinavia could be regarded as 'non-institutionalized', i.e. non-certified ecotourism. Examples of such tourism include, for instance, second homes (Müller and Jansson, 2004), farm tourism (Gössling and Mattsson, 2002), mountain tourism (Fredman *et al.*, 2001; Fredman and Lindberg, Chapter 10, this volume) or indigenous tourism (Pettersson, Chapter 15, this volume). Hunting tourism, on the other hand, is largely an ecologically sustainable form of tourism in Scandinavia, but it faces great challenges in becoming culturally sustainable, as this ritualized, male-dominated activity is at the heart of complex local identities where 'place' and 'belonging' are essential elements of *gemeinschaft* – social relations between individuals based on close personal and family ties. Should these obstacles be overcome, however, Scandinavian hunting tourism could be an interesting example of a consumptive form of ecotourism (Gunnarsdotter, Chapter 16, this volume).

Certified forms of tourism have emerged in all Scandinavian countries (cf. Gössling, Chapter 6, this volume). However, Sweden remains so far the only country that has developed a label for ecotourism: *Naturens Bästa* (Nature's Best). The label was launched during the UN International Year of Ecotourism in 2002 and developed by the Swedish Ecotourism Association in cooperation with the Swedish Travel and Tourism Association and the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (SEA, 2005a). The products labelled with Nature's Best should, in coherence with the Swedish Ecotourism Association's goals, contribute to nature conservation and preservation of the cultural heritage of the destination. Nature's Best is a certification for arrangements, not tour operators per se. Within 3 years (2002–2005), some 220 certified ecotourism arrangements offered by 70 operators have emerged in Sweden (for a more detailed discussion of *Naturens Bästa* see Gössling, Chapter 6, this volume and Fredman *et al.*, Chapter 3, this volume).

No study has as yet explored the mechanisms of ecotourism marketing and promotion in Scandinavia. There is evidence, however, that some arrangements certified with *Naturens Bästa* have attracted large tourist numbers even in the most remote areas (see, for instance, Folke *et al.*, Chapter 14, this volume). The success of the label might largely be ascribed to two factors: first, the Swedish Ecotourism Association focused on

marketing as a key element of its planning and organization, and developed a network with national and international organizations with a strong focus on national media. This is evident from the website of the Swedish Ecotourism Association, which provides a 'pressroom', with continuously updated information and photographs available for use by journalists. The website is professionally managed, and won the Swedish Publishing Prize in 2004. Secondly, as has been argued by Gössling (Chapter 8, this volume) and Hultman and Andersson Cederholm (Chapter 7, this volume), ecotourism in Sweden is marketed as an extraordinary experience rather than a benign, environmentally and socially beneficial form of tourism. There is thus a semantic shift from marketing the environmentally and socially benign character of ecotourism arrangements to presenting the experience-character of the journey, i.e. in focusing on individual benefits in booking an experience-product. This semantic shift might have been equally important in explaining the success of ecotourism in Sweden because it overcomes a problem common to all 'green' products: their higher costs are borne by the individual, while their benefits are enjoyed by society. In terms of the strategic expansion of certified ecotourism, this might be one important lesson to be learned from ecotourism development in Scandinavia.

Economically, ecotourism in Scandinavia is of great importance, and may account for a large share of the overall turnover from tourism in Scandinavia. Certified forms of ecotourism and the income derived from these are minor in comparison, however. It needs to be considered, though, that this revenue will often be made in peripheral areas with substantial structural problems. Particularly in rural areas, where lower incomes are the rule, it can make major contribution to livelihoods. In such areas, there are usually few alternative income opportunities, and tourism thus gains additional importance in diversifying these economies. Often, ecotourism entrepreneurs might also be able to capture additional income from value-added products sold directly to customers. For instance, farm products might be sold at higher prices in farm boutiques than in supermarkets, and a larger share of the gains will accrue directly to the farms. Thus, ecotourism and similar small-scale, entrepreneurial tourism businesses visualize possibilities for combining rural value-capture (Marsden and Smith, 2005) with economic, social and ecological sustainability.

## Scandinavian Images

Scandinavia is largely understood as a region with vast natural resources, including glaciers, volcanoes and geysers in Iceland, fjords in Norway, extensive forest and lake areas in Sweden and a great number of beaches in Denmark. These images of Scandinavia can be found in a wide variety of guidebooks and even in the scientific literature. One example is Boniface and Cooper's *World Tourism* (2005, p. 152): 'Scandinavia's tourism resources are the uncrowded, unpolluted countryside, the spectacular scenery of the mountains and many coastal regions, the islands and holiday beaches, and

the Scandinavian culture and outdoor way of life on show in the capitals and major cities of the region.'

Many Scandinavian countries have themselves created and maintained similar stereotypes, reinforcing the notion of Scandinavia as a region with great nature-based tourism potential. For instance, Visit Sweden (2005) distributed the following text in their 2005 brochure:

Because Sweden stretches so far north-to-south, there are dramatic differences between the various regions of the country. In the north is mythical Lapland, often called Europe's last wilderness; with its endless mountain expanses and exhilarating nature; with exotic, world-famous natural phenomena like the midnight sun, the northern lights and the arctic darkness and cold; with the Sami people – Scandinavia's aboriginal population and their fascinating culture, historical as well as contemporary, and not least with the world-famous IceHotel, built afresh each year from thousands of tons of snow and ice from the Torne river.

(Visit Sweden, 2005)

The text goes on to describe central Sweden with its '[...] blue-tinted mountains and deep forests cut through by roaring rivers', as well as the South with its 'vast fertile plains, its castles and manor houses, rolling hills, whispering deciduous forests and mile-long beaches' (Visit Sweden, 2005).

Similar representations of nature in advertizing materials can be found in all Scandinavian countries, even though these might vary between images of untamed wilderness (Iceland), majestic landscapes (Norway) and beach-focused family holidays (Denmark). In short, the image of tourism in Scandinavia is largely built on natural assets and nature-based recreational activities (cf. Bostedt and Mattsson, 1995; Gössling, 1997; Vail and Hultkrantz, 2000; Dupuis, 2004). These discursive, pre-travel constructions of Scandinavia as a multitude of places of nature can be assumed to structure tourist experiences and even tourist ways of seeing, thus continuously recreating this 'natural' image of Scandinavia (cf. Braun, 2002). This, in turn, might well generate enlarged markets for ecotourism ventures, a visualization of good examples and a greater understanding of ecotourism theory.

## **A Regional Approach to Ecotourism**

In recent years, public, scientific and governmental interest in ecotourism in Scandinavia has grown substantially. Extended forests, rivers and lakes allow for a great variety of nature-based activities, such as hiking, picking berries, collecting mushrooms, rock climbing, fishing, kayaking, sailing, snow scooter driving, bird watching, dog sledding and hunting, making Scandinavia a unique region from a nature-based tourism perspective. Furthermore, a considerable percentage of Scandinavian countries are now designated national parks and other protected areas, which, along with 22 World Heritage Sites (Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, 2005; UNESCO, 2005), form important tourist attractions. Certified tourism has also

experienced rapid growth in recent years, and the Swedish certification *Naturens Bästa* includes a wide variety of specialized offers. Scandinavian societies take a great interest in nature and outdoor activities, with the Right of Public Access – a unique common law granting access to virtually all areas – (Sandell, Chapter 9, this volume), being a cultural manifestation of this. In many contexts, aspects of Scandinavian tourism – including the systematic creation of new markets and products in peripheral areas (Nilsson, Chapter 12, this volume), as well as the strategic and innovation-based development of certified ecotourism products – are thus of considerable academic, public and cooperate interest. However, little has been written about ecotourism in Scandinavia, and *Ecotourism in Scandinavia: Lessons in Theory and Practice* is the first attempt to comprehensively describe, analyse and evaluate aspects of Scandinavian ecotourism, including overviews of the state of ecotourism development in Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Iceland, with a focus on aspects of sustainability, scale, marketing, certification, participation, education and organization.

Besides Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Iceland, Finland is the fifth country belonging to the Nordic countries. However, because of their common history, culture and language, this book focuses on Scandinavia. As Finland has seen strong growth in nature-based tourism as well, and particularly since some Finnish policy issues are of importance even in the context of this book, links between Finland and the Scandinavian countries are emphasized where appropriate. Likewise, Greenland is an autonomous region politically associated with Denmark, which has seen a strong growth in tourist arrivals in recent years, even though absolute arrival numbers are still low. Some information on tourism in this large island is provided in Gössling and Alkimou (Chapter 5, this volume).

## Global Environmental Change and Ecotourism

In the future, global environmental change, including temperature increases, sea level rise, land alterations, changes in precipitation patterns and extreme climate and weather events might have a wide range of consequences for tourism, and for nature-based tourism in particular (Gössling and Hall, 2005a). Global warming, for instance, has been predicted to be in the range of 1.4–5.8°C by 2100 (IPCC, 2001), with a likely scenario of a 3°C warming by the year 2100 (Kerr, 2004, p. 932). Recent research indicates, however, that the range might very well be larger, with up to 11.5°C warming by 2100 (Stainforth *et al.*, 2005). Global warming will affect northern regions in particular, which will have serious implications for northern ecosystems (ACIA, 2004). Some of these changes can already be felt. For instance, ticks have become more frequent in central Swedish forests (Lindgren and Gustafson, 2001), which might influence tourism based on forest resources. Models also predict substantial changes in Scandinavian precipitation patterns within a scenario of climate change (Xu, 2000; SWECLIM, 2002). Increases in precipitation, most of which are projected to

occur in winter, will contribute to increased lake inflows, lake levels and run-off, the latter leading to greater frequency of riparian flooding (cf. Palmer and Räisänen, 2002). During summer, drier conditions, exacerbated by greater evaporation, will reduce lake inflows and lake levels. Higher temperatures and decreasing water levels in summer may also affect thermal stratification, evaporation and species composition of lakes (Hulme *et al.*, 2003). This might in consequence influence different forms of ecotourism related to, for example, bird watching or fishing.

Increasing temperatures will also influence suitable climatic conditions for skating and other ice-related activities, as the number of days with temperatures below 0°C is likely to decline substantially (cf. SWECLIM, 2002). Ice skating, which has a long history as an important recreational winter activity in Scandinavia, is one of the activities likely to be affected. These are but a few examples of how ecotourism might be affected by global environmental change. On the other hand, ecotourism marketing is presently emphasizing sensual experiences rather than specific places, thus making ecotourism geographically independent. This characteristic presents the possibility for emerging ecotourism discourses to handle and even 'internalize' global environmental change, since all kinds of being in nature can be packaged and marketed as experiences (Andersson Cederholm and Hultman, 2005). Contradictory trends manifest themselves when ecotourism theory and practice are juxtaposed, something that is at the heart of this book.

## Ecotourism in Scandinavia: an Outlook

Certified ecotourism is expanding and currently entering the spheres of business tourism. For instance, conference tourism is now promoted as an incentive-based form of experience-ecotourism: 'Have your conference on a Sami mountain farm, gather your employees for a meeting in Hälsingland's bear-forests or for a kayak-tour in the Stockholm archipelago' (authors' translation; SEA, 2005b). This is interesting for at least two reasons. First, it means that ecotourism – and thus nature – is made visible in new ways. This in turn has the result that nature can be acted upon in new ways (cf. Thrift, 2000), specifically from a management perspective. Instead of being a scientific object as in the case of 'traditional' ecotourism practices, nature becomes a bookable product in a context of human resource management and hence an aspect of the development of strategic business advantages.

Ecology is framed as an economic resource within global circuits of capital accumulation, not as a scientific knowledge field or material/industrial resource base. This is a shift in perspective that has the potential to profoundly influence how we view nature. It might mean that 'nature' is more visibly incorporated in 'culture', both semantically and in practice, leading to a greater understanding and interest for interactions between tourists and nature. At the same time this shift in perspective highlights how tourism becomes progressively more difficult to define as a

discreet business category. There really is no such thing as ‘a tourist’, so ecotourists might perhaps more aptly be termed eco-consumers. It is consumers that are transported out into nature, and ecotourism operators are now producers of nature, mediators *and* part of the product. This line of reasoning is, furthermore, well in line with how Swedish tourism managers work to implement the definition of tourism in local and regional economies as ‘displaced consumption’, thus encompassing all points of business transactions in a given area between visitors and locals.

The issue of transportation leads to the second reason why a fusion between human resource management and nature opens up interesting vistas. It is well established that ecotourism can only be ecologically sustainable if air transport is *not* part of the trip (Gössling and Hall, 2005b; see also Flognfeldt, Chapter 13, this volume; Folke *et al.*, Chapter 14, this volume). However, Nature’s Best has recently invited large hotel chains, airlines and the national railways to become active partners of the certification network, and thus part of the ecotourism product. This signals a proactive attitude to the development, internationalization and integration of ecotourism, and also a strategic initiative to further strengthen the legitimacy of nature as experience-product where sustainability might be embedded, but in ways invisible for the consumer. Hence, it seems as if ecotourism and nature are becoming part of an agenda that is far more extensive than a small and specialized segment of a wider conceptualization of nature-based tourism. At the same time, to place nature firmly within a commercial logic raises urgent issues of democracy and access to nature. This is discussed in several chapters in this book, and were we to choose one single problem in the future development of Scandinavian ecotourism it would have to be this: how can we deal with the commoditization of nature while at the same time securing access and the sustainable use of it?

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# 2

## Ecotourism in Denmark

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### Introduction

In contrast to the other Scandinavian countries, Denmark is a small, densely populated country with an intensely farmed cultural landscape. The population of 5.4 million (Danmarks Statistik, 2005) inhabits an area of 43,094 km<sup>2</sup> – less than a tenth of that of Sweden. Consequently, Denmark has a population density of 126 inhabitants/km<sup>2</sup>, compared to 20 in Sweden, 14 in Norway and 15 in Finland. Except for the 7500 km<sup>2</sup> of coastline, Denmark has no vast natural areas – only planted forests (12% of the country) and dispersed natural areas somewhat affected by former or present land uses. Furthermore, Denmark does not have the *allemannsret* (cf. Sandell, Chapter 9, this volume; Viken, Chapter 4, this volume) found in other Scandinavian countries, but all beaches, public and private forests over 5 ha and nature areas are publicly accessible within some regulatory limits. In this context, ecotourism takes a different form in Denmark than in most Scandinavian countries.

Ecotourism is defined in many ways (Wood, 2002), and in a review of 85 different ecotourism definitions, Fennell (2001) found that the definitions most frequently include reference to where ecotourism occurs (e.g. natural areas – 62%, aspects of conservation – 61%, culture – 51%, benefits to locals – 48% and education – 41%). Several definitions also include sustainability (26%) or impacts (25%). Given the largely cultural landscape of Denmark, the definition of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (Ceballos-Lascurain, 1996) is the most suitable in the context of this chapter:

Ecotourism is environmentally responsible travel and visitation to relatively undisturbed natural areas, in order to enjoy and appreciate nature (and any accompanying cultural features – both past and present) that promotes conservation, has low negative visitor impacts, and provides for beneficially active socio-economic involvement of local populations.

(Caballos-Lascurain, 1996)

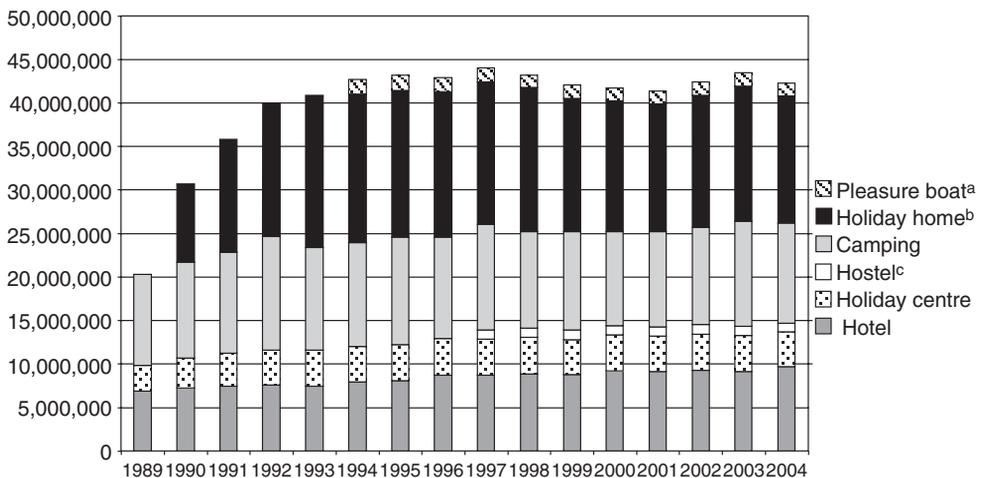
The definition includes culturally affected natural areas as well as the appreciation of cultural features. In addition, educational aspects of environmental learning and interpretation will also be included in the following presentation of ecotourism aspects in Denmark.

This chapter first briefly describes tourism in Denmark and how ecotourism is related to this in a cultural landscape context. Secondly, it describes how some of the key criteria of ecotourism are integrated into tourism but without being characterized as ecotourism. This includes linkages between tourism and nature protection, and tourism opportunities such as low-impact travel, organic food and local produce, nature interpretation programmes and tours, as well as eco-labelled overnight accommodation. Socio-economic benefits are briefly discussed, followed by a discussion section and conclusions.

## General Tourism Trends in Denmark

Tourism is a significant economic activity in Denmark. Since the 1990s, tourism has been the fourth largest industry, generating a turnover of DKK 44.3 billion in 2003 (€5.9 billion) and employment equivalent of 71,000 full-time jobs (Danmarks Turistråd, 2004).

Tourists' numbers increased significantly in Denmark around 1990, from 30.7 million registered overnight stays in 1990 to 42.7 million in 1994 (Visit Denmark, 2005a). However, since the mid-1990s tourist numbers have been relatively stable, at around 42–44 million registered overnight stays (Fig. 2.1). In 2003 there were 43.5 million registered overnight stays, with a slight drop to 42.2 million in 2004 (Visit Denmark, 2005a). Figures on ecotourism are often difficult to obtain (UNEP, 2001) and in Denmark there are no statistics



**Fig. 2.1.** Registered tourist overnight stays in Denmark, 1989–2004, by accommodation type. <sup>a</sup>, data from 1994; <sup>b</sup>, data from 1990; <sup>c</sup>, data from 1997; from Visit Denmark, 2005a.

available on ecotourism. Furthermore, official tourist numbers do not include overnight stays in second homes by their owners or stays with family or friends, both of which are labelled as tourism according to the World Tourism Organization (WTO). As only about 21% of the over 200,000 vacation homes are rented out, these numbers are substantial.

Almost half of the tourists in 2003 were Danes (45%), while international tourists came primarily from the neighbouring countries of Germany (35%), Norway (6%) and Sweden (5%). The remaining 9% were from the rest of Europe or from outside Europe – primarily from North America and Japan (Visit Denmark, 2005a). The vacation home is the most popular type of accommodation, which in 2003 was used by 36% of the tourists. Thirty per cent stayed in hotels or vacation centres, 28% went camping, 4% stayed on pleasure boats and 2% in hostels (Visit Denmark, 2005a).

Several studies by the Danish Tourism Board (Danmarks Turistråd, 1997, 1998) find that experiencing nature is a primary travel motive for tourists in Denmark. In particular, many German tourists are attracted by nature and nature-related qualities such as extensive, freely accessible beaches, which contrast with the limited and highly regulated access to the coast in Germany. Even Norwegians and Swedes are attracted by the wide sandy beaches, but they generally have a higher interest in the urban and cultural attractions than in the Danish nature areas, given abundant wilderness areas in their home countries. The majority of tourists spend their holidays in the coastal zone, where most vacation homes (93%) are located.

## **The ecotourism aspects of Danish tourism**

At the national level, Visit Denmark (formerly the Danish Tourist Board) has not wholeheartedly embraced the concepts of ecotourism or sustainability. These have been viewed as a passing trend and the marketing focus has now moved on to branding of Denmark based on ‘oasis’, ‘cosiness’ and ‘design’, with the attributes ‘unpretentious’, ‘talented’ and ‘free’ (Danmarks Turistråd, 2000). Although several studies commissioned by the Danish Tourist Board (Danmarks Turistråd, 1997, 1998) show a high importance of nature and nature-related qualities, this has not been proportionately reflected in the policies or action plans focusing on improving product development (Industriministeriet, 1986), market performance and industry economy (Industriministeriet, 1991), products, structural development and competence (Ministeriet for Kommunikation og Turisme, 1994) and revenues, productivity and competence (Økonomi – og Erhvervsministeriet, 2002). On the official Visit Denmark website (<http://www.visitdenmark.com>) the concepts of ecotourism and sustainability are not visible, while environmental labelling schemes are briefly mentioned under a few accommodation categories.

Consequently, the ‘greening’ of the tourism industry primarily takes a bottom-up approach in Denmark. At the local level, a number of environmentally oriented initiatives have been implemented to meet the

interests of tourists. Several labelling schemes for accommodation and even entire destinations have been initiated, facilities for cycling and similar low-impact travel have been improved, organic foods and restaurants have emerged and nature interpretation has become a popular activity among tourists. So, while ecotourism as such is not a widespread concept in the Danish tourism industry, many of these initiatives fulfil at least some of the criteria of ecotourism.

## Tourism and nature protection

Nature conservation is a key issue in many ecotourism definitions, even though it is implicitly assumed that limited protection is in place. Tourism was a driving force in Danish nature protection in the early years of tourism around 1900. As tourists needed to gain access to sites of natural beauty, tourism and nature conservation were closely interlinked and the Danish 'Tourist Association' was very active in the establishment of the Danish Society for Nature Conservation (Foreningen for Naturfredning) in 1911. The promotion of Danish nature qualities to tourists, and conservation of and access to these resources, were closely linked goals (Schultz, 1988). These, together with scientific and aesthetic interests, supported nature protection. However, during the 1920s, commercial interests no longer began to match the goals of conservation, and by the 1960s tourism development and nature protection had become opposing fields of interest. Tourism growth was a primary motive for the establishment of the 1969 National Planning Act, based on zoning to restrict the uncontrolled sprawl of vacation homes in nature areas, as well as the regulation of urban growth. However, tourism today is just one of many activities regulated through planning in the small-scale multifunctional landscape. The tools for conservation are in place but not linked directly to tourism.

The Danish nature protection system consists of a number of different overlapping protection zones covering agricultural and nature areas. Early types of nature protection had been initiated by the 18th century in response to degradation, and all forests were protected by 1805. The first nature protection act was established in 1917, and this has gradually been tightened to include more types of habitats while public access has been increased. The protection of and access to nature were prerequisites for tourism. However, the early piece-by-piece protection against compensation proved inefficient against development pressures, particularly during the 1960s, and nature protection was increasingly based on general protection measures (without compensation). Protection includes various types of habitats, aquatic ecosystems, species and natural and cultural landscape elements such as hedgerows, stone fences and prehistoric stone mounts.

As mentioned earlier, Denmark does not have the *allemannsret* found in other Scandinavian countries. However, public access has gradually increased and today the public has free access to almost all of the 7500 km<sup>2</sup> of coastline, all public and private forests over 5 ha and other nature areas

within some regulatory limits. In total, 28% of the forests are public lands (Skov- og Naturstyrelsen, 2005a).

All natural areas are under some type of protection, and in several locations nature restoration projects are enhancing both biodiversity and recreational opportunities. One example is the restoration of the Skjern river delta from agricultural lands to wetland. It is also worth noting that Denmark does not have any national parks. However, in 2002, a process of establishing national parks was initiated and seven pilot areas have undergone locally based preparation and feasibility studies, which are now being evaluated (Skov- og Naturstyrelsen, 2005b). Depending on the evaluation, a number of national parks are likely to be appointed. The proposed national parks are all located in areas with high potential for recreation and tourism. Evaluation of existing opportunities and new initiatives to enhance recreational experiences and nature interpretation are part of the park preparation processes (Skov- og Naturstyrelsen, 2005b).

The establishment of a number of national parks in Denmark in the coming years is likely to increase the number of nature-oriented tourists, as seen in other regions (Andersen *et al.*, 2004). This is also likely to increase the number of ecotourism opportunities offered by nearby tourism businesses. However, at this point in time they tend to be reluctant to get too involved in the national park process due to time pressure, local politics and the risk of wasting efforts in case the proposed national parks are not established. Generally, the coordination of tourism in national parks seems to have a secondary priority, both among nature managers – who are a bit uneasy about the tourism industry, and within the tourism industry, where work pressure is high and where many are reluctant to act before the decision of whether or not to establish national parks has been taken (Andersen *et al.*, 2004). However, the establishment of national parks in Denmark would more directly necessitate the integration of nature management and tourism development in each of the affected local areas, and may open new opportunities for ecotourism.

## **Ecotourism-related activities in the cultural landscape**

Ecotourism is not widely marketed in Denmark as a tourism product, but there are some examples of tourism meeting the criteria of ecotourism.

### *Low-impact travel*

Denmark is a small and relatively flat country, and thus ideal for cycling. Many Danes use their bicycle daily for transport or pleasure, and most cities have designated cycle lanes. There are 11 national cycle routes which are some 4000 km long (Skov- og Naturstyrelsen, 2003). Several of these are part of international cycle routes such as the North Sea Cycle Route, the Pilgrims Route, the Baltic Sea Cycle Route, the Middle Europe Route and the Northcape–Malta route (Skov- og Naturstyrelsen, 2003). In addition, there

are some 5500 km of regional cycle routes. The routes follow small roads with little traffic, forest roads and abandoned railways. The 9500 km of cycle trails in Denmark are clearly marked and detailed regional maps can be purchased.

Visit Denmark also provides detailed information on the Internet, and maps are available from local tourist offices. A new labelling scheme for cycle-friendly accommodation was established in 2004 and the criteria are oriented towards provision of cycle repair tools, safe cycle parking, drying facilities, solid breakfasts and the availability of maps. Communities can also be labelled as cycle friendly if they follow certain criteria. These include opportunities to rent bicycles, a minimum of 50 km of additional marked bicycle routes, cycle maps, tour descriptions a minimum of three accommodation sites labelled as cycle friendly, and cycle information at the local tourist office (Visit Denmark, 2005b). By spring 2005, 13 local areas and 128 overnight accommodation facilities had been labelled (Visit Denmark, 2005c).

Denmark is a nation closely linked to the sea, and sailing is a popular type of tourism, which is also environmentally friendly. In June, July and August 2004 there were 1.4 million registered overnight stays on pleasure boats. In some places like Isefjorden, a trail system for cycling and hiking along the shores is combined with campsites for kayakers touring the fjord.

### *Organic food and local produce*

Locally, a number of producers are offering organically grown food and most grocery stores carry a selection of eco-labelled food products. Many farms have small stands by the road which offer fresh local produce such as strawberries, new potatoes, honey, etc. These stands are much sought after by tourists and provide local farmers with a direct income. Organic farming is generally increasing in Denmark and the sale of organic food has grown significantly. It is possible to visit many of the farms and some have small stores, a café and offer tours. Currently 57 organic farms are open for visits (Økologisk Landsforening, 2005a), while 111 organic farms have stores selling their products (Økologisk Landsforening, 2005b). Other organizations offer farm products and goods as well (Danske Gårdbutikker på Nettet I/S, 2005). Within the Copenhagen region, EcoMap (2005) offers a map of ecological opportunities in the region including restaurants, cycle taxis, nature playgrounds, purchase of daily goods, etc. This is part of the global network 'Green Map System', which publishes maps of 'green', ecological and sustainable initiatives for local areas.

Another example of integration of local produce with tourism can be found on the Island of Moen. Here, a brochure, *The Paths to Green Food on Moen* (Møns Turistbureau, 2005), is distributed, which helps tourists and locals to find locally produced food of high quality that is often organically grown. Ecological restaurants can also be found and the local tourist offices can help identify them. Another option is a 'home dinner', where tourists can enjoy a meal with a Danish family in their own home and get to know the Danish culture and traditional foods (Visit Denmark, 2005d).

Many opportunities for access to organic and local produce are also available to tourists, contributing to: (i) reducing the environmental pressure from intensive farming; (ii) increasing environmental awareness; and (iii) providing benefits to and involvement of local farmers within tourism.

### *Nature interpretation programmes and tours*

Environmental learning is an important aspect of many definitions of ecotourism. In Denmark a system of nature interpretation facilities and guided tours was established as a 3-year trial in 1987. During the first year, the 11 nature interpreters involved guided more than 30,000 participants (Bondo-Andersen, 2004). Before long, the nature interpretation programme had become even more popular and has gradually expanded, so that by 2003 it included 266 nature interpreters carrying out approximately 26,000 nature interpretation activities with over 850,000 participants (Skov- og Naturstyrelsen og Friluftsrådet, 2004).

Although many of the activities are oriented toward school classes and other groups, about one-quarter of the activities are open to the general public. In several regions the programme is even offered in foreign languages. Public interpretation tours are often announced through local tourist offices, in semi-annual brochures with a calendar of nature interpretation activities and on the Internet (<http://www.naturnet.dk>). Although mostly organized by public agencies or non-governmental organizations, in some places like Skagen the tourist industry has been successful in selling daily tours for tourists with an environmental or cultural topic, and with both educational and entertainment value, such as 'become a Skagen painter for a day', or 'take a walk in the bog'. Many museums are also part of this programme, including several eco-museums (Økomuseum Samsø, 2005; Søhøjlandets Økomuseum, 2005) and the Skjern-Egvad Museum (2005).

The Danish nature interpretation programme was inspired by American and Scottish ranger systems, adapted by the Danish society and, after the 1987 Brundtland report and 1992 Rio Earth Summit, developed to incorporate sustainability aspects. The Danish interpretation system has recently been the role model which inspired the International Ranger Federation to adopt a number of principles, including sustainability aspects to be used by nature interpreters internationally (Bondo-Andersen, 2004). In the context of tourism, interpretation contributes to the education of tourists about natural and cultural features, thereby raising awareness of and respect for the host country, as well as reducing impacts and promoting conservation and sustainability – all key issues in ecotourism.

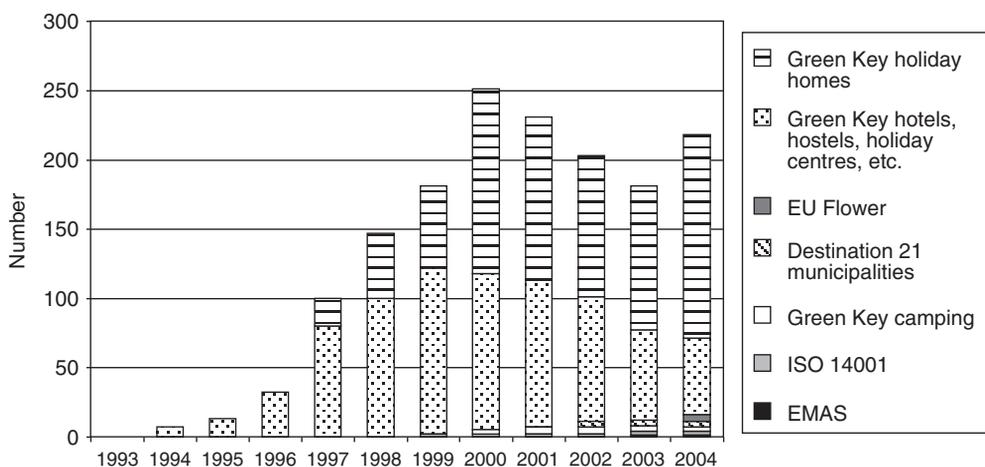
### *Overnight accommodation and eco-labelling*

Unlike in other Scandinavian countries, ecotourists in Denmark are generally not allowed to stay overnight in the countryside, unless on established campsites. However, during an ongoing 2004–2006 test period,

‘camping for the quiet forest hiker’ people can pitch tents outside marked campsites on areas belonging to the Danish Forest and Nature Agency (Skovog Naturstyrelsen, 2005c). Furthermore, a number of farms also offer camping on their land for a small fee of up to DKK15 (about €2), and there is a yearly booklet (Friluftsrådet *et al.*, 2004) providing an updated list of the currently 753 small, simple and car-free campsites in Denmark.

Ecotourists can also stay in environmentally certified tourism accommodation. Eco-labelling of tourism facilities is a way for tourism enterprises to become more environmentally friendly and to use this as a quality mark in attracting environmentally aware customers. In Denmark, there are a number of certification programmes either aimed at tourism or used by the industry (Fig. 2.2). Only general labelling schemes are included – not those established by specific hotel chains or similar.

A Danish programme – the ‘Green Key’ – began certifying hotels, hostels and vacation centres in 1994 and has gradually expanded to include holiday homes, camping sites, tourist offices and restaurants in Denmark. However, after 2000, the number of certified businesses has declined, possibly due to changes in criteria, organization structure or because some enterprises wanted to save the annual membership fee after receiving the immediate benefits from saving electricity, water, etc. The general decline in certified tourism enterprises, however, seemed to have been reversed by 2004, with an increase in certified holiday homes and the introduction of five hotels (and more to come) labelled with the EU Flower. A few tourism enterprises have adopted international labelling schemes such as ISO14001, while the Nordic Swan has so far not been used in a tourism context in Denmark (see Gössling, Chapter 6, this volume).



**Fig. 2.2.** Danish tourism facilities with eco-labels, 1993–2004 (from Miljøstyrelsen, 2005; data collected by the National Reference Centre for Recreation and Tourism at the Danish Centre for Forest, Landscape and Planning, KVL).

Studies of the relative importance of the various criteria of the Green Key labelling scheme show that both tourists and local residents find most criteria quite important and generally agree on the priorities (Kaae, 2001). However, the proliferation of environmental labelling schemes is increasing in Denmark and this might confuse customers and lower their confidence in environmental certification. Other Danish studies show that the labelling schemes may not have the high marketing effect they were initially expected to have (Birch and Frederiksen, 2002; Jensen, 2002). Tourists tend to see the eco-label as an added benefit rather than as a primary motive for their vacations. Since many tourists in Denmark are Danes, Germans, Norwegians and Swedes, good environmental performance might be an expected prerequisite.

Finally, the 'Destination 21' labelling scheme – initiated in 1999 – deserves mention, and substantial efforts were put into establishing criteria for sustainable tourism regions. This wider approach of certifying whole tourism regions is a complex challenge, but in 2002 four municipalities obtained the Destination 21 certification. However, due to changes in government and economic priorities in the tourism organizations, the programme has been on standby since the end of 2003 due to lack of funding.

### **Local socio-economic benefits from tourism**

Tourists visiting Denmark are primarily from neighbouring countries and socio-culturally quite similar. They can communicate relatively easily in Scandinavian languages, German or English, and many of the socio-cultural contrasts found in other tourist regions are non-existent. Many tourists in Denmark are also repeat visitors, gradually building up a more intimate knowledge of the region. Owners of vacation homes represent a group of 'temporary residents', who are tourists but are also attached to the region and involved in the local community.

Local benefits from tourism include jobs, income, more 'life' in the community, better infrastructure and higher public and private service levels. Naturally, a number of negative impacts are also linked to tourism such as traffic, parking problems, litter and noise (Kaae, 1999). Generally, residents are found to experience tourism impacts as more problematic in regions of higher tourism intensity (Kaae, 1999) but, locally, impacts are linked to factors such as the types of tourists, planning of infrastructure, planning efforts and involvement of locals (Kaae, 2002).

The majority of tourism businesses in Denmark are small and medium-size enterprises, typically family-run and thus contributing to income, employment and other benefits. Vacation homes are privately owned and regulations limit foreign ownership as well as the number of vacation houses per family, in order to avoid speculation. The owners' tourism-related incomes are taxed in their home communities, but they pay local land taxes on the vacation home. Detailed analyses of the regional economic effects of

tourism are carried out by the national tourism authorities (Danmarks Turistråd, 2004), and show tourism to be an important economic factor. Tourism provides alternative income, particularly in marginal regions where fishing and farming are declining.

## Discussion and Conclusion

Based on the defining criteria of ecotourism, it is debatable to what extent tourism in Denmark can be considered as ecotourism. In any case, ecotourism takes a different form in Denmark than in most other Scandinavian countries.

In relation to the criteria linking ecotourism to primarily natural areas, Denmark is disadvantaged by the lack of wilderness and by having predominantly culturally influenced landscapes. However, the relatively 'natural' coastal regions are by far the most popular tourist areas and nature and nature-related qualities are key travel motives for many tourists in Denmark. Another problem is that of limited opportunities for overnight stops in the Danish countryside, as there is no *allemansret*. Although environmentally oriented accommodation and elaborate trail systems exist, these do not usually provide the wilderness experiences often associated with ecotourism.

In the context of nature conservation criteria, Danish tourism and nature conservation were historically closely interlinked and mutually supportive. Ecotourism may function well as a conservation tool in developing tourism regions – as it has done in Denmark – but in today's multifunctional landscape, the protection of nature is a result of legislation no longer directly linked with tourism. The long history of Danish tourism to its current mature and relatively stable stage has resulted in slow growth and the establishment of regulations to reduce unintended impacts.

The inclusion of 'culture' in many ecotourism definitions is highly relevant to Denmark, where nature experiences are often interwoven with cultural elements. As the tourists come primarily from neighbouring countries they are culturally quite similar to the Danish host population and few socio-cultural conflicts occur. The criteria of ecotourism providing benefits to locals are highly relevant but complex. In Denmark, the ownership structure in tourism includes many private vacation homes and many small and medium-sized enterprises, which are contributing to income, employment, services and other benefits to local communities in peripheral regions.

Criteria of learning and education are included in many definitions of ecotourism, and many Danish nature areas provide information or offer interpretative facilities, including guided tours. Sustainability is often linked to ecotourism definitions and ecotourism is regarded as a tool for developing sustainable tourism (Toepfer, 2001). In Denmark, sustainable tourism – economically, environmentally and socially – is a more central concept than ecotourism. Although industry participation in labelling schemes has

declined between 2000 and 2003, the most recent trend seems to be upward again. Many local tourism regions offer a variety of 'green' opportunities – some may be called ecotourism or sustainable tourism – but this is in contrast to the branding and marketing of Denmark to tourists by national tourism authorities, where neither ecotourism nor sustainable tourism are even mentioned. Overall, few types of tourism in Denmark fulfil all the criteria of ecotourism, and few are packaged and marketed as such. Nevertheless, much tourism in Denmark could at least partially be seen as ecotourism.

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# 3

## Sweden: Where Holidays Come Naturally

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The wide open countryside, the rolling landscapes and vast forests give a feeling of spaciousness, silence and tranquillity which makes an unforgettable impression on many visitors.

(Visit Sweden, 2005)

### Institutionalized and Non-institutionalized Ecotourism in Sweden

Enter any tourist retail outlet anywhere in Sweden and you will find two animals, one domesticated (the Dala horse) and one wild (the moose). Both these animals act as vehicles for dominant discourses of Swedishness, and both, in different ways, refer back to nature. The Dala horse, a carved wooden icon in cheerful colours, is a national symbol that stands for rural heritage and a romanticized view of pre-modern Sweden. Its iconic status is embedded in a history of anti-urbanism (cf. Crang, 1999) and, as a mass-produced material manifestation of rural nostalgia, it simultaneously expresses the loss and mourning of nature and a tribute to tradition and homeland. The Dala horse now acts in tourism contexts as the rural Other against which urban tourists can formulate narratives of nature and authenticity.

The moose – as the king of the forest – represents an even more direct link between tourism and nature. The moose embodies wilderness and attracts incoming tourists over global distances. The corporeal moose whose various body parts are the most sought after trophies in the growing segment of Swedish hunting tourism, the road-sign moose whose disappearance from forest roads in many parts of the country marks the occurrence of foreign holiday seasons, the moose on cups, shirts, cigarette lighters and stickers – in all its manifestations the moose defines Sweden in juxtaposition to non-Scandinavian countries as a place of nature. Thus, chances are that what

tourists bring home after a visit in Sweden are narratives of nature, or culture expressed through narratives of nature.

Several chapters in this book highlight the Scandinavians' great affinity to nature and their common understanding of nature-based tourism as an analogue to ecotourism. For instance, Viken (Chapter 4, this volume) points out that Norwegians consider ecotourism almost as a silly concept, since most recreation and tourism take place in natural settings and are, in this sparsely populated country, implicitly understood as sustainable and 'eco'. Likewise, Icelanders (Gössling and Alkimou, Chapter 5, this volume) and Danes (Kaae, Chapter 2, this volume) have developed an understanding of national tourism that corresponds to 'ecotourism': sustainable tourism taking place in natural environments, where environmental conservation and learning about nature are seen as self-evident components of the tourism experience.

These general aspects of Scandinavian tourism also apply in Sweden. Moreover, characteristics of intra-Scandinavian tourism are generally assumed to apply to international incoming tourism as well. Looking at, for example, German tourists visiting Sweden, it is obvious that nature experiences are a major travel motive (Müller *et al.*, 2001). Nature-based tourism in Scandinavia equals ecotourism for many actors and could, for the share of tourism more or less functioning according to the principles of ecotourism, be conceptualized as non-institutionalized ecotourism. Examples of such tourism might, for instance, include second homes (Hall and Müller, 2004), farm tourism (Gössling and Mattsson, 2002) or mountain tourism (Fredman *et al.*, 2001). Much of the non-institutionalized ecotourism in Sweden can, however, be characterized as self-sustained individual travel, including relatively few commercial elements.

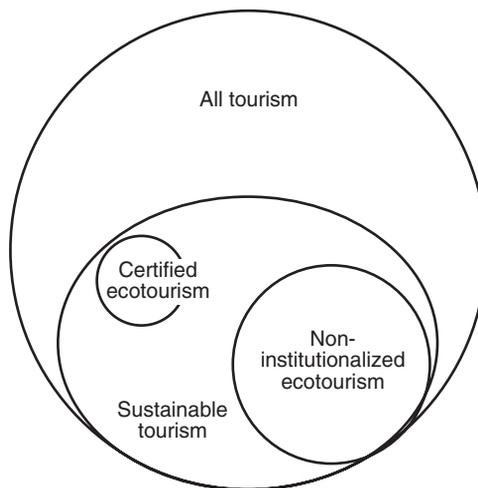
When asked in a national census, 78% of the population replied that they had participated in forest hikes, 39% in boat cruises and 11% in mountain hiking at least once in a single year (Statistics Sweden, 2004). Not all of this can, by definition, be classified as tourism, but gives an illustration of Swedish affinity to nature experiences. This is an indication of the embeddedness of Swedish ecotourism.

We will outline a genealogy of ecotourism with its roots in connections between outdoor recreation and the formation of a modern Swedish nation. Outdoor recreation has been, and is, an important phenomenon for Swedish citizens in the creation of both individual as well as national identities. It often entails activities on a local scale, thus strengthening a sense of community. At the same time outdoor recreation is coupled to a strong educational agenda regarding local nature and culture. Therefore, there are several similarities between outdoor recreation and ecotourism, but outdoor recreation does not necessarily entail obvious, direct consumption practices. Likewise, there are many similarities between ecotourism and nature-based tourism in a wider sense, not least regarding forms of consumption, but we see a clear distinction between the two based on an underlying philosophy and recommendations and rules for tourist and operator behaviour. In sum, we see a continuum from outdoor recreation to tourism to nature-based

tourism to ecotourism. Along this continuum the specificity of consumer practices increases. As knowledge projects, outdoor recreation and ecotourism converge, while there is no necessary claim to knowledge about local nature and culture in the more general categories of tourism and nature-based tourism.

In addition to non-institutionalized forms of ecotourism, Sweden is currently the only country in the northern hemisphere having a segment of institutionalized, i.e. certified, ecotourism. Certification by the Swedish Ecotourism Association (Svenska Ekoturismföreningen, SEF) is based on a wide range of criteria (see below) and is specific for arrangements, not for the operator per se. Certified arrangements, which have been audited, can carry the label 'Nature's Best' (*Naturens Bästa*). Besides institutionalized/certified and non-institutionalized/non-certified forms of ecotourism, there are several interrelated forms of tourism in Sweden. One example is tourism that is nature-based or cultural, but not fulfilling the 'general principles' of ecotourism. For instance, snowmobile-based recreation is becoming increasingly popular in many parts of northern Sweden (see Fredman and Lindberg, Chapter 10, this volume), but is not usually considered as ecotourism because of its negative environmental impacts. Likewise, certain forms of cultural tourism (for instance city breaks) are not ecotourism as these are not nature-based; nevertheless, such forms of tourism can be sustainable. More specifically, some forms of tourism might be distinguished that strive to be sustainable through certification such as the Nordic Swan or the Green Key (for an overview of tourism certifications in Scandinavia see Gössling, Chapter 6, this volume).

Figure 3.1 seeks to conceptualize Swedish tourism. A substantial segment of all Swedish tourism might be sustainable, including nature-based tourism, cultural tourism and other forms of tourism (visiting friends and relatives, etc.). Within the segment of sustainable tourism, certified/institutionalized



**Fig. 3.1.** A conceptualization of tourism in Sweden.

and non-certified/non-institutionalized forms of ecotourism can be distinguished. Non-institutionalized forms of ecotourism might stand for a rather large share of sustainable tourism, while certified ecotourism is, in terms of tourist numbers, of rather minor importance.

## From 'Outdoor Recreation' to 'Ecotourism'

Leisure and tourism activities in nature are not a phenomenon particular to Sweden, but such activities have, during the last 150 years, come to define both what it means to be Swedish and Sweden as a tourism landscape. The mythologies that give meaning to being in nature can be traced back to the Middle Ages and the 'barbaric' practices of northern Europe *vs* the 'civilization' of continental Europe (Tordsson, 2000), but for tourism purposes it is of more immediate interest to reflect upon the role of nature in relation to modernism and urbanism. In an anthology of outdoor recreation history in Sweden, Sandell and Sörlin (2000) describe how outdoor recreation in the leisure landscape developed as a cultural phenomenon in the industrial society. Four phases were identified:

- national identity and a romantic critique of modern civilization at the turn of the 20th century;
- collectivism and democratization in the interwar period;
- materialistic expansion and a consumer culture during the 1960s and 1970s; and
- globalization and activity diversification during the late 20th century.

The Swedish Touring Club (Svenska Turistföreningen), established in 1884, encouraged Swedes to 'know your nation', and the expanding rail network opened up the north of Sweden to tourist exploration. The north had become the internal frontier, and tourist development through signposted hiking trails and tourist cottages paralleled the emergence of Swedish modernism. At that time, tourism was characterized by an intellectual middle class that sought to be distinguished from a collective form of tourism – they wanted to be travellers, not tourists. Travelling was done for health reasons, to breathe fresh air and to enjoy spectacular scenery. The separation of the Swedish–Norwegian union at the beginning of the 20th century created a renewed interest in Swedish nature for patriotic reasons, and the first national parks in Sweden were established in 1909. During the interwar period the Swedish government took a more active role in tourism development, and in 1938 Swedes were granted a statutory right to 2 weeks of paid vacation annually (today it is 5 weeks), and tourism was recognized as a political welfare concern. Good recreational habits of the working class were promoted and the government provided funds to pay for the development of vacation homes and recreational areas. This form of collective tourism is in contrast to the earlier intellectual way of looking at tourism, where the focus was more on the individual (Nilsson, 1999). At this time the 'Right of Common Access', which allows individuals

free access to private land within some limitations, played an important role in tourism development (Kaltenborn *et. al.*, 2001).

In 1936, the southern seaside town Ystad hosted an exposition named 'Leisure'. The objective of this exposition was to educate Swedish citizens in what to do after work and on holidays. Modernist and industrial organizational, production and aesthetic principles had combined to necessitate new ways of managing time and space (Eskilsson, 2000). Specifically, to separate and spatialize working time and free time, respectively, became a condition for societal development. The formation of an urban space of production and, in contrast, a rural recreational landscape, articulated both modernist ideals and a bourgeois-driven process to control working-class behaviour and values. The emerging middle class wanted to ensure that the growing amount of free time was spent in productive and constructive ways (derived from middle-class ideals, i.e. thrift, creating your own happiness, time is money, etc.). This meant a temporal and spatial disciplinment of the working population. Leisure *time* should be spent on developing hobbies, collecting things, exercising the body and avoiding the ingestion of harmful substances. Leisure *space* was defined as non-urban, away from dance pavilions and beer halls and towards low-density ruralism.

Earlier, mobility through nature had already been discursively constructed as a way of becoming Swedish, as was the case in several other countries as well, i.e. other Scandinavian countries and the USA. 'Leisure' reinforced the moral obligation to use rural areas for tourism purposes by giving instructions on how to use free time, down to a level of detail that specified individual leisure-related objects. Many of these were explicitly intended for use in nature, e.g. tents, bicycles, spirit stoves, camping gear and bathing dresses. The choreography of tourism mobility began to take shape in a network of leisure-related organizations, transportation infrastructure, mass communication channels, new consumer objects and tourism facilities.

The decades that followed the Second World War heralded a booming economy, with large increases in nominal wages. Subsequent to the environmental debate of the 1960s, areas for nature conservation and recreation were officially identified, the purpose being to create recreational areas for the general public by securing land and to support the development of the tourism industry. Both social and regional economic aspects of recreation and tourism were given priority by the government at this time, many of the regional governments becoming important actors in the tourism development. In 1967 the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) was established, with a national responsibility for coordinating recreational planning in the country, including a responsibility for national park planning. The agency also administered governmental subsidies for trail construction until the beginning of the 1990s.

In the 1970s many local communities built recreational and tourism facilities to promote outdoor activities, many of which later faced economic problems. In the mid-1970s, the business aspects of tourism were increasingly becoming recognized and in 1976 the national authority 'Turistrådet' was

established. The number of reorganizations of this agency since then reflect a political shift towards promotion of commercial tourism and away from 'social' recreation: in the early 1990s, SEPA no longer had any formal responsibility for outdoor recreation or tourism promotion. Today, Sweden has two tourism promotion authorities: (i) the Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth – charged with developing strategies, keeping statistics and coordinating efforts relating to Swedish tourism; and (ii) the Swedish Travel and Tourism Council – responsible for the promotion of Sweden as a business and leisure travel destination.

In 2002, the SEPA regained formal responsibility for outdoor recreation promotion in Sweden. While more traditional outdoor recreation activities in people's everyday life still remain important (SCB, 2004), recent developments in the tourism industry have focused on commercialization and regional development. According to Ahlström (2000), there were approximately 150 nature-based tourism operators in Sweden around 1990 (canoeing, rafting, survival courses, rock climbing, horseback riding, etc.), and 5 years later the number had increased to 500. This development is a good example of what has recently been identified as the 'experience economy' (Pine and Gilmore, 1999).

Outdoor recreation during the latter part of the 20th century can be characterized by diversification, specialization and globalization. In a contents analysis of *Utemagasinet*, the leading outdoor recreation magazine in Sweden, Sandell (2000) distinguished nine trends in the ways of presenting contemporary Swedish outdoor life:

- focus on experiences;
- male oriented;
- adventurers and expedition professionals;
- professionalized leisure time;
- focus on achievements;
- absence of societal motives for participation;
- adrenaline, tranquillity, danger and flow;
- globalization; and
- activity driven.

Commercial interests probably drive many of these trends, and some of the recent changes in Swedish mountain tourism reported in this volume (Fredman and Lindberg, Chapter 10; Gössling, Chapter 8) also illustrate how Swedes are increasingly purchasing their nature experiences.

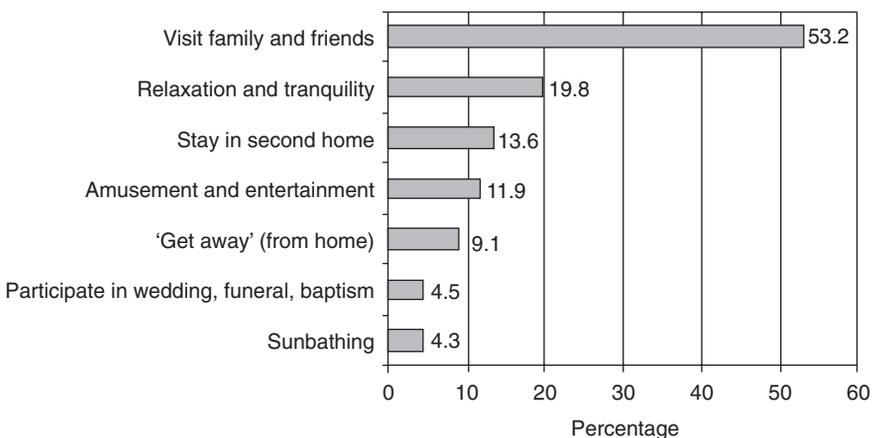
## Non-institutionalized Swedish Ecotourism

The Swedish tourism industry has a total turnover of SEK167 billion (approx. €18 billion), employs approximately 127,000 people and provides 2.5% of Sweden's GNP. Since 1995, the Swedish tourism business volume has increased by 40% in nominal prices. Most of the tourism in Sweden is domestic – domestic leisure traveller spend comprises 49% of the turnover,

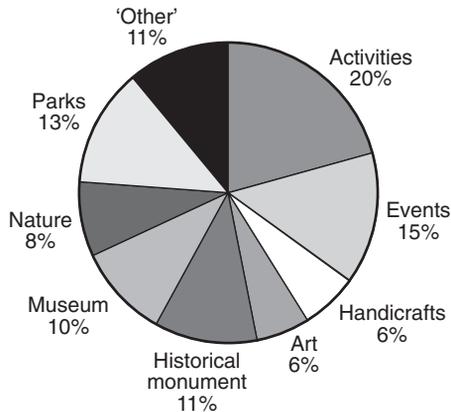
28% coming from international visitors and 22% from domestic business travel (Swedish Tourist Authority, 2005a). During 2003, Sweden had 7.7 million incoming visitors (each including at least one overnight stay). Among these, a majority came from Germany, followed by Denmark, Finland, Great Britain and Norway. About two-thirds of all incoming tourists come to Sweden for pleasure or to visit relatives and friends. Looking at domestic tourism, statistics from the Swedish national census show that 68% of the population have at least one week of leisure travel away from home during a 12-month period (Statistics Sweden, 2004). During 2004, the Swedes made 49.2 million trips (each including at least one overnight stay) in their own country. More than 65% of these were for pleasure rather than business (Swedish Tourist Authority, 2005a).

A major challenge is to estimate how many of these trips can be classified as nature-based tourism or ecotourism. Existing statistics will give very limited information in that respect. Looking at the travel motives among those 49.2 million domestic overnight trips, we found a majority visiting family and friends (Fig. 3.2). About one-fifth of all trips were for relaxation and tranquillity, 14% to stay in a second home, 12% for amusement and entertainment and 4% for sunbathing. With a couple of exceptions, most of the categories in Fig. 3.2 are more or less compatible with visits to experience nature. How nature-based tourism is captured in the statistics is very much a matter of the definitions used and how the questions asked are framed.

The Swedish Tourist Authority has, since 1989, collected statistics from a large number of visitor attractions all over the country (Swedish Tourist Authority, 2005b). The (approximately) 100 million visits to 2200 attractions are classified into nine categories (Fig. 3.3). The largest category (in terms of visitors), *activities*, consists largely of skiing (80%) and swimming facilities. The *nature* category comprises 8% of all visits, and includes visits to nature areas (90%), waterfalls, caves and bird-watching facilities.



**Fig. 3.2.** Travel motives in Swedish domestic tourism, percentage of all overnight stays (from Swedish Tourist Authority, 2005a).



**Fig. 3.3.** Visitor attractions in Sweden (from Swedish Tourist Authority, 2005b).

The total visitation over all categories between 1998 and 2003 increased by 6%, the largest increases being reported for *activities* (25%) and *nature* and *handicrafts* (12% each). The *museum* category features the largest decrease in visitation (12%), while the sub-category *outdoor museums* increased during the study period. Again, these statistics will give a few hints regarding the extent of nature-based tourism in Sweden, but not much more. One should also observe that these statistics are probably both biased and rather incomplete. They are based on self-reports from local tourist authorities, the selected attractions are arbitrarily chosen and, in many cases (particularly in the *nature* category), visitor numbers are simply estimated. For example, the *nature* category includes 90 attractions, while in Sweden there are a total of 28 national parks and some 1500 nature reserves – not all being major tourist destinations, of course, but a significant proportion are.

Nevertheless, data indicate that nature-related activities and attractions do increase more than the average. As reported elsewhere in this volume (see Fredman and Lindberg, Chapter 10, this volume), much of the tourism in the Swedish mountain region is nature based. In a recent study of future travel to the Swedish mountain region, Fredman and Sandell (2005) found that backpacking, downhill skiing and day-hiking were most likely to increase over the following 10 years. Eighteen per cent of the Swedish population thought they would increase their participation in backpacking in the mountains over the following 10 years, while 14% thought they would increase their participation in downhill skiing and day-hiking respectively.

One can argue that Sweden, during most of the 20th century, developed a compelling infrastructure for non-institutionalized ecotourism participation. Throughout the entire country there is a well-developed network of roads, public transportation, camping facilities and youth hostels (Swedish Touring Club, 2005). Along the 2600 km of coastline there is a network of boating and recreation services. Through many of the forested areas, comprising 60% of the Swedish land area, there are some 1600 km of hiking trails, many with overnight facilities (Magnusson, 1997). And in the

mountain region, the Swedish Touring Club has, in cooperation with national authorities, developed an extensive trail and hut system (Fredman *et al.*, 2001).

The formation of leisure space has, for the last 100 years, followed a trajectory of accessibility, and the continuous objective in the development of Sweden as a tourist landscape has been the democratization of nature. The Right of Public Access (*allemansrätten*, see Sandell, Chapter 9, this volume) has a long tradition, but during the 20th century, following the rapidly increasing economic importance of rural tourism, the meaning and consequences of the Right of Public Access have changed. Since a sophisticated tourism infrastructure has emerged all over Sweden, practice and materiality have combined to make Swedish nature ultra-accessible. This, in turn, has necessitated protective measures and even a developing discussion concerning questions on whether the right of public access is commensurate with a growing tourism industry.

The protection of Swedish nature has always taken place within tourism discourses, i.e. nature has not been exempt from tourist use. There is a historical (see above) as well as commercial logic behind this, in that protected natural areas often are very attractive to visit. While protected areas in Sweden are established both due to ecological and social reasons, there has been no tradition of collecting visitor data, and consequently knowledge of visitor numbers, distributions and visitor impact is generally quite limited (Emmelin *et al.*, 2005). One reason for this could be the relatively low population density in combination with the right of public access – limiting the importance of protected areas for the total supply of land for outdoor recreation opportunities compared to many other countries where access to private land is more restricted. Recent changes in Swedish environmental policy imply an increased recognition of social and economic values in (and around) protected areas (Swedish Government, 2001, p. 173): ‘Nature tourism and nature conservation should be developed for mutual benefit. In general, the nature in Sweden and in particular the protected areas, represents a resource with development potential.’

Key components in this process are local participation, regional development (e.g. tourism) and recognition of outdoor recreation benefits (e.g. health, environmental education, etc.). One example of implementation of this new policy is the recently established Fulufjället National Park in the county of Dalarna, where management is based on visitor data and a zoning system in order to provide a spectrum of recreation opportunities (Fredman *et al.*, 2005). The area is certified as a PAN (Protected Area Network) Park, and a Pan Park Accommodation lodge has just opened outside the park boundary – a joint venture between WWF and a Dutch travel agency. In the same Government Writ, institutionalized ecotourism is also recognized as a potential precursor in the mutual development of environmental protection and the tourism industry in Sweden.

## Institutionalized Swedish Ecotourism

What Swedish authorities have done in order to manage the tourist growth industry, together with the protection of nature, is to place nature within a scientific discourse. This is not unique to tourist nature, but rather a general consequence of the industrialization of society. Along with discoveries of invisible and hitherto unknown environmental problems in the 1960s, it became critical to gain a deeper scientific understanding of nature. This entailed the use of new technologies to visualize nature, and thus new ways of speaking of nature. When the naked eye can no longer detect environmental problems unaided, vision must be technologically enhanced. The wording of how to create a process of sustainable development in the 1992 Rio Declaration reflects this:

[...] building for sustainable development by improving scientific understanding through exchanges of scientific and technological knowledge, and by enhancing the development, adaptation, diffusion and transfer of technologies, including new and innovative technologies.

(United Nations, 2005)

Tourist nature became part of this general ‘scientization’ of nature through the mobilization of ecology. This change of emphasis was a way of stressing tourism as a holistic practice, away from tourism as an exploitive and degrading one. As the Swedish Ecotourism Association puts it: ‘Tourism is not only overpopulated beaches, unequal encounters, trash piles in hotel back yards or stinking sewers in the bay a stone’s throw away’ (Svenska Ekoturismföreningen, 2005a, our translation). Ecology is ‘[...] that branch of biology which deals with the relations of living organisms to their surroundings, their habits and modes of life, etc.’ (*Oxford English Dictionary*), and ecotourism thus purports to place the tourist in the middle of a network of meanings, organisms, cultures and objects instead of outside it, as an alienated spectator. The ‘scientization’ of tourist nature in Sweden has taken the moral and ideological connotations of mobility through nature in new directions.

For much of the 20th century, social intercourse with nature (the literal translation of the Swedish expression *naturumgänge*, which denotes being non-idle in nature) was part of a national agenda that hybridized land and body. With the establishment of the Swedish Ecotourism Association, ecotourism turned nature, in addition to being an arena for developing a soundness of body and soul, into a knowledge project. This was not, and still is not, happening primarily in a national context, although much environmental work is operationalized by national agencies. Rather, just as ecology deals with flows and networks from a holistic perspective, the ‘scientization’ of nature is embedded in global discourses and networks.

The 1992 Rio Conference and Agenda 21 document were international United Nations endeavours, resulting in a number of global sustainability principles subsequently searching for local translations and implementations all over the world. Thus, it is not primarily the nation that is formulated

within ecotourism but rather the web of life, human dependence upon nature and the fragility of ecosystems. By illuminating the complexities of nature, ecotourism operators construct nature (and local culture) – through marketing – as an object in need of respect, an entity that must be encountered with a humble frame of mind. The Swedish Environmental Protection Agency reinforces this construction of nature and formulates a number of ethical rules for ecotourists under the heading ‘As ecotourist I promise to ...’ (Naturvårdsverket, 2005, our translation). What you promise to do if you take on the role of ecotourist includes: (i) to act sympathetically with nature; (ii) to obtain pre-travel knowledge about nature; (iii) to develop awareness of protected areas; (iv) to minimize demands for travel comforts (if these entail increased environmental stress); and (v) to study animals from a distance, not at close range.

Since its official introduction, Swedish ecotourism has thus been a mode of travel framed by asceticism and scientific knowledge. It is a form of tourism that can be seen as a reaction to environmental degradation in a larger societal context than local tear and wear at individual destinations, even though this, of course, is also expressed in ecotourism manifestos. There is always a focus in (Swedish) ecotourism contexts on local conditions, local critical levels of environmental stress, local reserves of knowledge, local restrictions of resource use and mobility through nature and local economy. But, to understand the emergence of Swedish ecotourism, it is useful to place it in a global discourse of environmental problems. This also facilitates the discussion of how Swedish ecotourism has developed since its 1996 introduction as a designated type of travel in nature. Generally, following the institutionalization of Swedish ecotourism, the trend has shifted from a focus on conservation towards that on marketable experiences (see Hultman and Andersson Cederholm, Chapter 7, this volume).

Nature’s Best, as the ‘quality label of Swedish ecotourism’ (SEF, 2005a), is unique among Scandinavian countries. However, an expansion of the label to other countries, including the United States, is planned (SEF, 2005b). The Swedish Travel and Tourism Council is also currently promoting a marketing campaign profiling Sweden as an ecotourism destination internationally. Nature’s Best was developed in several steps. In 2000, a sum of SEK 200,000 (€22,000) was invested by governmental bodies and other organizations to conduct a feasibility study of the planned certification scheme. Experiences with existing forms of ecotourism in Sweden were summarized in this study, and a first sketch of what a certification organization could look like was presented in cooperation with nature-based tour operators. In May 2001 it was officially announced that a Swedish ecotourism certification was to be developed and presented by 2002, the United Nations’ ‘Year of Ecotourism’. Some 20 organizations and companies worked on the certification scheme, and it was officially launched in February 2002 as ‘Nature’s Best’, together with a call for operators to apply for the label. The criteria for Nature’s Best were revised in June 2003, but SEF’s ‘six basic principles’ for ecotourism did not change (Nature’s Best, 2005):

**1. *Respect the limitations of the destination – minimize the negative impacts on local nature and culture.***

Ecotourism is about preserving what the visitor has come to experience. The ecological and cultural capacity of each area must be respected. This means tour operators must have a thorough knowledge of the destination, a local presence and work closely with others present in the area.

**2. *Support the local economy.***

Ecotourism is about community development. Conservation can easily fail if local people object to it. Tangible benefits from tourism are a positive force. Each visitor contributes economically to the well-being of the destination by renting rooms, hiring local guides and purchasing goods and services. The more the better.

**3. *Make all the operators' activities environmentally sustainable.***

Ecotourism operators must set a good example of sound environmental practice. Approved operators are to have policies which minimize environmental impact by prioritizing, e.g. collective transport, sustainable lodging, waste management, etc.

**4. *Contribute actively to nature and cultural conservation.***

Ecotourism assumes responsibility for the protection of biodiversity and special cultural values. This means supporting nature preservation in various ways. Our operators cooperate to find 'win-win' ways of doing business.

**5. *Promote knowledge and respect and the joy of discovery.***

Ecotourism is about travelling with curiosity and a respectful mindset. Approved operators are competent hosts providing visitors with a good introduction to the area. Good advice and guidance are often the keys to a memorable trip.

**6. *Quality and safety all the way.***

Ecotourism is quality tourism. Approved tours must meet and even exceed our customers' high expectations. Safety issues are taken very seriously, and we have many satisfied customers. An approved tour operator is a trusted supplier and partner.

These six principles are the platform for the criteria that have to be met by any tour operator applying for Nature's Best. The Swedish Ecotourism Association does, as a first step, sell a 'start package' to interested clients. The start package consists of information about relevant regulations, check lists and the application itself. Based on these documents, the applicant needs to prove that the product fulfils all 'basic criteria' plus at least 25% of 'bonus criteria'. The idea behind the certification is seen as a development process, where all operators have to continuously improve the certified product. Recently, new criteria for 2006–2010 came into force which, when revised in 2010, are likely to become even stricter.

The criteria for application are divided into the above-mentioned six principle categories, or umbrella themes and, within these categories, subdivided into 'basic' and 'bonus' criteria. In total, there are some 90 'basic' and 40 'bonus' criteria. Special additional criteria apply for hunting, fishing, riding, kayaking, rafting, snow-scooter driving, caving, water-borne transport, wildlife watching and diving. Many criteria can simply be ticked off on the



**Fig. 3.4.** Distribution of Swedish operators with certified ecotourism products, 2005.

checklist, as they express a stated will of the operator to behave responsibly, rather than being measurable parameters. These criteria include, for instance, ‘one-way packaging is avoided’ or ‘the operator strives to use only locally produced or certified food’. Meeting other criteria entails considerable efforts, such as ‘the operator has an individual, written environmental management plan, which describes the arrangement’s environmental impacts’.

Institutionalized ecotourism in Sweden has seen a rapid development. Within 3 years, almost 70 operators offering 220 certified arrangements have become members. In some regions, such as north-east Skåne (see Nilsson, Chapter 12, this volume), the development of new ecotourism products has even been strategically organized with financial support from the European Union. Hence, certified ecotourism can now be found all over the country (Fig. 3.4). This map also shows that ecotourism development has been

particularly successful in some regions, where clusters of certified operators have emerged. Another aspect of importance is that ecotourism products are viable in peripheral areas. Many parts of rural Sweden are characterized by decreasing population densities and dependence on extractive industries. But with logging, farming and mining declining in terms of labour requirements, tourism often takes on a new meaning. In Sweden, as elsewhere in the world, rural communities typically suffer from a lack of diversity in their economic structure, which means they are highly dependent on a few employers, and economic dependence is often on external, rather than on local, sources of financial capital (Marcoullier and Green, 2000). The focus on ecotourism products might, in these areas, represent a process of diversification of economic income opportunities, and successful marketing by the Swedish Ecotourism Association might provide opportunities for a positive economic development in such areas.

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# 4

## Ecotourism in Norway: Non-existence or Co-existence?

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### Introduction

Norway has fostered Arctic explorers such as Roald Amundsen Fritjef and Nansen, the father of deep ecology, Arne Næss and Gro Harlem Brundtland, after whom the 'Brundtland report' (WCED, 1987) was named. Still, ecology, ecotourism and even sustainable tourism are almost non-existent in the country.

In preparation for this chapter, a number of tourism providers were asked about the idea of ecotourism. Responses included: 'Why should we use the term?'; 'Isn't all tourism in this country ecotourism?'; and, ironically, 'Does it refer to economy or ecology?'. The issue is obviously central neither to the Norwegian tourism industry nor to the public. Calling up the few enterprises and organizations that appear when searching for 'ecotourism' and 'Norway' on the Internet reveals that these are, with one exception, foreigners working for the promotion of ecotourism in Norway. Furthermore, most of these ecotourism businesses were started by farmers, who had started with eco-farming and focused on ecotourism to enlarge their commercial base. The non-existence of ecotourism ventures in Norway is in stark contrast to the Swedish situation. An April 2005 search on the Internet revealed that there were 3950 hits for 'ecotourism' and 'Sweden' – as opposed to 785 for the respective Norwegian search. To write about ecotourism in Norway is thus to write about something that does not exist, or that exists under a different label.

The literature on ecotourism can be divided into texts produced by 'believers', people who want tourism not to damage or to put pressure on nature; some academic and presumably neutral presentations (Fennell, 1999; Page and Dowling, 2002) and a few rather critical accounts (cf. Duffy, 2002; McLaren, 2003). The critics of ecotourism tend to maintain that it is a difficult concept, that ecotourists behave like other tourists, that ecotourists

are often pioneers opening up new areas for tourism, and that ecotourism – as all tourism – is founded in a market economy. Vital to this economy is growth and competition, principles that have consequences which will be illustrated by the example of Svalbard.

## Natural-born Norwegians?

There are a variety of possible explanations as to why ecotourism has never had a breakthrough in Norway. Several of these are based on the close relationship most Norwegians have with nature; nature is more or less where the Norwegians are born and where they live, harvest and spend their spare time, and it is also a significant element of national identity (Breivik and Løvmo, 1978; Aarnes, 1991; Goksøyr, 1994; Pedersen, 1999). In the words of the Polish scholar Nina Witoszek (1998, p. 18): ‘There is an extensive semiotic immersion from nature into the Norwegian perception of the Norwegian self.’ Even if more than half of the Norwegians live in towns, most of them have strong ties to rural eras from where their forefathers originated, where they have relatives or friends, or where they have a second home.

There are also a number of prevalent rituals such as long nature walks or cross-country skiing trips, hiking, picking berries and so on. Many nature-oriented practices are deeply embedded. Most Norwegians know how to make a bonfire, to kill and skin fish, to find a path through the wilderness and to survive in the mountains: this is traditional knowledge. Thus, nature is indeed highly valorized, more or less in a reflexive matter. According to Kalland (2004, p. 9), the traditional Norwegian nature-based activities are partly based on attitudes and perceptions, and partly on naturalized patterns of action. Anyhow, Norwegians believe that they know how to take care of nature. Thus, there is no need for ecotourism.

The attitudes to nature referred to here are anthropocentric and hegemonic: human beings at the top of the nature chain having the right to exploit nature for the benefit of human existence (cf. Macnaghten and Urry, 1998). This contrasts with the ‘ecotourism’ platform based on an ecocentric philosophy that equalizes nature with humans, and more or less excludes the human from nature: nature shall not be disturbed. This is an unfamiliar paradigm for most Norwegians. To them, ecotourism or ecology is for people that do not have natural relations to nature. If you are brought up and live in urban areas you have to learn how to behave in and cope with nature: ‘[...] urban life is un-nature’, said Nansen in 1921 (Nansen, 1942, p. 578). Thus, the rationale for ecotourism in the Norwegian mind is to socialize alienated people with nature.

Attitudes and actions also relate to traditions and discourses concerning outdoor recreation (Norwegian: *friluftsliv*), dating back to the 19th century. One of the origins of Norwegian outdoor recreation is the upper class in Oslo, who were inspired by the mountaineering practices of the English upper class in the Scottish Highlands and in the Swiss Alps, and started to hike in the Norwegian mountains in the 1860s (cf. Aarnes, 1991; Richardson,

1994; Pedersen, 1999). In order to go into the mountains, they certainly had to listen to local people, who for generations had used this wilderness as grazing land and for harvesting.

Hence, the Norwegian appreciation of nature was probably acquired both from Romantic waves of European intellectuals and from local traditions in rural Norway (Pedersen, 1999, p. 37). This may also be the reason why climbing never became a big sport; the Norwegians preferred hiking and other less physically demanding forms of outdoor activity. The Norwegians' admiration of their countryside in the second half of the 19th century was also tied to strong independence movements; mountains, valleys and peasant people were vital symbols of a nation striving for independence (Aarnes, 1991; Pedersen, 1999). Norway became independent in 1905, after having been in union with Sweden (since 1814) and formerly a Danish colony (before 1814).

With more time becoming available for leisure activities by the urban population, the countryside and the mountains became quite popular for recreational purposes. In fact, the modern urban class more or less colonized the countryside (cf. Pedersen, 1999, p. 34). In 1957, a law was created (*Friluftsloven*) that guaranteed free admittance for everybody to uncultivated outdoor areas, irrespective of ownership. However, outdoor recreation had become well established among large parts of the Norwegian population long before this.

Today, this free access to nature principle is supported by almost all political parties and motivated by the idea of 'a healthy soul in a healthy body'. The Norwegian Tourist Organization (founded in 1868), was created to take care of these interests and to develop tourist infrastructure for its members (cf. Richardson, 1994). In addition, a network of marked tracks, mountain lodges and cabins exists all over the country. The ideological base for this kind of organization is not unlike the ecotourism platform, although less pronounced in terms of its basic principles. It could thus be argued that ecotourism has existed in Norway for more than 100 years, including the surrounding discourses and the physical infrastructure. In other words, the discursive space, where ecotourism could have entered, was already occupied by traditional outdoor activities, politics and organizations.

In Norway, positive attitudes towards nature are based on lay and traditional approaches to nature. However, some doubt has emerged concerning the solidity of the fundamentals of these attitudes. A growing number of Norwegians are not raised according to these traditions, and during the past decades new groups of nature users have entered the scene (Pedersen, 1999): people using motorized vehicles in the countryside, such as snowmobiles and quad bikes. Recent years have also seen a significant increase in other technologically based extreme sports such as rafting, mountain biking, top-skiing, kite-skiing, paragliding, base-jumping and so on. In addition, contemporary Norway is a multicultural society.

Thus, there are many negative signs concerning 'nature competence'. Self-satisfied attitudes may become a sleeping pill for not taking into account environmental considerations, concepts and products such as ecotourism. The manager of one of the few ecotourism companies put it this way: 'When

people become aware of the many aspects of ecology, and the ways average Norwegians are not acting environmentally, the understanding of the value of the eco-approach normally increases.' Probably, to be acknowledged, the term 'ecology' has to be popularized. As it is today, it seems something Norwegians primarily relate to foreign locations and cultures; it is a matter for the 'Other'. A review of Norwegian tour operators confirms this observation, as many of them flag for ecotourism in their marketing of destinations in developing countries. This can be interpreted as both self-satisfaction and missionary attitude: 'we do not need this philosophy ourselves, but many others do.' As a sign of their own excellence Norwegians tend to emphasize that Brundtland, the leader of the much-quoted Brundtland Commission, is Norwegian.

## Ecology: Science and Ideology

In Norway, ecology is obviously regarded as an academic term, and as such it is interpreted rather strictly. There exists a split between strong and weak definitions of sustainability (cf. Hunter and Green, 1995; Hay, 2002, p. 214) that is also applicable to terms such as ecology and ecotourism. In many places, ecotourism is another term for nature tourism, which would correspond to weak definitions of ecotourism, or 'blue-green environmental ideas' (Duffy, 2002). The Norwegian perception of ecotourism is obviously based on a much stronger definition of ecotourism, and is perceived by many as a contradiction. Tourism puts pressure on nature, and tourism means a gathering of more people in one place than would be 'natural'. Ecotourism also indicates a focus that differs from the predominating one within Norwegian tourism. The major nature attractions in Norway are based on nature as scenery and spectacular views, and they are objects of an aesthetic gaze. The ecotourism approach is, in a strict sense, more oriented towards sights and also knowledge. However, as Duffy (2002, p. 135) shows, ecotourism ventures prioritize the beautiful on behalf of the less spectacular, but equally important, elements of nature.

Arne Næss, the Norwegian eco-philosopher and founder of deep ecology, probably strengthened the perception of the term 'eco-' as ideological. Næss and his affiliates have been central in disputes and combats of hydropower developments in Norway, particularly in the first big case (Mardølaaksjonen) in the late 1960s. Thus, ecology has partly been a concept associated with politically contentious issues. Among the majority of the Norwegian public, although environmental concern has become a norm and a 'masterframe' (cf. Eder, 1996), those fronting environmental issues are looked upon as political outsiders, and the clang of 'eco-' is a bit controversial. Many Norwegians thus look at ecotourism as a marketing concept and as 'greenspeak' (cf. Dann, 1996; Harré *et al.*, 1999). This might be the ultimate reason why it is not much used in marketing: it is looked upon as a concept that is difficult to live up to, and Norwegians do not like to boast, as one of the interviewees maintained. So, as long as there are non-ecological elements in the product, the term will normally be avoided. This was in fact the reason why the tourism industry on Svalbard in the early

1990s chose not to use the term: ecotourism did not fit with a form of tourism causing very large emissions of CO<sub>2</sub> due to long, aviation-based travel distances, dominant cruise ship tourism and significant snowmobile tourism, and in general a tourism based on high consumption and high-tech operations. The choice to not use the term ecotourism was also tied to a conviction that 'nature' was a better marketing concept.

More generally, ecological paradigms tend to be looked upon as limitations, and not as opportunities. Local people fear that ecotourism could imply restrictions for nature practices. Ecotourism does not open up economic opportunities as sustainable tourism does. Therefore, many prefer to use the term 'sustainable tourism' or 'green tourism'.

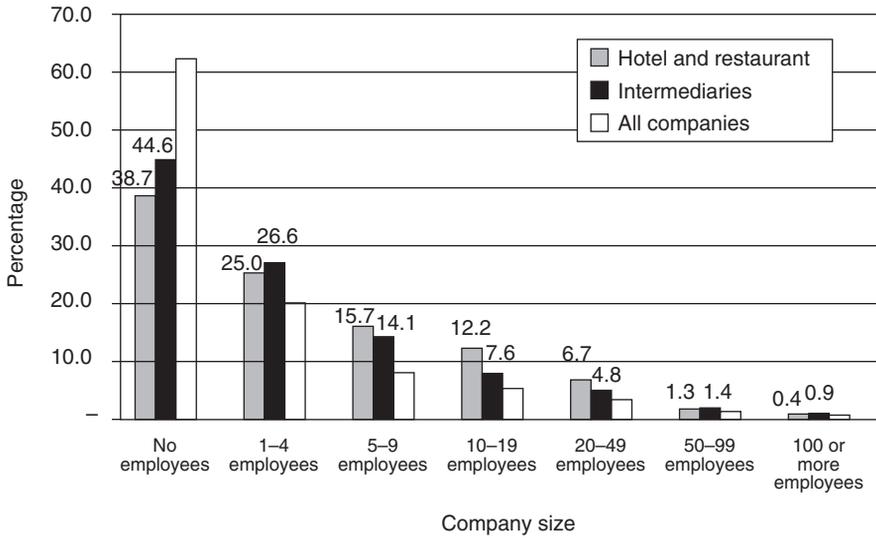
## Norway: Eco-destination?

The previous sections have outlined that the most common attitude towards ecotourism is that of an unnecessary concept, as most tourism in Norway is run on the principles of ecotourism. This is probably an exaggeration but, on the other hand, the structure and character of Norwegian tourism is surely in accordance with some of those principles. There is no commonly agreed definition of the term, but international principles exist that are a kind of minimum standard for ecotourism ventures and destinations (Fennell, 1999; WTO, 2001; Page and Dowling, 2002). The first principle is that ecotourism should be nature based and include valorization of nature and local culture. Almost all tourism in Norway is nature based, and local culture is an important ingredient (Jacobsen, 2003; Viken *et al.*, 2004).

A second point is that there should be an educational and interpretative element in the product. This is certainly variable and there is no demand that local guides should accompany tourist groups, but interpretation is nevertheless a major element in group-based tourism. However, the majority of tourists in Norway travel on their own, and the interpretation element is thus beyond control for most tourism. Thirdly, there is a small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) principle in the ecotourism standard. In Norway almost all tourism companies are small and locally owned. This is indicated in Fig. 4.1.

This shows that the companies in the tourism sector are generally small, with 78.4% of the hotels and restaurants having less than ten employees. Altogether, the tourism industry employs 150,000 persons, about 6.4% of the workforce in the country (Ministry of Industrial Affairs, 2005).

A fourth demand is that ecotourism (or any tourism) should not harm nature. This principle is certainly not always fulfilled, but generally there are few environmental problems reported that result from tourism operations in Norway. Besides this, there are few reports of erosion, disturbance of wildlife, damaged heritage or interference with local communities. Kalland (2004) claims that this is probably as much incidental as a result of sustainable politics and action. So, the most problematic side of Norwegian tourism, besides the fact that tourism is based on high consumption levels, is transport (Høyer, 2000; Gössling, 2002) – partly due to the country's peripheral position



**Fig. 4.1.** Company size within tourism and generally in Norway, 2005 (from Statistik Sentralbyrå, 2005).

in relation to its markets, and partly to its length, which stretches more than 2500 km from south to north.

A fifth aspect is that ecotourism should add to the local economy and generate alternative employment opportunities for local people. This is clearly the case, and in some rural districts up to 20% of the employees work in the tourism industry (Ministry of Industrial Affairs, 2005). Preferably, tourism activities should increase the understanding of the value of preservation of nature and culture. Being relatively problem-free, tourism is highly valued, according to a recent study (Viken, 2004, pp. 84–113), and there tends to be a high level of local involvement in tourism.

So, in many ways tourism in Norway is fulfilling the demands on ecotourism set by the World Tourism Organization (2001). Note, however, that there are also a variety of tourism operations that are far from being ecotouristic: beach-based tourism, alpine ski resorts, a growing market for motorized and technology-based tourist activities and so on. There is also a trend for large (national) companies to take over small, locally owned hotels and restaurants. The tendencies that counteract the ecotourism traits of Norwegian tourism are, not surprisingly, developments towards an increasingly commercial and capitalist tourism economy.

## Tourism on Svalbard: Ecotourism Practice or Not?

### Tourism development

Svalbard is located in the Arctic Sea. It is one of the northernmost inhabited places on earth, stretching from the 74th to the 81st degree of latitude. The

archipelago covers a land area of 61,229 km<sup>2</sup>, with a coastline 3587 km long. The climate is cold, but due to the Gulf Stream no colder than many other winter destinations. The average air temperature is +6°C in the summer, -14°C in winter.

Tourism on Svalbard dates back to the middle of the 19th century (Arlov, 1996; Elstad, 2004). The exploration of the polar areas gave publicity to the Arctic (Riffenburgh, 1993), and people became aware of Svalbard. A few also followed in the wake of explorers as pioneer tourists in the area. Since the 1870s, cruise tourism – which has always been an international business – has constituted a significant part of tourism on Svalbard. Local, land-based tourism had its first period of popularity in the 1890s, when a hotel existed close to where Longyearbyen is today; a second period in the 1930s further north in Ny-Ålesund, where another hotel was built (the building is still in use) and with a regular shipping line from northern Norway. After the Second World War the Norwegian authorities were more or less against land-based tourism development, officially due to a concern for the environment.

The point of departure for the third and prevailing period was the search for an economic alternative to coal mining, and tourism was given priority. As a consequence, many small private tourism companies popped up in the 1990s. Towards the end of the 1990s, two companies dominated hotels, restaurants and tour operations, employing some 115 people. Recently, the two companies have fused, and now virtually have a monopoly



**Fig. 4.2.** Svalbard, in the Arctic Ocean (© Norsk Polarinstitutt, avtalenr, 6 2005).

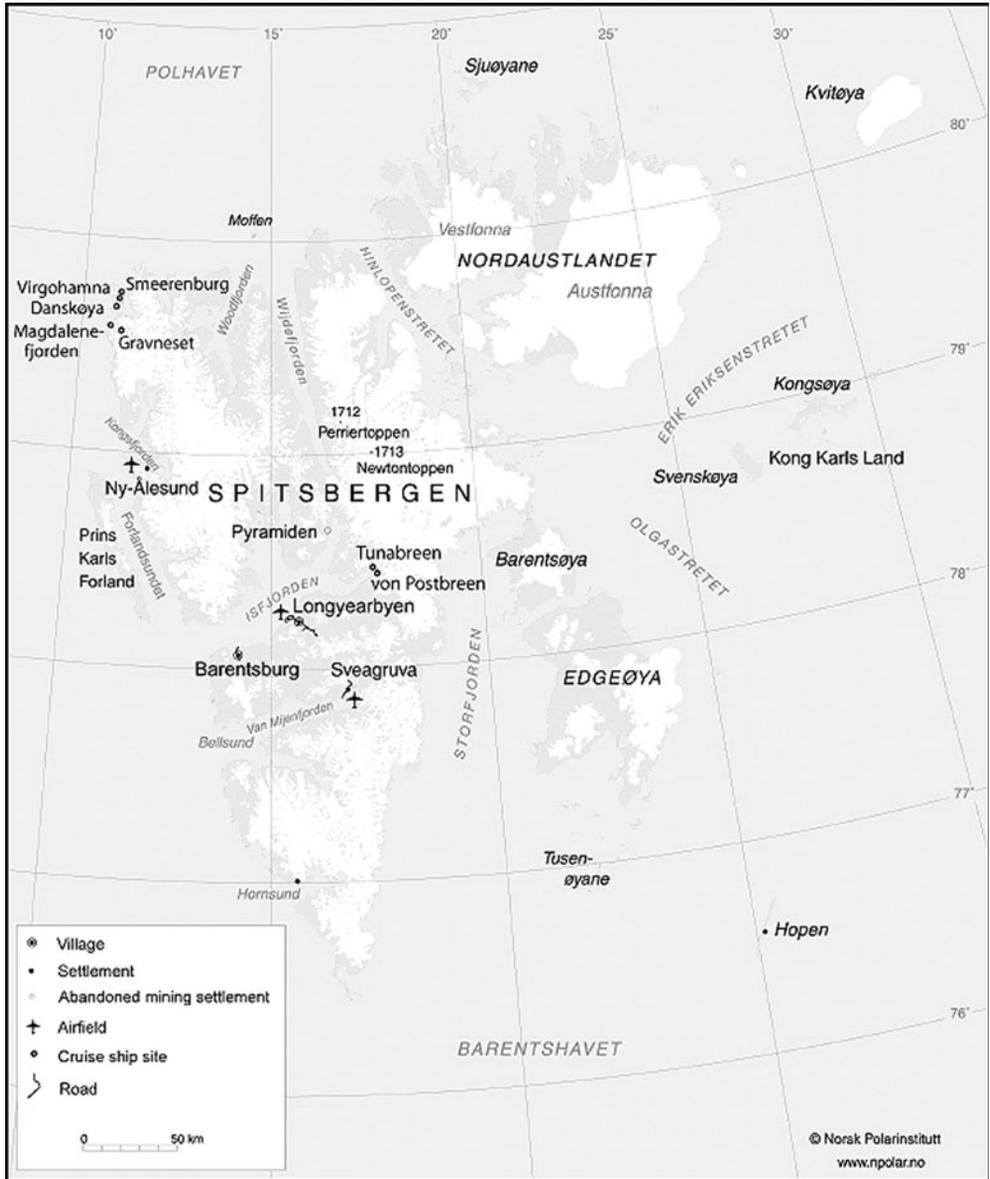


Fig. 4.3. Svalbard and its tourist sites (© Norsk Polarinstitutt, avtalenr. 6 2005).

concerning accommodation, apart from their being the largest of 15 local tour operators. Tourism statistics show that guest nights in Longyearbyen increased from 15,000 in 1990 (Svalbard Næringsutvikling, 1994) to 77,926 in 2004 (Svalbard Reiseliv, 2005; personal communication). About 70% of these tourists are Norwegian. In addition, there is a significant level of cruise tourism, with an estimated total of 50,000 tourists to Svalbard each year. Clearly, there has been a tremendous growth in tourist arrivals, which must

be seen in relation to the no-tourism policy extant before 1990, as the domestic market potential was large when Svalbard was 'opened' for tourists. Arrivals also need to be seen in the context of the size of the visited area, which is huge.

### **A planning process in the spirit of ecotourism?**

Since the 1990s, when Svalbard opened for tourism, ecological sustainability has been a concern, and this has guided the developments of the tourism industry and authorities:

The (Norwegian) Government wishes Svalbard to be one of the world's best managed wilderness areas. [...] in the event of a conflict between environmental targets and other interests, environmental considerations are to prevail within the limits dictated by treaty obligations and sovereignty considerations.

(Ministry of the Environment, 1999)

Svalbard Industrial Development, a company set up by the authorities to develop new industries on Svalbard, initiated a tourism plan that was finalized in 1994 (Svalbard Næringsutvikling, 1994). This work basically followed what Friedman (1987) called a social learning planning model (cf. Reid, 2003). The goal was to achieve a better and mutual understanding of the tourism business through a planning process. The approach of this plan met most of the criteria for ecotourism (Page and Dowling, 2002, p. 217). However, due to the above-mentioned scepticism towards ecotourism, the term was deliberately not used. Instead, the formulation that tourism should be 'ecologically sustainable' was used (Svalbard Næringsutvikling, 1994).

The plan also corresponds well with the recommendations by Page and Dowling (2002) for analysing future product opportunities, the resource base, logistic problems and the need for information strategies. Furthermore, the plan stated that nature and heritage should be preserved and monitored. The environmental section was expanded and detailed in a strategic follow-up to the plan in 1997 (Svalbard Næringsutvikling, 1997). However, this document was more focused on problems than solutions – it was a kind of precautionary warning. This was probably due to the fact that tourism was in its infancy, where nobody could foresee its future volume and the challenges arising from this. The aspect where the Svalbard tourism development process corresponds most closely to Page and Dowling's (2002) is in terms of networking.

The tourism industry created the Svalbard Tourism Board in the late 1990s, and this organization has been vital for some aspects of the development process, and in particular for the tourist industry within the eco-realm, and it has also collaborated with the Governor of Svalbard in several environmental projects. Also, as recommended by Page and Dowling, external collaborators exist: other Arctic destinations and international NGOs, such as the World Wide Fund for Nature.

Besides planning, Svalbard's environment and tourism are also well monitored and managed by a combination of self-regulation, state regulation

and different types of co-governance (Viken, 2006). There are no reports so far indicating that severe environmental problems related to growing tourism exist (Viken and Heimtun, 2001; Presterud, 2003; Svalbard Reiseliv, 2004, personal communication). However, there are many signs indicating that much of the tourism development on Svalbard has been led by values other than environmental concern; mergers, external investors, competition and marketing campaigns are elements of this picture. Contradictory to the policies of the authorities, there has also been a dispersal of tourism activities to most corners of the islands.

### **The promotion of ecological strategies in the tourism industry**

The local tourism industry on Svalbard has supported the lofty ambitions for Svalbard concerning environmental quality and management. In the Tourism Plan of 1994 it was stated that any development should be ecologically sustainable and that the commercial development should be concentrated in Ice Fjord/Nordenskiöld Land, the areas closest to Longyearbyen (Svalbard Næringsutvikling, 1994). In the Tourism Strategy of 1997, environmental concern was strengthened and the ambitions of the Government were adopted: 'Svalbard shall be the leading and best preserved high Arctic destination in the World. This can be obtained through a governed development that originates from and takes into consideration the vulnerability of nature' (Svalbard Næringsutvikling, 1997, pp. 12–13). There are also other examples of collective actions, most of them carried out by the local tourist board, including a 1998 project focusing on environmental practice within the tourism firms; creation of a set of tour operation guidelines and the so-called Common Sense Rules for Tourists (a code of conduct); a statistics reporting system; a nature guide training programme and an environmental section on Svalbard Tourism's web site. The most important thing, however, is that a business culture has been developed that is highly focused on environmental concerns, security and quality (Viken and Heimtun, 2001).

Despite all the collective signs of an environmentally responsible tourism industry, there is not much evidence of this in the marketing material or Internet presentations of tour operators on Svalbard. Only one of the local firms, a dog-sledge tour provider, has an expressed environmental philosophy, claiming to follow the Ten Principles for Arctic Tourism and Codes of Conduct for Tour Operations in the Arctic, developed by the World Wide Fund for Nature (Svalbard Adventure, 2005). The local tour operators follow the authorities in having a low polar bear profile in their marketing – polar bear safaris denote the type of tourism that is not wanted by the authorities (Ministry of Environment, 1999). The low eco-profile in the marketing of the local tour operators might be explained by the high percentage of Norwegian customers.

Turning to international tour operators, the 'polar bear profile' is significantly higher, but environmental strategies are not much clearer,

judging from Internet presentations. Nature is praised, security emphasized and itineraries are described. There are two exceptions, Lindblad Expeditions and Hapag-Lloyd. Lindblad Expeditions has been accredited with ISO 14001, has its own set of environmental goals and standards, and obviously regards itself as an ecotourism company. This company achieved the *Conde Nast Traveler* (a travel magazine) Ecotourism Award in 2002 and uses big, ice-classified ships, claiming that travel 'to a region should serve to sustain and in certain cases repair the integrity of that region's nature and culture [...]' (Lindblad expeditions, 2005).

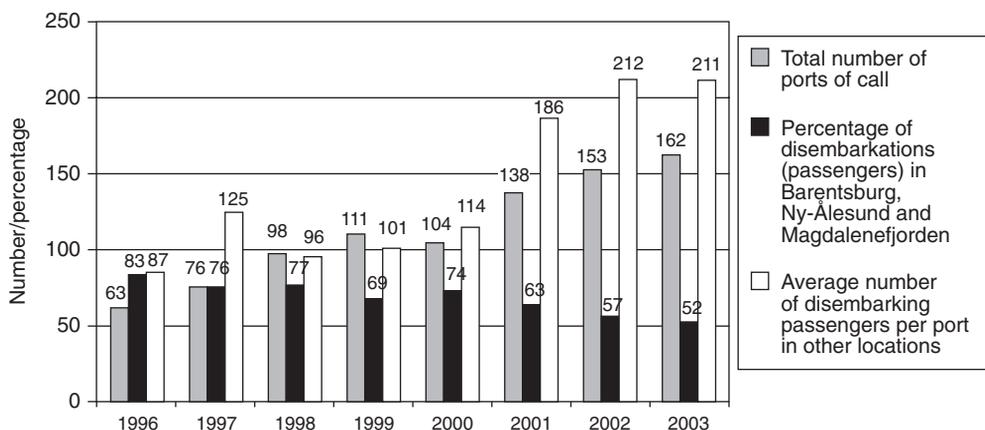
The other company, Hapag-Lloyd, is a more traditional cruise-ship company that has been operating in the Arctic for more than 100 years. Hapag-Lloyd has a well-developed management system, is a member of the International Association of Antarctic Tour Operators (IAATO) and claims to have fostered the process of creating 'Guidelines for Ecological Tourism in the Arctic'. The company also presents a Code of Conduct for travellers, an adoption of the IAATO guidelines. 'Let us jointly ensure that these unique ecosystems preserve what makes them so precious for people: unspoilt refuges for a unique type of nature' (Hapag-Lloyd, 2005). In addition to this there are a wide range of tour operators and travel agents promoting Svalbard under labels of ecotourism, responsible travel or similar terms.

## Tourism dispersal

Most tourists staying in Longyearbyen during the summer are on a cruise from and to a harbour in Europe. There are also cruises from Longyearbyen, most of these day cruises. The major attractions for cruise passengers are the scenery and the view of the glaciers that calf (detach) into the sea. To go ashore is an important activity, for hiking, bird watching or to visit cultural heritage sites such as whaling stations and mines. There are three types of cruise operators; overseas cruise operators, locally (Longyearbyen) owned and based coastal cruise operators; and foreign or externally owned (but partly Longyearbyen-based) tour operators. Altogether, there were 27,296 cruise tourists in 2002.

In recent years, there has been a tendency for cruise operators to take their passengers ashore at an increasing number of locations (cf. WWF, 2004). This has led to dispersal patterns running counter to the policies of concentrating tourism in the Ice Fjord and Nordenskiöld's Land (Sysselmannen på Svalbard, 2005). The number of passengers visiting locations outside Longyearbyen increased from 37,508 in 1996 to 69,691 in 2003. Figure 4.4 shows three indicators of dispersal from 1996 to 2003.

The diagram shows that the number of ports of call increased from 63 in 1996 to 162 in 2003, reflecting location dispersal. The share of passengers disembarking outside Longyearbyen, i.e. in Barentsburg, Ny-Ålesund and Magdalenefjorden (Gravodden), has decreased, from 87% in 1996 to 52% in 2003. Finally, the average number of tourists disembarking annually in other locations increased from 83 in 1996 to 211 in 2003. This means that the



**Fig. 4.4.** Three indicators of cruise tourism dispersal (visits to Longyearbyen not included; from Governor of Svalbard, personal communication, 2005).

dispersal of tourists leads to more pressure on nature at each port of call, even though the number of tourists visiting each location is relatively small. Another aspect of importance in the context of dispersal is that locally owned operators tend to use areas in proximity to Longyearbyen, while foreign-owned operators are inclined to use the whole archipelago (Table 4.1).

Given these distributional patterns, local tour operators seem more loyal to Norwegian environmental politics than are foreign-based operators. The monitoring authorities have expressed concerns about this (Presterud, 2003), and locally based tour operators fear restrictions due to the behaviour patterns of their external competitors. A stricter regulation will certainly affect all actors equally. Dispersal has symbolic significance, as Svalbard is increasingly conquered by the tourism industry. As outlined earlier, many of the operators claim to be environmentally concerned and to run businesses along ecotourism philosophies. However, ecotourism has been blamed for opening up new areas (McLaren, 2003). The Svalbard case obviously adds to this picture.

**Table 4.1.** Ports of call and disembarkments outside Longyearbyen in 2003 (from Governor of Svalbard, 2005).

	Coastal cruise, local tour operator	Coastal cruise, external tour operator	Overseas cruise
Number of ports of call			
within Ice Fjord/Nordenskiöld Land	11	19	2
outside Ice Fjord/Nordenskiöld Land	40	138	17
Number of disembarkations			
within Ice Fjord/Nordenskiöld Land	6,183	2,319	2,575
outside Ice Fjord/Nordenskiöld Land	8,782	21,033	28,799

## Conclusions

This chapter has shown that ecotourism is a non-existent phenomenon in Norway, at least in terms of an intended business activity. There are different reasons for this, even though the traditionally close relationship of Norwegians with nature is the most important one. Nature is the core element of national identity, and the discursive space for ecotourism had already been occupied. Nevertheless, Norwegian tourism operations have many of the characteristics of ecotourism, and the country might be as good an ecotourism destination as those with a strong ecotourism profile. As for tourists, those considering themselves as ecotourists probably undertake many of the same activities as average Norwegian tourists do.

'Non-existent' ecotourism in Norway may differ from ordinary ecotourism operations in the way nature and nature concerns are mediated. In Norway, nature-related behaviour and environmental concern are based on traditional knowledge, and will often be less explicit or articulated. The question is thus whether there is a knowledge transfer that works, even though tourists stay only for a short while with tour operators. Basically, nothing seems to hinder such knowledge transfers. In fact, it is often said that small tourism enterprises have good products – in reality this might mean good nature interpretation.

Another question is whether tour operators or tourists are responsible for the outcome of ecotourism, i.e. whether tourism is truly 'eco'. There is no straightforward answer. Most Norwegians maintaining strong ecotourism definitions will probably say that ecology concerns the web of nature (and humans) in a particular geographical area, and that both the providers and the tourists are part of the outcome. Fennell and Dowling (2003) argue along these lines, maintaining that ecotourism should be planned for particular areas. However, one may claim that ecotourism is detached from scale, and rather a principle than a type of tourism, as argued by Cater (1994).

In presenting the case study of Svalbard, tourism-related development processes in an environmentally conscious destination were evaluated. Since the destination relies strongly on transport and modern technology, the tourism industry found it difficult to tie it to a term like 'ecotourism': 'ecological sustainability' was instead favoured as goal. Tourism is part of a well-functioning environmental management system for the islands. There are few signs of environmental problems, but there is a tendency for dispersal that worries environmentalists and authorities. Svalbard, one of the most remote islands on earth, has step by step been conquered by a tourism industry that promotes itself as a guardian of the environment and as an ecotourism venture. Expansion patterns could thus be seen as an example of what Duffy (2004) calls aggressive towards nature: tourists want to touch rare plants, to look animals right in the eye or even to play with them, and so on.

As shown in this chapter, it is mostly foreign tour operators, i.e. those less familiar with Svalbard's environment and Norwegian policies, that are driving the expansion of tourism operations. It could be questioned whether this is coincidence or whether Norwegian operations are based on a better

understanding of or stronger respect for nature. In any case, it appears that Norwegian actors with tradition-based nature attitudes are more 'eco' than the ecotourism-labelled ventures. As there will soon be no places left unvisited along the coast of Svalbard, there might an argument for the current widespread scepticism towards ecotourism in Norway.

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# 5

## Iceland: Nature-, Adventure- or Eco-island?

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### Tourism Development in Iceland

Less than two decades ago, Iceland was a little known destination on the periphery of Europe, a place that could at best be described as moderately interesting for tourism. However, in recent years, this cold-water island has become the 'hottest' destination in Europe in terms of relative growth in international tourist arrivals, which increased by an average of 11.7% per year in the period 1995–2000. In absolute numbers, international tourist arrivals jumped from 142,000 in 1990 to 278,000 in 2002 (WTO, 2005).

This growth in tourist arrivals seems paradoxical. Clearly, Iceland is a very expensive destination, with transport and food prices being well above those in most other European countries. In contrast to its high prices, however, Iceland seems to have a few truly unique sites that would explain its attractiveness for international visitors. For example, the US Department of State (1997) dryly comments: 'Iceland's main attraction is its scenery, particularly during late spring and summer. The rugged landscape includes geysers and hot springs in various parts of the country and numerous waterfalls streaming from the glaciers and volcanic fields.' The description goes on: '[...] Outdoor activities, including camping, hiking, skiing, and horseback riding, are popular'. With average temperatures of 11°C in July, a two months' main season and often unfavourable – rainy and cold – weather conditions, the question arises of why Iceland would be so attractive to tourists. 'Rugged landscapes including geysers, hot springs and waterfalls', as well as outdoor activities such as 'hiking and horseback riding' can hardly explain Iceland's attractiveness. Given Iceland's primary nature-based tourism product, this chapter seeks to understand Iceland's fascination for tourists and to discuss whether the island should be understood in tourism terms as a nature, adventure or ecotourism destination.

## Understanding Iceland's Attraction

Baum (1997, p. 25) conceptualized the fascination of cold-water islands in the North Atlantic in terms of a number of characteristics: remoteness; small, discrete size; overseas but not too far; different but familiar; slower pace; a bit back in time; common heritage; distinct culture and language; wilderness environment; water-focused society; and distinctive niche attractions. All these aspects seem to fit Iceland, even though being 'a bit back in time' might only be partially true. Rather, the general image of Iceland is that of a highly vibrant, flexible society and economy, punctually coexisting with traditional lifestyles (e.g. sheep farming) in rural areas. While these general features might be a good starting point for a better understanding of Iceland's attractiveness, they might still not be sufficient to explain the island's popularity with tourists.

In a more comprehensive analysis, Gössling (2006) thus conceptualized the fascination for Iceland in terms of a socially constructed 'myth'. This myth builds on extremes in all spheres, including aspects of population and culture, environment and technological progress. Extremes are also constructed and presented in terms of uniqueness, location and contrast. For instance, the very name 'Ice-land' is an antithesis of hospitality and frequently used in marketing. Indeed, as opposed to 'Greenland', a far colder island that received its name also with the purpose of attracting settlers, 'Iceland' was named by one of the first visitors, Flóki Vilgerdason, a Viking who attempted to settle on the island, but had to leave again because environmental conditions were too harsh. Frustrated, he called the land 'Iceland' (Hjálmarsson, 1994). This image of a cold country covered in ice is reproduced in various contexts, such as the James Bond film *Die Another Day* or the latest Batman movie *Batman Begins*. Furthermore, 'ice' is set in contrast to 'fire', as expressed by the omnipresence of volcanoes in advertisement materials, references made to hell, or products such as a local vodka named *Elduris* ('Fire-ice').

Extremes, however, do not create the 'myth' of a destination. The 'myth of Iceland' thus needs to be seen as a social construction weaving together environmental, social, economic, technological and political spheres into a larger semantic construction detached from 'fact'. Gössling (2006) thus argues that Iceland consciously seeks to create the myth of an extreme, 'different' destination, something that seems to have great appeal to tourists. This process is reinforced through media coverage and word of mouth, inter-tourist communication channels.

## The 'Green' Image of Iceland

Iceland's marketing focuses largely – with the exception of its capital Reykjavik – on nature-related experiences. Consider, for instance, the introductory text on the homepage of the Icelandic tour operator Embla:

Immerse yourself in the serenity of nature as you roam the spectacular vistas of Iceland's natural wonderland – black sand beaches, majestic glaciers, extensive lava fields, deserts, lush rivers, cascading waterfalls, magnificent mountains and bubbling hot springs. Our tours are designed for those who want to experience the rich combination of culture, history, nature and ecology in Iceland, one of the most pristine and unspoiled environments in the world.

(Embla, 2005)

Images such as these are likely to match the tourists' expectations, which might exist from earlier confrontations with Iceland through TV reports, journals, newspaper articles, movies or books. For instance, the novel *Journey to the Centre of the Earth* (Verne, 1965) takes place at the glacier Snæfellsjökull. This and other books, such as *Nonni and Manni* (Jón Svansson) might serve as examples of previous non-physical contacts with the island. Overall, 'nature' is an omnipresent feature in Icelandic marketing. Pictures of the island usually depict landscape views, often aerial, as well as ice formations, snow scooters, dogsleds, super jeeps, northern lights, waterfalls, horses and whales. Headlines read 'Living on a volcano', 'Whale watching voyages', 'Super jeeps', 'Glacier experience' or 'White, wild and wonderful'.

The general image of Iceland represented is thus that of a cold, unusual, majestic country, which is also the image reflected in books on Iceland, including titles such as '*Lost in Iceland*', '*Magic of Iceland*', '*Wonders of Iceland*', '*Colours of Iceland*' or '*Land of Light*'. However, while all of these elements of nature refer to serious leisure activities (Gössling, 2006), 'nature' is also depicted as a source of recovery and relaxation. This becomes most obvious when looking at the frequent presentation of geothermal pools in advertisements and information material, notably the Blue Lagoon, a 'wellness' spa in the middle of a wasteland lava landscape. Likewise, Reykjavik advertises its thermal beach in the south-west of the city, where hot water flows into the sea. Geothermal pools and beaches seem of importance, as they add an element of relaxation, complementing Iceland's tourism product by offering opportunities for mental or physical recovery.

Geothermal springs also offer an interesting perspective on the nature–society dichotomy characteristic of modern societies. Clearly, many tourists will have an understanding of Scandinavian people as 'coexisting' with nature (see Hultman and Andersson Cederholm, Chapter 7, this volume; Viken, Chapter 4, this volume). Geothermal power in Iceland might accordingly be seen as an example of humans and nature existing in harmony, as its use is surrounded by various discourses on the sustainability of energy use. In the perception of many tourists, Icelanders transcend the nature–society dichotomy as they live with nature, and actually dwell *within* nature, an image that might be reinforced through various processes. For instance, in 2004, the public photographic exhibition 'Icelanders', in the centre of Reykjavik, presented 'people from all over the island', including 'small boat fishermen', 'tourist farmers', 'fox hunters' and 'rock collectors'. The exhibition, a collection of rather unusual people said to comprise Icelandic society, created the notion that *all* Icelanders work in nature-related contexts – *dwelling in nature* – and that Icelanders are *part* of nature.

This might be an important factor in the tourists' understanding of Scandinavian countries as 'eco-' countries, and the understanding that all tourism in Scandinavia is ecotourism. Obviously, this perception chooses to ignore that there *is* a nature–society dichotomy. The example of geothermal power demonstrates, for instance, that nature and humans exist in different spheres, and that nature is not on equal terms with society, nor that society is part of nature. Rather, nature is the basis for many human (economic) activities, it is used and exploited for human purposes and it is dominated by technology. This latter aspect of domination often seems confused with coexistence; however, expressions of human superiority over nature, as mirrored in the omnipresence of super jeeps, are visible everywhere.

The wish to dominate nature does not come as a surprise, though; it is no more than the logical outcome of the Icelanders' century-long struggle for survival in an extremely harsh environment. Living conditions for many people did not improve until the second half of the 20th century and, for a substantial proportion of the population, not until one or two decades ago. Nevertheless, romantic images of nature are paramount in the tourists' image of Iceland. This is confirmed by studies showing that most tourist associations connected with Iceland fall into the categories 'nature' and 'different'. For example, Alkimou (2004) found that fire, lava, volcanoes, glaciers and ice, geysers, geothermal sources, waterfalls, northern lights or weather-related aspects (cold, rainy) were the most frequently mentioned nature-related phenomena associated with Iceland. Similarly, Gössling (2006) found that 'nature' was predominant in tourists' perceptions, with attributes ranging from 'beautiful' (scenic landscape views) to 'challenging' (snowmobile rides) to 'war-like' (smouldering, barren lands at Mount Krafla). Overall, the understanding of 'the environment' in Iceland thus seems based on romanticized notions of uniqueness, wilderness and grandness.

## Nature-, Adventure- or Ecotourism?

Clearly, Iceland's tourism product can be described as nature-based, with the exception of Reykjavik, where cultural attractions dominate. What distinguishes nature-based tourism in Iceland from adventure tourism? The overlap might indeed be substantial. Swarbrooke *et al.* (2003, p. 9) describe a number of core characteristics of adventure tourism that seem to match Iceland's nature-based tourism characteristics rather well. These include uncertain outcomes of the vacation, danger and risk, challenge, anticipated rewards, novelty, stimulation and excitement, escapism and separation, exploration and discovery, absorption and focus, as well as contrasting emotions. For example, mud roads and temporarily high river levels pose difficulties for the traveller and might be perceived as dangerous, risky and challenging, even though there is minimum probability of a serious accident in Iceland. Hence, danger and risk might exist rather in the imagination of the tourist, but the challenge might nevertheless foster anticipated rewards, as well as feelings of novelty, stimulation and excitement.

Likewise, escapism and separation are almost self-evident elements of tourism in Iceland, as physical borders – encirclement by water – also constitute mental borders, supporting feelings of isolation and distance. Furthermore, Cater (2003) suggests that adventure tourism is based on deep, embodied experiences which, in Iceland, could be understood as experiences addressing all senses. For example, expressions of risk, challenge and danger are not just visual – including smouldering volcanic landscapes, danger signs and super jeeps – but they can also be felt, heard, tasted or smelled.

In many areas, the ground is hot from volcanic activity, ripples in the road make cars (and passengers) bump, sulphur springs cause penetrating smells, and foods such as fermented shark, cod liver oil or puffin have strong and unfamiliar tastes. Geysers and hot springs cause steam eruptions that fill the air with hissing sounds. There are thundering waterfalls, the cries of seagulls or complete silence. Altogether, these might add up to multi-sensorial adventure experiences. The adventure character of tourism in Iceland might also explain growth in tourist arrivals. As Pigram and Jenkin (1999, p. 6) pointed out, an increasing number of tourists expect physical and emotional rewards from their leisure activities, as well as self-fulfilment and reaffirmation of identity (Craik, 1997). Iceland might profit from this trend, particularly because it appeals to a mass adventure market, as most adventure attributes seem to be at the ‘soft’ end of the adventure spectrum. Note that adventure tourism can also contain cultural elements (cf. Swarbrooke *et al.*, 2003). In Iceland, these include the Viking past, stories of elves and hidden people, magic and witchcraft (Gössling, 2006).

As pointed out above, Iceland could be conceptualized as a nature-adventure destination, but it is, as mentioned earlier, also implicitly understood as an ecotourism destination. This is reflected in marketing and the wider perception of Iceland. For instance, an Internet search for ‘Iceland’ and ‘ecotourism’ yielded some 167,000 hits (October 2005), clearly indicating that Iceland is associated with ecotourism. The Icelandic Tourist Board states that there is no reason why Iceland ‘[...] should not be an ecotourism destination, since all its energy use is sustainable’ (Icelandic Tourist Board, cited in Alkimou, 2004). More specifically, the perspective on tourism activities is ‘eco’ because the tourists’ interaction with the environment is supposedly not harmful. This view includes super jeeps, which are ‘[...] environmentally friendly because they only leave fast-erased tracks, and there are more people in one jeep than in a normal car’, justifying its high fuel use (Icelandic Tourist Board, cited in Alkimou, 2004). The notion of being ‘sustainable’ or ‘moving towards sustainability’ is also expressed in official documents, such as the Parliamentary Resolution on Tourism, ‘Tourism Strategy 2006–2015’ (Icelandic Parliament, 2005). This document has four goals, three of which refer to the environment:

1. The operating conditions created for the tourism industry shall be comparable to those in Iceland’s competitor countries.
2. Iceland shall be at the forefront of environmentally friendly tourism.

3. The build-up of national parks shall be followed by the promotion of tourism that integrates outdoor activities and nature conservation.
4. The responsibility of travellers and tourism companies with regard to environmental affairs shall be increased.

These measures are supported through incentive structures. For instance, the Icelandic Tourist Board rewarded the organization Icelandic Farm Holidays (IFH) with the 2004 Environmental Award for establishing an environmental policy and working towards more sustainable tourism in Iceland. This has basically meant that Icelandic Farm Holidays held workshops for its members on sustainable tourism, published guidelines concerning environmental friendly operations and joined the benchmarking and certification programme Green Globe 21, with 15 members of IFH becoming members of Green Globe 21 (IFH, 2005).

Altogether, there is thus a considerable effort being put into the development of more sustainable tourism in Iceland, and pro-environmental measures are understood as far-reaching and cutting-edge. However, these approaches are flawed by several shortcomings. Two of these, the issue of transport to and from Iceland and the use of Green Globe 21 as a certification scheme, will be discussed below.

Regarding transport, it is clear that the focus of achieving sustainable tourism is national. From a global point of view, however, transport to and from Iceland is the most important issue at stake (Gössling and Hall, 2005), something not even mentioned by the Tourist Board or other governmental bodies. How serious is this for an island destination like Iceland? The following sections will illustrate the importance of transport in the making or unmaking of sustainable destinations, something that is still only sporadically incorporated in sustainability perspectives on tourism.

Emissions from tourism arise from travel to and from the destination, accommodation and activities. In Iceland, emissions from tourism at the destination level might for some sectors be close to zero, given the vast amount of renewable energy available. For instance, accommodation is likely to cause quite limited emissions, as hotels are heated with geothermal power or electricity from renewable sources. Food is mostly relevant in terms of import-related and local transport. However, as a large proportion of the food provided to tourists (fish, lamb) is local produce, the ecological hinterland of production might be small. Imports of other products – for instance, fruit – by sea and air might result in a considerable energy-footprint.

As for activities, tourists can roughly be divided into two categories: cultural tourists in Reykjavik (visiting museums, cafés, bars and discotheques) and tourists partaking in excursions to various sights in Iceland. The most energy-intense standard journey will be the great circuit, i.e. to travel on the national Road 1 around Iceland. Depending on the sites visited, tourists will drive some 2500 km, often in a 4×4 jeep. Energy use and emissions of such a journey can be substantial, and are estimated here at roughly 330 kg CO<sub>2</sub> per person (two passengers, 10 l fuel/100 km, 2500 km

distance; for calculation see Gössling *et al.*, 2005). Note that this is not a lifecycle approach to energy use, considering the energy used for production of cars, etc.

As for emissions caused by travel to and from Iceland, a number of assumptions have to be made in the calculation process. As shown in Table 5.1, data are available for departures (roughly corresponding to arrivals) by international tourists from Keflavik airport in 2004, totalling 348,533 passengers (Statistics Iceland, 2005). However, as a calculation of available data for 2003 suggests, some 36% of all tourist departures are in transit (own calculation based on Statistics Iceland, 2005), i.e. these tourists are not international tourists according to the definition of the World Tourism Organization.

It is not clear from the statistical database, though, how transit departures are distributed among different nationalities. Table 5.1 shows the number of departing passengers by nationality, and a rough estimate of the round trip distances flown between Keflavik and the likely airport of departure, e.g. London, UK or Paris, France. Note that all estimations are conservative. For instance, for travellers from the USA and Canada, departures were calculated for locations geographically closer to Iceland. 'True' travel distances and emissions might thus be considerably higher. Similarly, for 'Other countries', an average round trip distance of 3000 km was assumed, even though 'Other countries' includes visitors from Oceania and other overseas markets. Consequently, this might underestimate true travel distances.

The results show that international tourist arrivals resulted in emissions of 692,400 t of CO<sub>2</sub>-equivalents (CO<sub>2</sub>), or 443,000 t of CO<sub>2</sub> subtracting the

**Table 5.1.** Tourism sustainability in Iceland: air transport, 2004 (from Statistics Iceland, 2005).

Departures Keflavik airport	Passengers ( <i>n</i> )	Round trip distance (km)	pkm (million)	CO <sub>2</sub> (1000 tons)
UK	59,856	1,800	215.5	85.5
USA	48,366	4,800	464.3	158.0
Germany	38,539	2,200	169.6	67.3
Denmark	32,845	1,900	124.8	49.5
Sweden	27,045	1,900	102.8	40.8
Norway	26,746	1,700	90.9	36.1
France	21,482	2,300	98.8	39.2
Netherlands	11,014	2,000	44.1	17.5
Italy	9,470	3,100	58.7	23.3
Finland	7,460	2,200	32.8	13.0
Switzerland	6,964	2,500	34.8	13.8
Japan	6,525	8,800	114.8	39.1
Spain	5,613	2,800	31.4	12.5
Canada	3,481	3,700	25.8	8.8
Other countries	43,127	3,000	258.8	88.0
Total	348,533	–	1,867.9	692.4

36% share of transit tourists in 2004. Per tourist, this amounts to roughly 2 t of CO<sub>2</sub>. These figures can be compared to Iceland's national emissions of 2.4 million t of CO<sub>2</sub> in 2002 (Statistics Iceland, 2005). International tourists to Iceland might thus have caused emissions corresponding to 18% of national emissions in 2002.

These results show clearly how air travel increases national emissions, which are currently not considered in the Kyoto Protocol. Should Iceland be forced to reduce its emissions within the framework of the Kyoto Protocol, *including* air emissions and eventually bunker fuels (these are, like aviation emissions, not as yet considered in the Kyoto Protocol), this will entail substantial difficulties, as the total amount of emissions will substantially increase. From a per capita point of view, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of 2 t for a single journey can be compared to world average per capita emissions of 3.6 t CO<sub>2</sub> in 2002 (UNDP, 2005). As emissions of 3.6 t CO<sub>2</sub> per capita are known to be unsustainable (Gössling *et al.*, 2005), it is quite clear that the average journey to Iceland involving emissions of roughly 55% of this amount cannot be sustainable. Clearly, transport emissions are thus from a more holistic perspective the most important environmental impact of tourism in Iceland. In the future, tourism is likely to become even less sustainable, as one of the strategies of the Icelandic Tourist Board is to attract more travellers from long-distance markets. In the long term, this will turn Iceland into an increasingly unsustainable high-value, high-volume destination.

As for local attempts to achieve tourism sustainability, expressed, for instance, by the IFH's commitment to sustainability, there seem to be problems in terms of the certification chosen. Green Globe is known to be a for-profit organization and, clearly, it is run as a business, with the main goal being to generate economic turnover. In terms of expertise, the organization does not seem to have a profound knowledge of environmental issues, nor does it have a holistic approach to sustainability, while serious shortcomings characterize its indicators of sustainability (see Gössling, Chapter 6, this volume). For instance, air travel, the most serious problem connected with tourism sustainability from a global, comprehensive point of view, is not even part of Green Globe's sustainability assessments, while sustainable water use standards used by the organization have met with serious criticism in Iceland, where water use restrictions simply do not make sense given the capacity of renewable water resources of more than 600,000 m<sup>3</sup> per capita per year (FAO, 2003).

Given the sustainability of Iceland's energy resources (with the exception of fuel used for transport), the question arises of what a Green Globe certification can contribute to Iceland's overall sustainability, rather than to create additional costs for the certified stakeholders. In conclusion, much of Iceland's tourism might, at the local level, be understood as ecotourism, even though the actors are not certified. From a global point of view, however, tourism in Iceland is clearly not ecotourism.

## Greenland: the Next Frontier?

For reasons outlined above, Iceland has turned into a successful nature–adventure tourism destination with rapidly increasing tourist arrivals. This process has occurred hand in hand with changes in the tourism product, which could be described in terms of a change from a small-scale, nature-based adventure destination into a soft-adventure, mass-tourism destination. Facilitated by the introduction of a low-fare carrier, Iceland Express, which will serve an increasing number of airports in the future, as well as an increasing number of cruise ships calling at Reykjavik, visitor numbers will continue to grow. In consequence, the balance between soft- and hard-adventure tourism might be increasingly difficult to maintain. In guidebooks one already reads that: ‘on weekends in July/August, popular spots like Skaftafell can become uncomfortably crowded’ (Mead, 2002, p. 113) and, in interviews (July 2004), tourists expressed their disappointment that ‘wherever you come there are already three tourist buses’. Indeed, the tourist industry already markets other, still more remote, destinations, such as Greenland. This could, in accordance with Zurich’s model of gateway hierarchies, be interpreted as a shift towards a new periphery frontier (cf. Zurich, 1992). Is Greenland the next frontier for nature–adventure tourists?

Clearly, images of Greenland are built strongly on unspoiled, vast environments, including pristine Arctic wilderness, flora and fauna, majestic landscapes, ice formations – and few visitors. These features attract an increasing number of adventure tourists, with options to visit Greenland on a one-day basis from Iceland. Likewise, cruise tourism is on the increase, with cruise ships now calling at several ports around Greenland. This has led to an enormous growth in tourist arrivals, which have increased from 3500 in 1992 (Kaae, 2006) to 31,623 in 2004 (calculated from Statistics Greenland, 2005; includes day visitors).

As Kaae (2006) reports, impacts from tourism on the environment remain largely unexplored, even though ongoing research suggests that impacts on nature are as much related to local activities as to tourism. For instance, over-hunting is a serious problem, but threats related to tourism such as global warming or the introduction of invasive species are also leaving traces in sensitive Arctic environments. Still, the majority of these impacts are yet to become obvious and, for most tourists, Greenland thus still stands for an unspoiled, pristine environment. As tourism in Greenland builds on ‘pure nature’ images, policies aim at achieving more sustainable tourism. However, attempts to achieve sustainability might focus rather on visual pollution than the larger issues at stake (e.g. transport emissions). Consequently, it remains to be seen how Greenland will be affected by, for example, global environmental change, which is likely to have a severe affect on Arctic environments in the medium-term future (ACIA, 2004).

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# 6

## Tourism Certification in Scandinavia

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### Sustainable Development and Tourism

Scandinavian countries are generally characterized by a strong commitment to sustainability. Different stakeholders, including governments, industry, non-governmental organizations and a substantial proportion of the population in Norway, Sweden, Iceland and Denmark cooperate towards sustainable development, and pro-environmental action is consequently evident on different levels in society. For instance, in Sweden, the government has proclaimed 15 national environmental goals, and there is the overall goal of becoming a sustainable society by 2021 (Naturvårdsverket, 2005).

Furthermore, an increasing number of companies are affiliated to 'green' business networks, and environmental organizations such as the World Wide Fund for Nature, the Society for Nature Protection (Naturskyddsforeningen) and Natural Step (Det Naturliga Steget) work towards the integration of social and environmental concerns in societal patterns of production and consumption. At the individual level, an increasing number of citizens are willing to pay a premium on 'green', more environmentally friendly and socially just products and services. Consumer decision making is facilitated by certification which, in recent years has grown in terms of both the variety and number of products and services certified. This trend is also manifested in tourism, where a large number of both national and international certifications has come into existence.

Worldwide, there are now a substantial number of eco-labels, codes of conduct, sustainability reporting schemes, awards and benchmarking programmes in the tourism industry (Honey, 2002). Font (2002) identified over 100 eco-labels for tourism, hospitality and ecotourism worldwide. A range of certification exists in Scandinavia with one label, Nature's Best (Naturens Bästa), being entirely devoted to ecotourism. Certification is supposed to aid consumers in sustainable decision making, even though

their scope in grasping the sustainability of a product might be limited. Clearly, certification usually shows whether a product or service is less environmentally harmful or more socially just, but fails to indicate whether consumption is sustainable. Nevertheless, certification might have an important role in marketing. In the following, different labels found within Scandinavian tourism will be presented and evaluated with respect to aspects such as scope, purpose and sustainability.

## Certification in Tourism

Over the past 15 years, certification for sustainable tourism has grown significantly (Weaver, 2005). Currently, there are over 60 programmes worldwide setting standards and verifying them, with an average of about 50 certified tourism firms per programme (Skinner *et al.*, 2004). Most of the certification programmes are regional or national, and are linked to specific destinations with locally relevant standards. Most labels have so far focused on environmental issues which, according to Font and Harris (2004), reflect the priorities of the 1980s and 1990s as well as the European dominance in certification schemes, where social issues are covered by legislation.

However, there has been a recent change in emphasis to embrace social issues as well, even though Font and Harris (2004) critically remark that such changes might 'require a greater commitment from tourism companies, and reduce the appeal of certification as a market-led tool for sustainable development' (p. 988). Likewise, Weaver (2005, p. 26) suggests: 'indicator-based sustainable tourism strategies are complicated by the actual process of selecting, measuring, monitoring and evaluating a viable set of relevant variables.'

A wide range of tourism-related certification exists in Scandinavia. Some of these were developed specifically as labels for tourism (e.g. Bo på Lantgård), while others were introduced from other economic sectors (e.g. Svanen). Most certifications are found in Sweden, while others can be found in other Scandinavian countries. Finally, some certification is at the level of European standards (EU Flower, Blue Flag), or exists worldwide (Green Globe 21). Table 6.1 provides an overview of tourism certification in Scandinavia. Note that other certifications exist that might be relevant for tourism, such as the Swedish KRAV-label for organic food, or Bra Miljöval for environmentally friendly non-food products. These might also be used in the tourism industry, but are not specific to tourism, and thus beyond the scope of the following account.

## Categories of Tourism Certification

### Bo på Lantgård (Stay on a Farm)

Farm tourism in Sweden developed relatively recently on a broader scale. Bo på Lantgård, a non-profit organization, was founded as a pilot project in

**Table 6.1.** Tourism certification in Scandinavia.

Country/ region	Certification	Area of application	Criteria			
			Q	E	HHS	<i>n</i>
Sweden	Bo på Lantgård (Stay on a Farm)	Farm accommodation	*	**	*	428
Sweden	Godkänd Gård för Hästturism (Certified Horse Farm)	Horse farms	*	**	*	40
South-eastern Sweden	Det Naturliga Fisket (Natural Fishing)	Fishing arrangements/ accommodation	*	**	*	35
Sweden	Naturlig Laddning (Nature-based activities)	Nature-based activities	*	*	*	12
Denmark, Sweden, Greenland, Estonia, France, Lithuania	The Green Key	Accommodation		*		254
Sweden, Norway, Finland, Iceland	Svanen (Nordic Swan)	Accommodation		*		111
Europe	EU Flower	Accommodation		*		36
Europe	Blue Flag	Beaches/marinas	*	*	*	3107
Worldwide	Green Globe 21	Airlines, airports, attractions, car hire, caravan parks, convention centres, cruise boats, exhibition halls, golf courses, hotels, marinas, micro-businesses, railways, restaurants, tour operators, cities, destinations, protected areas, resorts, rural locations		*		113
Sweden	Naturens Bästa (Nature's Best)	Ecotourism arrangements	*	*	*	220 <sup>a</sup>

Q, Quality; E, Environment; HHS, Health, Hygiene and Safety; *n*, number of participating businesses; \*, obligatory criteria; \*\*, non-obligatory criteria; <sup>a</sup> number of certified arrangements offered by 70 tour operators.

Skåne in 1989 with support from the National Agency for Agriculture and the Farmer's Union (Gössling and Mattsson, 2002). Regional offices were subsequently established in all Swedish counties. The national office is responsible for national and international marketing, the collection of statistics, the delivery of information and the cooperation with authorities and other organizations. Membership costs are comparatively low, with an annual membership fee of around €150, and an additional lump sum for the initial control of the farm. The control visit takes place in order to check whether the farm respects applicable laws (the Schengen Visa, which demands registration of guests, as well as Swedish laws concerning accommodation businesses, environment/health, food, taxes and insurance)

(Bo på Lantgård, 2005). Apart from these quality criteria, the farm environment and the character of the farm experience are also aspects that are evaluated before membership is awarded. Farms are classified into one of five categories, corresponding to the star rating system as applied to hotel accommodation.

The main benefit for farms is that Bo på Lantgård opens up marketing channels. For instance, the organization seeks to publish information in local and national newspapers, and to advertise in special-interest media. Fourteen thousand catalogues were printed, illustrating all participating farms. Locally, farms distribute their address via local tourist offices and many of them have websites of their own. Quality feedback is ensured through the distribution of quality control postcards to guests (available in three languages), which can be sent back directly to Bo på Lantgård free of charge.

Farmers in Sweden offer two accommodation alternatives, sometimes in combination: self-catering accommodation and bed and breakfast; bed and breakfast is currently the more popular choice. Some farms have recently started to specialize, and offer fishing, horse-riding or conference arrangements. Farm tourism is a small-scale activity, with a maximum of eight beds in four rooms per farm. Use of any larger establishment has to be reported to the police, the fire department and the health authorities, which will also change its legal status. Bo på Lantgård has seen a rapid growth since 1989, when only nine farms participated. In 1992, the number had grown to 60 and, by 1997, there were 230. In the following years growth accelerated, and by November 2005 there were 428 registered farms involved (Gössling and Mattsson, 2002; Bo på Lantgård, 2005).

### **Godkänd Gård för Hästturism (Certified Horse Farms)**

The project 'Godkänd Gård för Hästturism' started in 2001, with the goal to promote quality horse tourism in Sweden (LRF, 2005). The project was initiated with the cooperation of Lantbrukarnas Riksförbund (The Swedish Board of Agriculture), Svenska Jordbruksverket (Federation of Swedish Farmers) and Turistdelegationen (Swedish Tourism Authority). The organization awards its label to farms that fulfill 34 criteria, including aspects of accounting, safety, horse-keeping, environmental issues and service standards. Farms applying for certification can do so by self-assessment, even though there are random checks on farms.

Costs for certification are in the order of €400 annually for membership, plus about €1000 for marketing in a catalogue illustrating all farms. Fifty thousand catalogues are to be printed; however, this will happen only if 50 farms want to participate, which is currently not the case (LRF, 2005). The label, which is promoted by the organization Hästlandet Sverige (Horse Land Sweden), seeks to cooperate with the media in order to popularize horse-riding. Hästlandet Sverige also has a website featuring all farms and possible riding tracks (Hästlandet Sverige, 2005). In 2005, the organization had 40 certified members (LRF, 2005).

## **Det Naturliga Fisket (Natural Fishing)**

Det Naturliga Fisket was established in south-eastern Sweden in 1999, and has 35 certified members (Det Naturliga Fisket, 2005). The project was financed by different counties (*län*), the European Union's Structural Fund and the participating companies. The goal of the organization is to promote fishing tourism, with the underlying idea of offering products of high quality, service and comfort.

In order to become a member of Det Naturliga Fisket, applicants have to fulfil a number of quality criteria within the following categories: fishing/water bodies, product and product information, marketing, competence and networks. More specifically, this means that members should have a good knowledge of water bodies and fish species, and provide relevant information to their customers. There should be good contacts with locals and owners of terrestrial and lacustrine systems. Ecological knowledge is of importance, and members should participate in safeguarding fishing waters. Member companies should seek to have regular contacts with local tourist offices, and they should also seek to promote their fishing activities individually. Each member company should have a customer register and a business plan. Furthermore, they should have participated in the educational programme provided by the organization, which is meant to help members to develop the product and to maintain a high standard of quality.

In order to become a member, applicants have to participate in different educational modules offered by Det Naturliga Fisket (in total covering an 11-day programme), fulfil the organization's quality criteria, have a readily developed product to offer and to undergo a control visit. The costs of membership are €2200, which is the price of becoming a member through the 'fast package' offered by the organization. Marketing for Det Naturliga Fisket includes, for instance, inclusion on the organization's website. The overall idea is, however, that members drive the development of the organization, as well as marketing and promotion, through their own active engagement.

## **Naturlig Laddning (Nature-based Activities)**

Naturlig Laddning was launched in Sweden in 2001 as a project funded by the European Union with the purpose of promoting health-improving arrangements in nature, developed by entrepreneurs in rural areas in the county of Småland and on the island of Öland. The project was completed in September 2003, and has since then been a network within the Swedish Lantbrukarnas Riksförbund (The Federation of Swedish Farmers) (Naturlig Laddning, 2005).

Naturlig Laddning is now a certification of nature-based activities with a focus on health and recreation: 'In Naturlig Laddning it is caring, safety and personal service which are of importance. You get the chance to relax and experience quality of life, to think over your everyday life and to feel

*gemeinschaft* and coherence' (Naturlig Laddning, 2005, author's translation). The overall goal of the organization is to:

- stimulate movability;
- increase concentration;
- improve learning through experiences;
- increase understanding of interactions;
- improve cooperation;
- improve reality embedment;
- involve all senses; and
- improve fantasy and creativity.

In order to achieve this, the certification Naturlig Laddning has been created. Applicants have to fulfil a number of criteria, which are structured in basic categories and categories specific to Naturlig Laddning. These include: (i) general (including aspects of accounting, economics and environment); (ii) customer safety (including various aspects of insurance and security); the character of nature arrangements (including those that applicants cannot carry out, i.e. based on competition or environmentally destructive practices); (iv) meetings and their characteristics; and (v) the hospitality environment (including accommodation, surroundings and food).

Furthermore, the applicant has to list which specific activities (s)he is carrying out. The documents provided by the applicant are evaluated by Lantbrukarnas Riksförbund and certification is awarded after an inspection by the company. The annual costs for membership/certification are about €275, and there is an option for representation in a brochure for an additional payment of €275. However, the brochure will be printed only if 20 companies apply, and is thus as yet a future project. The certificate is valid for 3 years (Naturlig Laddning, 2005).

## The Green Key

The Green Key is an international tourism eco-label for different types of accommodation and restaurants (The Green Key, 2005). The certification was developed in Denmark in 1994, and is currently used in Denmark, France, Sweden, Greenland, Estonia and Lithuania. A current campaign through the Foundation for Environmental Education seeks to establish the Green Key in another nine countries. Applicants for the Green Key have to fulfil three groups of criteria, which are mandatory, essential or optional. Mandatory criteria must always be fulfilled before certification, while essential criteria can be fulfilled within a certain time frame. Optional criteria are chosen from a range of possible criteria and are nation-specific, as each country also develops national criteria.

Criteria cover three main areas: environmental management, communication and training, and technical requirements. Environmental management refers to activities related to an individual restaurant/accommodation establishment through an environmental policy, specific

goals and action plans. Communication and training refers to the involvement of staff, guests and suppliers. Technical requirements include efficiency measures in energy and water consumption, waste separation, use of chemicals, etc. National steering groups evaluate applicants with representatives from 'authorities, NGOs and business associations', who approve applications (The Green Key, 2005). Furthermore, national Green Key representatives visit certified businesses in order to control performance. To apply for the Green Key is free of charge; however, an annual fee is charged for membership and permission to display the label, depending on the size of the business. The applicant is allowed to use the certification for 1 year; after which a new application must be submitted. There is no active promotion of Green Key certified businesses, apart from the international website and national websites.

### **Svanen (The Swan)**

Svanen is the official Nordic eco-label introduced by the Nordic Council of Ministers in 1989. The certification comprises a wide range of products and services, including the certification of hotels. In total, there are now 111 hotels certified in Sweden, Iceland, Finland and Norway, the majority of these being in Sweden. The overall approach of the certification is to consider the lifecycle of any product/service, i.e. to include the impact on the environment, from raw material to waste. Furthermore, criteria for certification include quality and performance, with the overall demand that '[...] the product must be at least as good as similar products on the market' (Svanen, 2005, author's translation). A particular feature of Svanen is that certification is awarded for a maximum of 3 years. After this period, a new application has to be made, which will, subsequently, be more difficult, as the environmental standards to be met are continuously increased. Applicants are controlled by inspection of the establishment.

Svanen is coordinated by the Nordic Ecolabelling Board. The Board decides which products can be certified. Criteria are developed by 'groups of experts' from the Nordic countries, including representatives from the government, environmental organizations, trade and industry (Svanen, 2005). The application fee for hotels is €2000 (one-off payment) plus an additional annual fee of 0.15% of the annual volume of sales, with a minimum charge of €1000 and a maximum of €39,000. Svanen largely finances itself through fees, even though it also receives some national funding, which varies between the participating countries. Svanen is a non-profit organization. Marketing is limited, but includes occasional advertisements in the press, as well as a website.

### **The Blue Flag**

The Blue Flag is an eco-label for beaches and marinas used in 35 countries all around the world (however, 26 of these are located in Europe; Blue Flag,

2005). In 2005, 2472 beaches and 635 marinas were certified with the Blue Flag. The certification is run by the independent, non-profit organization Foundation for Environmental Education. The label was developed in 1985 in France, when the first coastal municipalities were awarded the Blue Flag on the basis of criteria covering sewage treatment and bathing water quality. In 1987, the 'European Year of the Environment', the Blue Flag was launched in the European Community, now also including aspects of waste management as well as coastal planning and protection. While certification standards have as yet varied between countries, an international set of criteria with some variation within countries will be used from 2006 onwards. The criteria currently used focus on aspects of water quality, environmental education and information, environmental management, as well as safety and other services. An overall goal of the Blue Flag campaign is to raise awareness of environmental issues and to provide information to the public, decision makers and tourism operators.

Applicants, i.e. municipalities (beaches) or owners (marinas), submit an application form with enclosed documentation to the National Jury, which is composed of 'major relevant national stakeholders', including the Ministries of the Environment/Health/Tourism, local authorities and other organizations (Blue Flag, 2005). The National Jury evaluates the application and forwards it for final decision to the International Jury, which consists of representatives from the United Nations Environment Programme, World Tourism Organization, International Lifesaving Federation, International Council of Marine Industry Association, International Union for the Conservation of Nature, European Union for Coastal Conservation and European Union.

In order to be certified, applicants have to fulfil all 'imperative requirements' and as many 'guideline criteria' as possible. Inspections are made by both national and international controllers. The application is free of charge, but an annual sum of €30–36 per beach/marina is charged for the use of the label, depending on the total number of beaches/marinas certified (C.A. Dean, International Blue Flag Co-ordination, personal communication, 22 November 2005). Continuously ongoing controls on bathing water quality have to be ensured by the national environmental protection agencies. The certification is awarded for one season only.

## **The EU Flower**

The EU Flower, an eco-label used for a wide range of products including tourist accommodation, is based on criteria of environmental performance. The certification was introduced for accommodation in 2003, and since 2005 it also includes campsites (EU Flower, 2005). The certification scheme consists of 37 mandatory and 47 optional criteria, which aim at limiting energy and water consumption, reducing waste production, using renewable resources/substances less hazardous to the environment, and promoting environmental education and communication. Applicants get an 'applica-

tion pack' and 'verification forms', which are based on self-evaluation. The application is then assessed by an 'independent organization'. The basic fee for applications is €300–1300, with reductions granted to micro-enterprises and small to medium-sized enterprises. An annual fee of 0.15% of the annual volume of sales has to be paid once the applicant is certified. The minimum annual fee is €100, the maximum €25,000. Marketing consists of press releases by the European Union, as well as various websites related to the EU Flower (EU, 2005; EU Flower 2005).

## **Green Globe 21**

Green Globe 21 is a for-profit business organization with the goal of 'lifting performance thresholds for sustainable tourism' (Green Globe, 2005). The organization was developed by the World Travel and Tourism Council in 1993, and officially launched in 1994, based on Agenda 21 and its principles for sustainable development. The programme was expanded in 1999, when a Green Globe 21 standard was introduced and updated in 2001, by now including a monitoring process of annual improvements. A specific feature of Green Globe 21 is its ABC programme, where members of the organization have the chance to be 'Affiliated, Benchmarked or Certified'. Affiliation is no more than a statement of commitment, based on membership of the organization. Benchmarking refers to a process of performance assessment, including advice on where environmental improvements can be made. Finally, certification means that all requirements of the Green Globe 21 standard are fulfilled and that an on-site visit by an accredited third-party auditor has been successfully passed. Green Globe 21 has four areas of application: companies, communities, design and construction and ecotourism.

Virtually any sector of the tourism industry can be certified, including 'airlines, airports, attractions, car hire, caravan parks, convention centres, cruise boats, exhibition halls, golf courses, hotels, marinas, micro businesses, railways, restaurants, tour operators, cities, destinations, protected areas, resorts, rural locations' (Green Globe, 2005). Costs for 'affiliation, benchmarking and certification' vary. For example, for companies, the fee for becoming an affiliate of Green Globe 21 is €120 (first year), and €150–3000 for any subsequent year, depending on the company size. Costs for benchmarking vary between €300–6000 (annual fee), depending on company's size. In order to become certified, companies have to pay for an on-site independent assessment, with widely varying costs. For certified companies, annual costs are of the same order as benchmarking fees. Marketing for Green Globe 21 is largely limited to the Internet.

## **Nature's Best**

Nature's Best was launched during the UN International Year of Ecotourism 2002 (for a review of criteria and the application process see Fredman *et al.*,

Chapter 3, this volume). The label was developed by the Swedish Ecotourism Association in cooperation with the Swedish Travel and Tourism Association and the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (SEA, 2005). The products labelled should, in coherence with the organization's goals, contribute to nature conservation and preservation of the cultural heritage of the destination in accordance with the basic criteria of being environmentally friendly. Nature's Best certifies not tour operators, but individual businesses, and a maximum of five businesses can be certified in one application. When these have been approved, the company, itself, on the basis of 'mutual confidence' established through the first application, can subsequently label further arrangements. The labelled products are controlled through random controls, if suspicion of lapse (misuse of the label) exists. The certification must be reviewed and renewed every third year.

Within three years, almost 70 operators offering 220 certified arrangements have been certified with Nature's Best, and these are distributed all over the country. Nature's Best is the only label in Scandinavia explicitly developed for ecotourism. Costs for certification vary with the annual turnover of the applicant. The 'start package' costs €170–500, the control visit €450–1350 and the annual fee for certified businesses varies between €500 and €2500. The success of the label is largely a result of the marketing network created by the Swedish Ecotourism Association, which involves different media such as the country's largest newspapers. On Nature's Best website, there is even a 'pressroom' providing updated information and photographs for journalists. The website won the Swedish Publishing Prize in 2004.

## **Certification in Scandinavia: Characteristics, Weaknesses and Strengths**

As shown in the previous section, there are a considerable number of certifications within the context of sustainable tourism and ecotourism in Scandinavia. Sweden has been at the forefront of labelling efforts, with five certifications found exclusively in this country. However, the success of the different certification programmes in terms of the number of members and certified businesses varies considerably. For instance, Naturlig Laddning has 12 members, while Bo på Lantgård has 428. There are also great differences in certification processes. While some labels can be obtained largely through self-assessment, eventually in combination with a control visit, other labels can be acquired only after assessment through an independent auditor.

Standards vary accordingly, with preconditions for certifications including anything along a gradient from stated commitment to relative improvements to absolute standards. Regarding the aspects considered, labels usually focus on environmental issues, even though a number of certifications have chosen to include quality standards and aspects of health/hygiene/safety as well. Note that there is one certification entirely for

disabled travellers (impaired hearing or vision, wheelchair dependence or allergies), which has not been discussed in this chapter's focus on eco-labels. The 'Equality' certification is awarded by the Swedish organization Turism för alla (Tourism for all). More information can be found on the organization's website (Turism för alla 2005).

Regarding membership/certification costs and funding/financing, there are notable differences between certifications. Most labels are dependent on third-party funding in order to survive economically, something that seems characteristic of much certification worldwide (cf. Font and Harris 2004).

Most certification is characterized by a number of shortcomings. On the accreditation level, self-assessments are of little creditability. Regarding the comprehensiveness of certification, few seem holistic, something that is generally true for certification worldwide: clearly, all certification presented in this chapter chooses to ignore the global consequences of travel, even though the central role of emissions – mostly from transport – in the context of sustainability is paramount (Gössling and Alkimou, Chapter 5, this volume; Folke *et al.*, Chapter 14, this volume). Consequently, tourism certification can help to improve sustainability, but does not allow for assessments of whether or not a journey/accommodation establishment/business is sustainable from an absolute point of view. Locally, the uniqueness of a destination also needs to be considered in sustainability assessments. However, this is seldom the case, as the criteria applied are often static. Some labels such as Green Globe 21 might even use the same absolute standards worldwide and irrespective of locality. The major challenge for any sustainability indicator would thus be to integrate the idea of absolute indicators with the realization that each destination is fundamentally unique.

There also seem to be great differences in the labels with respect to the idealistic background of the certification bodies. For instance, Green Globe 21 as a for-profit organization has its main goal of generating economic turnover, and its certification criteria partially bear witness to limited expert knowledge (cf. Gössling and Alkimou, Chapter 5, this volume). Rather, the system of affiliated members could be understood as a mechanism to sell environmental integrity without action. In this context, it is interesting to note that Skinner *et al.* (2004) found, of the ten major accreditation organizations investigated in their study, Green Globe 21 had by far the largest operational costs, exceeding US\$3 million annually:

Geographic location of offices and services and salary levels also affect operating costs. Salaries (and/or consultant fees if services are subcontracted) tend to be the biggest single budget component. Organizations such as FSC, MSC and GG21 also operate in several countries, driving up travel and communications costs.

(Skinner *et al.*, 2004, p. 128)

In contrast, nature enthusiasts, with the overall goal of contributing to sustainable development, created the label Nature's Best. As pointed out above, the label has undergone a 'semantic shift' to make its promotion

viable, but the criteria for certification have not been jeopardized and are even announced as becoming stricter in the future. Overall, it could thus be argued that idealistic motives behind certification schemes and the seriousness of the commitment of the applicants are of great importance in establishing more sustainable tourism.

In the long term, certification might rise or fall with the level of honesty, transparency and credibility it is based on. At present, few of the certifications used in Scandinavia are assessed by a third, independent party and this affects their credibility. Another problem is that certification in Sweden is generally less common and has a limited number of members, which Font (2002) sees as a general aspect of labels worldwide: 'there are too many ecolabels, with different meanings, criteria, geographical scope, confusing messages, limited experience [...]'. Clearly, many labels in Scandinavia have similar criteria for certification and are difficult to distinguish. One exception might be Nature's Best, the ecotourism label, which, even though far from being recognized by the majority of Swedish citizens, has become well known among tourists interested in nature-based experiences. This is, as pointed out above, largely as a result of the systematic network approach focusing on promotion and marketing. As Bendell and Font (2004) remark, marketing might also be the key benefit promoted to applicants of most schemes.

High prices for accreditation and membership are another drawback of many certification schemes, and most organizations remain dependent on outside funding (Skinner *et al.*, 2004). Some organizations in Scandinavia have thus sought to reduce fees to a minimum. This strategy has worked particularly well for Bo på Lantgård, which was able to attract large numbers of members within a relatively short period of time. Through this strategy, together with attractive marketing opportunities, Bo på Lantgård may have been able to gain critical mass in terms of members and public recognition, which is also true for the Swedish Ecotourism Association's label Nature's Best.

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# 7

## The Role of Nature in Swedish Ecotourism

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Exchange the piercing ring of your mobile phone and the smell of rain-soaked asphalt for the quietness of the forest and the peace of the lakeside. A conference based in the wilderness will fill you with positive energy and a spirit of togetherness.

(<http://www.naturesbasta.com>)

### Introduction

Nature has long been a cornerstone of Swedish identity building, and mythologies surrounding activities in nature show many social, material and economic manifestations (Tordsson, 2000). This is evident in promotional material selling Sweden to foreign and national tourists, in political decisions and motivations concerning protected areas, in educational curricula, urban planning or the watermark of Carl Larsson's national romantic, nature-alluding paintings in the Swedish passport (cf. O'Byrne, 2001). Nature has through 'The Right of Public Access' (*allemansrätten*) acted as a symbol and physical arena for democracy, embodied by the right – and moral obligation – to move through nature. Nature has been and continues to be a medium through which one can constitute oneself as Swedish.

Our purpose in this chapter is to discuss nature as it is used commercially within the ecotourism industry. The theoretical as well as the material framework is the concept of cultural economy in relation to nature: '[...] the cultural construction of nature is one medium of translation between the biophysical world and economic systems of value and exchange' (Mansfield, 2003, p. 329). From this perspective nature can be regarded as a 'servicescape' (Bitner, 1992), an environment that in various ways is manipulated and designed in order to facilitate commercial exchanges (Arnould *et al.*, 1998). Nature functions in a multitude of tourist contexts as

an arena for commercial action and is incorporated into the economy either as a consumer object in its own right or as a commercially propelling attribute to other consumer objects. This inseparability of culture and economy is perhaps most obviously articulated when the relationship is viewed in terms of materiality and practice (Simonsen, 2001). Nature is a cultural construction – nature is made meaningful – through representations and translations in actor-networks created by ecotourism operators, and this meaning is then transformed into cash flows when tourists consume the products expressed in and by these actor-networks. It is this cultural construction of nature through ecotourist practices that will be our analytical focus.

The argument is framed by a set of changes which have occurred in the ecotourism industry during the last few years. These changes become obvious in marketing and product composition as shifts in focus from ‘nature as materiality’ to ‘nature as corporeal and sensual experience’, and from nature as a place on the map to nature as a globalized locality and ‘experiencescape’.

We also discuss changes in the different management principles enacted by ecotourist operators and subsequent new roles for ecotourists. The majority of material we use is connected to Nature’s Best, a certification organization for Swedish ecotourism products and businesses (see Fredman *et al.*, Chapter 3, this volume; Gössling, Chapter 6, this volume). This organization constructs nature through its representation of nature and the businesses it certifies. We also use a number of ecotourism businesses certified by Nature’s Best and some international ecotourism operators as examples of the cultural construction of nature. The storyline in our discussion is a development from ‘traditional’ ecotourist practices and rhetoric to what we perceive as the ‘new cultural economy of nature’. The material is based on Internet sources, since web-mediated interaction between operators and tourists becomes an increasingly important means of creating feelings of endearment between consumer and product (Cano and Prentice, 1998). In other words, representations manifested in web domains are important elements in the formation of discourses about nature, and thus important for tourist interpretations and understanding of nature.

## Nature-object and Eco-gaze

The rationale for ecotourism is to resolve – within a tourist discourse – the paradox whereby tourism inherently destroys the things tourists covet. With different strategies, ecotourism operators strive to transfer a moral obligation to the individual tourist not to degrade nature and local culture. In a standard definition of ecotourism, proper ecotourist behaviour is translated into responsibility when being in nature: ‘[...] responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people’ (<http://www.ecotourism.org>).

The phrase ‘*conserve the environment*’ highlights a fundamental paradox

manifested within the ecotourism industry. On the one hand, ecotourism is all about acquiring (scientific) knowledge about nature. This is evident in the representational material that is used to construct ecotourism web domains, or in quotes such as 'ecotourism travel gives visitors the possibility to *acquire knowledge* about issues related to nature, culture, environment and development' (<http://www.ekoturism.org>, our translation, emphasis in original). But, at the same time, ecotourists cannot bodily engage with nature in any invasive way; nature must remain pristine.

The ecological, social and cultural trace of the tourist must be non-existent (although the above definition of ecotourism positions the ecotourist as an agent of change since s/he is urged to improve something and thereby change it: there is a modernistic and normative agenda embedded in ecotourism). In order to resolve this paradox in practice, two things must happen. The first is that ecotourism operators must place and represent nature at a distance from the tourist. The way to do this is to code nature as an object to be worshipped; the goal is to '*actively exhibit charismatic and rare or sensitive species in a non-invasive way*' (<http://www.ekoturism.org>, our translation and emphasis). The specification of charisma as a criterion for attractiveness signals how the construction of nature within the ecotourism industry works. It is not nature per se that must be viewed from a distance, but a certain kind of nature. Attractive nature from an ecotourism perspective is not any old tree, frog or bug; it is nature as the exotic Other, and it thereby confirms that ecotourism operators and ecotourists are completely separated from nature.

The second thing to happen is that tourists must distance themselves from nature. Nature is supposed to be viewed and not in any way to be rearranged. Just as in many other forms of tourism, the camera lens is a primary filter through which the ecotourist views nature and culture. So the actual role of the ecotourist is often that of the gazer. Nature and local people have consequently been constructed as observable attractions in the same way as any mass tourist attraction. Many ecotourism web domains bear witness to this in the way these virtual encounters with nature are structured in a style of photography that is geared towards capturing the sublime, awe-inspiring and, indeed, charismatic aspects of nature. Nature, and local culture, is as a consequence represented as fragile, pre-modern and mysterious.

Interpreted in this way, ecotourism is a mode of reproducing the modernist dichotomy between nature and society. Nature is a sphere outside and apart from society. Rhetorically, conventional tourism is represented as any other source of environmental degradation, a toxic leak of harmful agents from urban society to innocent nature. Ecotourism on the other hand is a gentle and respectful exploration of the secrets and wonders of nature. But while traditional ecotourist rhetoric stresses that ecotourism is all about coming really close to nature and local culture in a respectful way, on nature's own terms, current ecotourism practices mirror the distance between nature and Western culture. There is an explicit normative agenda behind separating tourist nature and culture from Western society.

The reason for the existence of ecotourism organizations is that: 'all tourism related to nature or the combination of nature and culture is guided towards fulfilling ecotourism requirements' (<http://www.ekoturism.org>, our translation). This would mean that all tourist practices have to refrain from close engagement with the natural or cultural Other. The outcome is a formalization of the tourist gaze. Further, it could be argued that ecotourism experiences converge with the experience of watching nature programmes on television, in line with Larsen's (2001) discussion on the visual 'cinematic' experience characteristic for the corporally immobile but travelling spectator. As ecotourists move through a nature from which they are separated, 'the travel glance' (Larsen, 2001) might be an appropriate term for describing the visual mode of understanding nature. Nature and all its wonders flow past as the result of the choreographed mobility of ecotourists while the frames of experience are carefully constructed by ecotourism operators (Braun, 2002).

The ecotourist dichotomy of nature and (Western) culture is reflected in much of the sustainability discourse in general (Hultman, 2003). The anxiety expressed about nature that suffuses this discourse works to position nature firmly as a system totally apart from society. It has been argued that ecotourism has been governed by an approach informed by science and above all planning – as opposed to the unmanaged character of other kinds of tourism when it comes to environmental issues (Hughes, 1995). Nature, and the tourist, must be managed in an organized way in order to remain attractive. Ecotourist travel

[...] is conducted with the outmost care, and the least possible wear on the destination's natural and cultural values, *with the purpose of conserving the biodiversity and cultural values* that the visitor has come to experience.

(<http://www.ekoturism.org>, our translation and emphasis)

Encounters between the tourist on the one hand and nature and local culture on the other must be controlled and directed. On several levels, the 'scientization' of nature (Urry, 1999) in tourist contexts has thus acted to dissociate tourists from nature and local culture, quite contrary to the general rhetoric. Nature becomes the Other, and ecotourism landscapes '[...] by being placed outside modernity, come[s] to define modernity' (Braun, 2002, p. 140).

What ecotourism discourse and practice have also done is to situate nature and indigenous culture in the same position. Ecotourism allows the traveller to 'explore rainforests, mountains, deserts, tropical beaches, coral reefs [ ... ] guided by those who know them best – the people who live there' (<http://www.tourismconcern.org.uk>). Local people are part of nature: they have intimate knowledge of nature and all its secrets. Nature and local culture have been fused together, they have been hybridized, and through this ontological arrangement runs a discourse of conservation since ecotourism is a tourist mode that 'actively contributes to the protection of nature and safeguards cultural values' (<http://www.ekoturism.org>, our translation). To expand on this, we turn to the concept of authenticity.

## Natural Knowledge

The concept of authenticity in tourism mythology is strongly related to the image of originality and purity (Littrell *et al.*, 1993; Andersson Cederholm, 1999). In tourism narratives – marketing materials as well as written and oral travel stories – the object of authenticity is often the cultural Other, since the authentic character of the natural surroundings is usually undisputed. In studies of authenticity and tourist experiences, the notion of authenticity is related to the experience of non-authenticity, and MacCannell's (1973, 1976) concept of 'staged authenticity' indicates the disillusionment when the tourist scene seems too adapted to the expectation of the tourist gaze (Cohen, 1979, 1988; Pearce and Moscardo, 1986). In tourism narratives, the notion of the 'tourist trap' indicates the experience of commoditization of culture in a Western sense, and the development of a tourist culture where all traces of a traditional culture have vanished. The notion of tradition and the image of non-Western cultures in tourism mythology often imply a proximity to nature, in a geographical as well as a cultural sense, and the fusion of culture and nature thus reflects a primitivistic image of the natural and cultural Other (Silver, 1993; Andersson Cederholm, 1999; Taylor, 2000; Elsrud, 2004). The mythological character of the notion of the natural and unspoiled cultural reservoir is, despite the reflective turn characterized by 'post-tourism' (Urry, 1990), reproduced within tourism narratives (Andersson Cederholm, 1999; Elsrud, 2004).

However, the concept of authenticity is not static, and there is a need for distinctions within the concept. Wang (1999) for example, discusses *objectivism*, *constructivism* and *postmodernism* as three approaches in studies of authenticity, and suggests *existential authenticity* as an alternative concept. Cary (2004) uses the term *serendipity* to elaborate on the experiential notion of authenticity, and Taylor (2000) highlights the concept of *sincerity*.

In our discussion we will make a distinction between three aspects of authentic experiences: notions of 'the *Origin*, the *unique* and *existential authenticity*' (Andersson Cederholm, 1999, 2004). One aspect of authenticity is the notion of the Origin mentioned above: an essentialist image of cultures and natures preserved and of time standing still. Quite often, the idea of the Origin highlights a perception of time prevalent in late-modern societies: the notion of acceleration of time. 'You have to go there before it is too late', is a quite common phrase among tourists seeking the last remnants of authenticity (Andersson Cederholm, 1999). This argument is evident in tourist marketing, where the explicit threat of modernization is used to legitimize travel to authentic places (e.g. Kilroy Travel's 'Go before it's too late'; authenticity here ranges from natural milieus like the South Pole to industrial heritage from the early 20th century). Thus, there is a discursive and material race to define the last white spots on Earth where you may blend with remote and pure Otherness.

The fusion of culture and nature, implied by the notion of the Origin, raises the expectation of a tacit and inherited knowledge among local people of how to preserve and cultivate nature in a sustainable way. A local guide is

expected to convey knowledge about local culture and nature in a way that even a well-trained non-local guide would never manage. Stressing the presence of a local guide is common in ecotourism marketing; in Nature's Best requirements for certification the connection to the local community is emphasized. Using a local guide not only benefits the local economy, but also conveys a sense of authenticity. Knowledge of nature and traditional culture is not only regarded as inherited, but also as mysterious and essentialist. It is something that the locals are supposed to know, just by virtue of the fact that they are locals. This kind of knowledge is regarded as *natural* and should therefore be respected.

One of Nature's Best's six main requirements is formulated as 'respect the limits of the destination – the least possible impact on nature and culture' and as a sub-requirement one can read: 'always respect local rules and recommendations for protected areas' (Nature's Best Document of Requirements, 2002–2005). However, the emphasis on local guides is somewhat problematic for ecotourist operators. On the one hand the guides represent authenticity by their presupposed essentialist knowledge, and by their very presence local guides represent personal encounters with the local community. On the other hand, there is always a risk that the *professional skills* of the guide might be poor, something that would be truly detrimental for staging nature as an experience – or 'servicescape'. In a reflective comment on changes in the ecotourism business during the previous two decades, the director of Wildland Adventures, an ecotourist operator, made the following comments on the role of the guide:

Guides are the catalyst between travellers and their experience. There is nothing more important to creating authenticity in travel than the right guide. In spite of decades in experience in ecotourism and some excellent, locally-based guide training programs, finding the right guide that creates the 'Wild Style' experience is the difference between magic and mediocrity in a Wildland Adventure. There are many trained naturalists, excellent tour escorts, and knowledgeable historians and archaeologists, but it is still rare to find a native guide with the requisite range of skills and character: a sufficient command of the English language, the requisite knowledge and the skill to impart the information, the experience to lead, and a personality that is open to sharing a part of themselves, their beliefs and values which induces heart-to-heart interactions between travellers and their hosts.

(Kurt Kutay, in <http://www.wildland.com>)

The symbolic and economic value embedded in the authentic is also articulated in a similar context concerning intellectual property rights in relation to genetic material and traditional knowledge used by indigenous people. Within the World Trade Organization, this discussion encompasses three different standpoints (Byström, 2003; <http://www.grain.org>). The first is how large capitalistic corporations strongly advocate the free right to patent traditional knowledge and genetic material used by indigenous people. In a tourist context, this would be an equivalent to the commoditization of nature and local culture on tourists' terms.

As opposed to this, a second view proposes the protection of traditional

knowledge from commoditization by redefining it as intellectual property. This is an official proposition from government bodies in developing countries, and could be compared to 'traditional' ecotourism practices where nature is represented as being in need of protection and conservation. A third standpoint is that traditional knowledge is an integral part of a cultural and spiritual context, which makes it impossible to buy or sell. It is not even possible to categorize it as a property. This is the view held by practitioners of traditional knowledge, and it also reflects the tourists' quest for the Origin in the essentialist notion of the concept. The commercial framing of the Origin in a tourist context is illustrated by Nature's Best's staging of authentic experiences: 'The wolf is the northern hemisphere's most charismatic animal species. Precisely for this reason, the wolf is one of the greatest global cutting edge attractions' (<http://www.ekoturism.org>, our translation). A local guide proves to be indispensable for the navigation through the wonders of nature:

The tracks reveal what the wolf has been up to and what has happened, almost how it thinks. [...] The guide [...] has extensive knowledge of this particular wolf family. [...] He is also in command of the art of howling and a nightly howling expedition beneath the stars is guaranteed to raise the hairs of your neck.

(<http://www.naturesbasta.com>, our translation)

## The Everywhere Unique

As discussed above, the tension between the notion of the Origin – the essentialist aspect of authenticity – and the demand for professionalism is highlighted in the quest for the good guide. However, not all tourists search for the Origin in a primitivist sense, even though this aspect of authenticity is nevertheless important. Another aspect of authenticity prevalent in tourism discourses is the notion of *the unique*. It implies the search for the unique experience not so much in relation to a specific destination regarded as pure and unspoiled in an essentialist sense – as in the notion of Origin – but rather in relation to the tourist industry and the tourist's self-reflexive awareness of other tourists. That is, a destination is regarded as authentic if it has not developed a tourist culture, where most commercial and cultural life is adapted to the needs of the tourists.

In searching for authenticity it is of great value for many tourists not to be treated *merely* as customers (Andersson Cederholm, 1999, 2004), but as *persons*. Comparable to the role of the guide, the encounter between service provider and tourist is supposed to induce *heart-to-heart interactions*. This notion of authenticity is in line with the discussion of 'new tourism' (Poon, 1993) and tendencies towards demands for tailor-made, non-standardized personal solutions. Exclusivity is a key word in marketing, and the concept of 'cutting edge products' is introduced by Nature's Best: '... several of Laponia's absolute top-notch attractions [have] been transformed into bookable cutting edge products' (<http://www.ekoturism.org>, our transla-

tion). The notion of uniqueness implies uniqueness in the business arrangement as a whole, rather than in the destination per se.

When the notion of authenticity is dissociated from its connection to a specific physical destination, authenticity becomes part of an 'experiencescape' rather than simply a landscape. Even though the essentialist notion of Origin is reproduced in tourism mythologies, we argue that there has been a shift in focus from emphasis on the essentialist notion of authenticity towards the experiential:

Some of our more novice clients still think authenticity is synonymous with travel to pristine natural areas and untrudden villages where native peoples retain traditional values. [ ... ] However, what I find equally gratifying and meaningful is simply the truth. [ ... ] Authentic experiences are just as available in popular tourism destinations like Costa Rica and Thailand, as they are in remote Mongolia or the Bolivian highlands. *It all depends on how we conduct our business and integrate our tour operations from trained guides to informed guests.*

(Kurt Kutay, <http://www.wildland.com>, our emphasis)

This operator positions himself at the forefront of ecotourism businesses: 'Some of our more novice clients still think [ ... ]'. Furthermore, authenticity is not about destinations, it is about conducting business and doing it well. This shift in focus is reflected in products certified with Nature's Best:

Nature and the culture of people of nature have always fascinated the traveller: we seek backwards to the Origin and to the vital beauty of nature. This quest often brings us far away, to distant corners of the world, in spite of the fact that the same possibilities for experiences exist close by.

(<http://www.laplandsafari.se>, our translation)

A sense of uniqueness could be found anywhere in the world: it has nothing to do with geographical distance. The 'cutting edge product' is primarily marketed and sold as a *unique experience* rather than presented as nature or culture connected to a specific place. This way of constructing nature makes it possible to market a horse-riding product through 'the mythology of the deep, Swedish forest' (<http://www.wildhorseriding.com>) – taking place in the southern part of Sweden – by turning one night in a Sami tent complete with reindeer skins to sleep on into a major tour attraction. The geographical indifference indicates a non-essentialist notion of authenticity, even though representations of the Origin are important ingredients in the experience as a whole. When local culture is the issue, Sami culture is often emphasized. Several accredited companies qualified under the umbrella Nature's Best are from the north of Sweden and position their arrangements in a traditional Sami context: 'Geunja, Sami mountain lodge in a roadless land. A creative and inspiring meeting place for development, group cooperation, leadership and fresh thinking' (<http://www.laplandsafari.se>).

When experiential aspects of authenticity are emphasized, the local destination becomes a background, or stage, where the experience can take place. The stage has to be decorated with local flavour and naturalness in order to convey a sense of remoteness – a *roadless land*. However, the stages

for experiences are decorated according to the same manuscript wherever they are located, which means that the local flavour is a globalized, generalized locality. Locally produced food, local cultural heritage and local people are still important as manifestations of the Origin, but the local nature and culture in question could in fact be localized anywhere in the world. It is not the place that is important, but the sense of place: 'Ecotourism works as well in the Laponia mountains and our archipelagos as it does in Nepal or New Guinea' (Nature's Best Document of Requirements, 2002–2005). It is ecotourism defined as experience-packed practice that is put to the forefront, and this can take place anywhere. It is a sense of place, a sense of tradition and, quite often, the personal encounter with the locals that are supposed to create a unique experience, juxtaposed to standardized or mainstream types of travelling.

## Connecting to the Whole

Even though the notion of uniqueness is disconnected from the physical place, it has strong connections to a social typification of exclusivity *versus* mainstream travelling. Uniqueness is thus related to specific types of tourism, where non-standardization is highly valued. This leads us to a third aspect of authenticity, not necessarily connected to the social typification of exclusivity in travel experiences, and clearly disconnected from the essentialist notion of the Origin. It is the notion of *existential authenticity*, indicating a sensual, fusion of body-and-soul, a non-reflexive experience, often opposed to the tourists' distant observation of the local scene (Andersson Cederholm, 1999; Wang, 1999).

The experience of existential authenticity is similar to the liminal experience (Turner, 1969, 1978; Cohen, 1985; Gyimothy and Mykletun, 2004), i.e. the framed, ritualistic and out-of-the-ordinary type of activity which encourages an emotional state of flow and immersion of the self in the surroundings ('liminoid' is another term often referred to when it comes to secularized versions of liminal activities; see, for example, Turner, 1978).

In ecotourism marketing, *nature* is used as the medium for reaching this holistic experience of being part of something eternal; the encounter with natural environments 'by bringing you in collective harmony with the web of life that surrounds us', something that initiates a process of reclamation: 'Rediscover a sense of belonging to something larger than yourself' (<http://www.wildland.com>). This is contrasted with a society dominated by a stressful busy lifestyle, governed by the clock. As one of the certified Swedish ecotourist operators describes it: 'Discover the calmness, silence and freedom far beyond mobile phones and "technostress"' (<http://www.lapplandsafari.se>). Nature is constructed in a way that emphasizes its mystical and even healing properties:

Fishing is an occupation having a given place as a charger for the batteries in your body! When fishing you can cool down, pick up your patience and soon you will experience excitement as well as peace in your soul. Fishing as a medical

prescription will be big in the future when we in due time have learned to heal a burnt out person in a better way than with medicines [...].  
(<http://www.fegen.nu>)

It is the sensual experience of connecting to a greater whole that is stressed. The location, full of interesting and original nature and peoples of nature, is the setting supposed to encourage a certain way of feeling and thinking. In this sense, it is not the tourist gaze that is encouraged, but a sensual holistic experience. A Sami village or bear safari might be the exotic and extraordinary setting, but the actual product is a specific kind of holistic experience – not a distant gazing at a specific landscape. The notions of uniqueness and existential authenticity are experiential rather than essentialist. The disconnection from the unique and the actual physical destination makes the experience of authenticity both individualized and fluid.

The social typification of uniqueness in relation to the tourist industry is thus related to trends of attraction, while the holistic existential experience is a result of situational circumstances and even less tangible. Furthermore, Nature's Best emphasizes experiences, not nature per se. The notion of the Origin becomes just an ingredient in the exclusive experience, not the main objective of tourism activity. All three aspects of authenticity are important in nature-based tourism experiences, but in emerging ecotourism practice and discourse the essentialist notion of authenticity is losing significance. Instead of embodying purity – an object to be gazed upon – nature becomes a tool for exclusivity and self-exploration. Consequently, the modernist dichotomy between society/the tourist and nature is transcended.

## Welcome to Natureland

In Sweden and elsewhere the formation of new ecotourist discourses and practices can thus be discerned, and Nature's Best is an important Swedish actor in the process of situating nature in a new global cultural economy. The scientific approach to managing nature has given way to another logic: conservation through exclusivity, which can also be expressed as conservation through commoditization. The way nature and local culture are commoditized is how these categories are translated as *experiences* instead of as (scientific) objects. It is clearly exclusive – the targeted consumers are obviously upmarket – and the notion of sustainability is strikingly absent in the message.

In a 2003 conference presentation of the Nature's Best concept, one of the organization's founders explicitly stated that the goal was to dissociate nature from environmental sustainability. Tourists were not seen as willing to pay anything for *sustainability*, whereas they were more than willing to pay for the added-value *experience* of nature. The meaning of nature has changed, from scientific towards entertaining. Nature is mobilized as a medium of translation between the biophysical world and economic systems of value in a way that globalizes locality. For this to work out, ecotourist operators must

embody new management principles and ecotourists must take on new roles. For operators, this can be expressed as a shift from watchdog to facilitator and welcoming host, and for the ecotourist as a shift from scientific explorer to explorer of the inner self – or even hedonist.

In ‘traditional’ ecotourism, where nature is coded as scientific object, ecotourism operators are placed in the role of experts and ecotravel becomes a practice embedded in a specific kind of expert system. First, nature must be differentiated along lines of exotic/ordinary, charismatic/bland, fragile/robust and inaccessible/accessible. Ecotourism then becomes a vehicle to see and understand nature deemed as exotic, charismatic, fragile and inaccessible: ‘Ecotourism – tourism that takes you to fragile and beautiful areas’ (<http://www.peopleandplanet.org>).

The ecotourism operator acts as a translator of what is worth being seen and understood, and as watchdog over the conduct and actual physical behaviour of the tourist, because ‘it is [...] essential that we seek an understanding as to how we can protect the delicate eco-systems and civilisations’ (<http://www.c-e-r-t.org>). The tourist on the other hand, is cast in the role of a latter-day equivalent to the colonial explorer. S/he ventures into uncharted territories, where nature is represented as largely unknown, the as-yet-uncategorized and thus pre-modern: ‘*Beyond the hustle and bustle of our daily lives, lie the world’s great wildernesses and cultures. We feel drawn to visit these unspoilt lands, whether it be to view the wildlife, experience traditional cultures or simply to savour the silence and beauty of wide open spaces*’ (<http://www.c-e-r-t.org>, our emphasis).

New ecotourist practices, as exemplified by Nature’s Best and others, change the relationships between nature, local culture, operator and tourist. Instead of being watchdogs, ecotourism operators become actors who invite you into nature, and practically insist that you experience nature with all your senses. The tourist body shall be firmly placed in the middle of nature and then interact with it: ‘The rhythm from the paddle-strokes has an almost hypnotic effect. No other vessel brings you in such close encounter with nature as the kayak’ (<http://www.naturesbasta.com>, our translation). The tourist not only interacts with nature, s/he bodily incorporates it:

The hunt for moose in the forests of Lapponia might offer intensive meetings with the uncrowned king of the forest. To hunt with the help of really good dogs in almost untouched forests near the northern mountains is an experience that only a select few are privileged to take part in [...] A chartered cook assures that the nature experience also becomes a delicate experience.

(<http://www.naturesbasta.com>, our translation)

So as ecotourism operators open up nature – and at the same time limit admission to it by exclusivity instead of by strict protocol – the tourist is urged to partake in sensual and existential pleasures. Rhetorically and discursively nature is developing towards a medium for self-fulfilment, and thus away from the scientific object it is within ‘traditional’ ecotourism.

This meaning given to nature, in combination with how the notion of nature as specific place is exchanged for nature as globalized locality, forms

the basis of what we perceive as a new cultural economy of nature. Nature and local culture are perhaps not becoming more democratic – we are, after all, talking about cutting-edge products – but these tourist categories are being mobilized in new actor-networks in new ways. Nature, ecology and culture are constructed differently and given new meanings. In a sense, the ecotourist is allowed and encouraged to experience nature reflexively instead of objectively. Because nature is represented as a medium for sensual experiences and personal development, it can be argued that ecotourism now transcends the modernist dichotomy between nature and (Western) culture as well as reproducing it.

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# 8

## Ecotourism as Experience-tourism

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Ecotourism has lately been conceptualized as tourism that is environmentally and socially benign, contributing to local economies and the conservation of protected areas (e.g. Fennell, 1999; Honey, 1999; Weaver, 2001; Cater, 2004; Gössling and Hultman, Chapter 1, this volume). Accordingly, ecotourists have largely been understood as people with a profound interest in the environment, and ecotourism has been advertised as a sustainable, 'positive' form of tourism. For example, the United Nations General Assembly (2003) stated that the motive behind the proclamation of the United Nations Year of Ecotourism in 2002 was to:

[...] generate greater awareness among public authorities, the private sector, the civil society and consumers regarding ecotourism's capacity to contribute to the conservation of the natural and cultural heritage in natural and rural areas, and the improvement of standards of living in those areas.

Likewise, the World Tourism Organization (2005) promotes the expansion of sustainable tourism/ecotourism as a means of achieving the conservation of ecosystems, including protected areas. One would thus expect the marketing of ecotourism products to address the 'green' consciousness of tourists. However, an analysis of Swedish ecotourism tour operators and their advertisement campaigns reveals that marketing is based on selling unique experiences, rather than on sustainable tourism products fulfilling the criteria of ecotourism. Accordingly, it is argued in this chapter that the majority of ecotourists might be interested in consuming experiences rather than sustainable journeys, and that this might also be the main factor for purchasing eco-journeys. In line with this argument, it is suggested that there is a discrepancy between ecotourist motivations and the academic understanding of ecotourists as benign, environmentally aware tourists striving for nature conservation. As will be discussed, these findings have a number of implications for the understanding and development of

ecotourism. The following analysis is based on an investigation of Swedish ecotourism, but the findings might also apply in a more global context.

## Ecotourist Motivations, Attitudes and Behaviour

A wide range of publications have sought to conceptualize ecotourism, and there is a general agreement that ecotourism contains an educational element and should contribute to nature conservation (e.g. Fennell, 1999). Consequently, ecotourism has been understood as a form of tourism attractive to nature-orientated, environmentally aware tourists. For instance, Weaver (2001, p. 11) states that: 'In terms of visitor motivation [...] ecotourism definitions generally include an element of education, learning or appreciation about the natural attractions that form the basis of the ecotourism product.' This 'element of education, learning or appreciation' might stretch over a continuum, however, with some ecotourists preferring highly structured interpretations, resulting in an active educational process, while others are mostly interested in observation, i.e. more passive and subjective ways of learning.

As this continuum seems to exist even with regard to other characteristics of ecotourists, such as their demands on group size (small *versus* large), or their emphasis on personal experience *versus* mediation through guides, Weaver and Lawton (2001) distinguished two ideal types of ecotourists, 'hard' and 'soft'. 'Hard' ecotourists would, according to this conceptualization, show a strong environmental commitment and believe in enhance sustainability, while 'soft' ecotourists would rather show moderate or superficial environmental commitment and believe in steady-state sustainability (Weaver and Lawton, 2001). This implies that at least a share of ecotourists – those found on the 'hard' side of the ecotourist spectrum – would seek to minimize the impact of their vacation on the destination and, even more so, these ecotourists could also be expected to purchase ecotourism journeys for their very reason of being sustainable. Several authors provide evidence supporting this hypothesis. For instance, Weiler and Richins (1995), studying a sample of participants in Earthwatch Australia's field research projects, found not only that biocentric motivations were prominent in their sample ( $n$ , 156), but that more than half of the respondents held membership in various environmental organizations, clearly underlining the participants' strong environmental commitment. Likewise, Wurzinger (Chapter 11, this volume) found that Swedish ecotourists in her sample showed stronger pro-environmental behaviour.

Overall, there is thus evidence that: (i) ecotourists do have a more profound interest in the natural environment; and (ii) that at least a proportion of them show strong environmental commitment. Strong environmental commitment has also been the point of departure for much of the advertisement of ecotourism by its organizations (e.g. International Ecotourism Society, 2005), addressing the environmental consciousness of both tour operators and tourists. It could thus be expected that the

sustainable character of eco-journeys would be an important sales argument. However, as will be shown in the following, marketing of ecotourism focuses on selling superior experiences rather than sustainable eco-journeys.

## Ecotourism Experiences

The 'experience-economy' has been identified as a new and rapidly expanding sector of Western economies, based on the creation, marketing and selling of 'experiences' (cf. Pine and Gilmore, 1999). There are several important aspects of this development for tourist contexts. Many 'postmodern' tourists may be tired of conventional sun, sand and sea vacations and seek the authentic, which is often seen to exist in the natural (Urry, 1990, 1995; Poon, 1993). Poon (1993) coined the term 'new tourists' for such visitors who have travel experience are no longer interested in 'warm' destinations, travel individually and not entirely for the reason of escaping routine and home life. Self-fulfilment and experiences seem important travel motives for these tourists and, as Swarbrooke *et al.* (2003) have pointed out, growth in the markets catering to such 'new tourists' is substantial. More generally, an increasing number of tourists expect 'physical and emotional rewards [...]' (Pigram and Jenkin, 1999, p. 6) from leisure activities, and self-fulfilment and re-affirmation of identity are increasingly part of the tourist experience (Craik, 1997). In consequence, tourism is increasingly evaluated in terms of being rewarding, enriching, adventuresome and/or a learning experience (Zeppel and Hall, 1992). Clearly, such attributes fit ecotourism products rather well.

Ecotourism in its organized forms is usually small-scale, more intimate, more carefully constructed and takes place in natural settings, often peripheral, unsullied environments. Ecotourist journeys also demand a basic degree of activity, e.g. involving at least a walk or similar. These elements of ecotourism contribute to its perception as authentic and unique, and have great appeal to 'postmodern', 'new' tourists. In effect, there seems to be a demand/supply side interaction resulting in rapid growth in ecotourism, which is ultimately based on the quest for 'superior' or 'deep and embodied' (Cater, 2003) experiences. The importance of 'experiences' might be more characteristic for some tourism products than others. For instance, it is clear that adventure tourism is based on selling strong emotions, while 3S (sun, sand and sea) tourism might rather put emphasis on recovery and relaxation. Ecotourism might, experience-wise, be located mid-way on this spectrum, even though obviously closer to different forms of adventure tourism.

Ultimately, all leisure tourism builds on experiences, and whatever is perceived as 'deep and embodied' or 'superior' is a result of the subjective negotiation of the experience by the individual tourist. What is new about ecotourism experiences is thus their *presentation* rather than their character – presumably, a tour in a kayak is still a tour in a kayak. The difference is that, only a few years ago, a local tourism entrepreneur in the Stockholm

archipelago might have rented out kayaks for SEK100 (€11) per boat per day. Today, the same entrepreneur might offer tours certified with Nature's Best (the Swedish ecotourism certification), send along a guide, use an advertisement that builds on promises of deep experiences: 'Nature doesn't come any closer than this. In the silence you can hear the quacking of eider ducks. You are in the middle of everything – or far from everything, depending on how you look at it' (Nature's Best, 2005) – and charge several hundred euros for what formerly was known as 'kayaking'.

The pattern of marketing nature-based experiences as unique or superior can be observed on many websites of member companies of the Swedish Ecotourism Association (SEA). In fact, many websites look like collections of superlatives, containing expressions such as 'top-notch experiences', 'cutting-edge arrangements', 'unforgettable experiences' and the like. Nature's Best is thus not only guaranteeing the meeting of ecotourism standards, but has turned into a brand for superior experiences, a 'quality label [...] showing the way to Sweden's finest nature tours from the country's leading arrangers of Swedish ecotourism' (SEA, 2005). Accordingly, the SEA's website is marketed as 'Sweden's first nature-website [...] to find offers of cool dogsled adventures, fantastic kayak tours, unique Sami experiences, magnificent mountain rides and much, much more [...]' (SEA, 2005). Obviously, many of these nature-based activities would have been on offer 5, 10 or even 20 years ago, but dog-sledding is now 'cool', kayak tours are 'fantastic', meetings with Sami people are 'unique', and horseback rides 'magnificent'. Clearly, the use of powerful attributes to turn everyday nature-encounters into once-in-a-lifetime experiences also serves the purpose of creating products that, otherwise, would barely stand a chance of being purchased.

The general shift towards the use of powerful attributes focusing on experiences is also reflected in subsequent changes in the text on the Swedish Ecotourism Association's website, which read, until mid-2004 (author's translation):

Imagine deep forests, snow-covered mountaintops, untamed streams, meandering rivers, and the archipelago's uncountable islands. Wild bears and wolves, dancing cranes and large pikes waiting in one of Sweden's lakes. A cultural heritage that is thousands of years old; Sami people, forest workers and small-scale farmers. Nature's silence and tranquillity, in times spiced up with an adrenaline-kicking adventure. Add selected foods based on the region's raw materials, often prepared after traditional recipes, and guides and wardens who can mediate both discover-spirit and concern. Knowledgeable operators who proudly present the region's finest values and who also try to protect and conserve them. Overall, this turns into an experience above the usual. We have chosen to call this ecotourism.

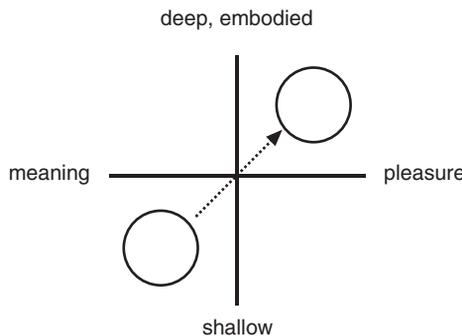
In mid-2004, the Swedish Ecotourism Association's website was changed, now summarizing ecotourism as (author's translation):

- playful and different experiences;
- unforgettable exchanges with the region's people;

- adventure and adrenaline, or silence and passion, in the middle of nature;
- an open attitude towards other cultures and ways of thinking; and
- travelling with respect, explorer spirit and curiosity.

Finally, in September 2005, the Swedish Ecotourism Association was presented under the simple heading ‘funnier travel for everyone’, even though the above text can still be found elsewhere on the website. Clearly, the marketing approach has changed from being ‘serious’ (presenting the criteria of ecotourism) to ‘hedonistic’ (experience as playful travel). Conservation and education, once the focus of ecotourism, have now become subordinate, almost invisible, themes. This shift in marketing is conscious. Hultman and Andersson Cederholm (Chapter 7, this volume), describe how the Swedish Ecotourism Association intentionally moves away from mentioning ecological and social aspects of ecotourism. In their perception, tourists are *not* willing to pay for sustainability, but very willing to pay for the added value of superior experiences. Nature no longer exists as a scientific entity; it is now a romanticized playground for experience-interested tourists. Given these changes in the presentation and marketing of nature-based experiences, there might be a need to conceptualize ecotourism experiences both in terms of their characteristics and their perception by tourists.

One avenue might be Cohen’s (1972, 1979) plurality approach. Cohen (1972, 1979) distinguished different kinds of tourists who might desire different experiences, including those travelling for mere pleasure and, at the other end of the spectrum, those searching for meaning. Within ecotourism, the plurality of expectations of experiences might coexist, as ecotourists might, during the very same trip, seek to experience pleasure and meaning. For example, Uriely *et al.* (2002) showed for backpackers that there are tourists corresponding to more than one mode of experience across one single trip. Figure 8.1 is an attempt to express this characteristic of the ecotourism experience on an axis from pleasure to meaning, with the option of coexistence, even though one side is likely to dominate. Meaning/pleasure could also include other aspects of the experience, such as the



**Fig. 8.1.** Dimensions of ecotourism experiences.

educational dimension (active *versus* passive, mediated *versus* individual learning).

On a second axis, the character of the experience might range from 'shallow' to 'deep and embodied'. Obviously, what would represent a shallow experience for one ecotourist, might be a deep, embodied experience for another. For instance, a fishing trip might have great experience value to the novice fisherman, while it would take a big-game fishing tour for the experienced fisherman to stimulate a similar perception. Nevertheless, it seems possible to distinguish rather common ecotourism experiences (fishing, forest walks, mushroom collecting) as opposed to rather unusual ones (e.g. wolf safari, Sami reindeer migration). Deep, embodied *versus* shallow would thus capture the character of the experience for the individual, representing the ecotourist's subjective negotiation of the experience.

Applying this model to the observed changes in the presentation and marketing of ecotourism would lead to two conclusions: first, ecotourism is moving from meaning (strong environmental commitment, active education) to pleasure (playful, hedonistic travel). Secondly, ecotourism experiences might *always* have ranged somewhere between 'shallow' and 'deep', but there is now a trend to present and advertise *all* experiences as 'deep and embodied', and thus an overall shift from shallow/meaning to deep/embodied/pleasure. One might think that this should pose a number of practical problems, as the experience-perception of the tourist needs to match its semantic construction if this concept is to work. In other words: an experience being advertised as 'deep' will not without consequences be experienced as 'shallow' by the tourist. It is argued here that a number of processes might facilitate the perception of 'deepness'. As discussed above, small groups and mediation by guides might facilitate perceptions of uniqueness and authenticity. Furthermore, ecotourism products are generally more carefully designed and arranged, which might also foster such perceptions. Finally, ecotourism often takes place in remote regions of difficult access, which might facilitate encounters with charismatic, rare mega-fauna.

Overall, ecotourism promises genuine encounters with 'the natural and authentic'. As Swarbrooke *et al.* (2003) argue, knowing that an experience will be extraordinary or unique, the anticipated 'superiority' is likely to enhance the experience. Even the high prices of ecotourism products can contribute to this process. Economic theory knows, for instance, Veblen-effects (Clarke *et al.*, 2003): that is, consumer preferences to buy products as a direct function of their high price. Consequently, ecotourism operations and their high prices might be perceived as exclusive products. Altogether, ecotourism thus presents experiences as unique, more authentic, distinctive and exclusive, facilitating their perception as 'deep and embodied' or 'superior'.

The outlined changes in the marketing, presentation and consumption of ecotourism mirror some of the changes in the tourism production system, where selling experiences has replaced the selling of sights, and where

tourism is increasingly becoming placeless (Hultman and Andersson Cederholm, Chapter 7, this volume). In the context of ecotourism, growing interest in nature-based experiences also represents a shift towards more active vacations even though, as ecotourism is arranged, designed, constructed and even staged, activeness is embedded in a passive process of *being* engaged. As Hultman and Andersson Cederholm (Chapter 7, this volume) point out, ecotourism may transcend the dichotomy between nature and society, but this is an arranged, facilitated process. Tourists do not seek to interact with nature on its own terms, which could, in extreme cases, be a daring experience involving real risks, but rather to engage with nature in protected, secured arrangements building on romanticized representations and understandings of 'nature'. This meets a broader neo-romantic trend of understanding nature as 'good but endangered', which is manifested in Swedish society in many forms, from the slogan on the most popular butter *Naturen är god* ('Nature is good') to the Swedish Nature Protection Agency's environmental goals (for example, 'conserve magnificent mountain landscapes').

Ecotourism operators meet and foster these developments through the creation of nature-based products that can be purchased and consumed as packaged experiences, representing a broader process of commoditization of nature (Hultman and Andersson Cederholm, Chapter 7, this volume). Hence, ecotourism does allow for exchanges between nature and society, and it may transcend modernity's dichotomy; however, it is also clear that what is experienced as 'nature' is increasingly a social construction.

## Ecotourism as Experience Tourism

In the light of the developments sketched above, it can be expected that experience-based ecotourism will see continued strong growth. Consuming experiences might even be a self-reinforcing and self-reproducing process, as reflected in tourist statements such as: 'the more you have seen, the more you want to see'. However, there might also be limits to growth. For instance, small scale might be an important precondition for perceptions of exclusiveness. Ecotourism is still negligible in comparison to conventional tourism, but its recent growth has been strong. Ecotourism experiences are now offered in a wide variety of locations, geographically covering the whole of Scandinavia, and by a wide variety of operators who have partially seen rapidly increasing client numbers. There is also a trend towards the professionalization of ecotourism's organizational structures, including the systematic creation of new products and their marketing, more strategic approaches to marketing, and political lobbying. This has resulted in 'repetitive products', such as kayak tours offered by a variety of operators, as well as a more frequent representation of ecotourism products in different media. These developments might put elements of uniqueness, exclusiveness and smallness in jeopardy, and at some stage result in reduced interest in ecotourism, at least for the segment of 'hard' ecotourists.

This chapter has argued that institutionalized ecotourism in Sweden – and possibly ecotourism in other regions as well – is moving from being marketed as a benign and sustainable form of tourism towards the advertisement of experience-tourism. This entails a number of implications for both tourists and tour operators. For instance, if ecotourism becomes placeless, as the value of the experience outweighs the value of the site, then locations will lose their importance (cf. Hultman and Andersson Cederholm, Chapter 7, this volume). Poria *et al.* (2003) have argued in a similar way for heritage tourism, where the creation, structuring and provision of the experience gains importance. This opens up opportunities even for less ‘unique’ places to develop ecotourism, while it puts greater emphasis on the importance of ecotourism providers to be innovative inventors of ecotourism products.

For the advocates of ecotourism as an alternative, ‘better’ tourism concept, it is not necessarily a problematic development that the anticipation of unique experiences is a better sales argument than the eco-friendly character of eco-journeys. Clearly, the experience-focus has been the driving factor of growth in ecotourism in recent years, and might have communicated the concept to even less environmentally aware people. As the criteria of certification guarantee that ecotourism products meet demands in terms of conservation, as well as social and environmental integrity (with the notable exception of transport to/from the destination), it is ensured that ecotourism remains a more ‘beneficial’ form of tourism. Strong growth in ‘green’ markets has often attracted imitators, though, and it remains to be seen whether experience-ecotourism will attract only committed entrepreneurs in the future.

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# 9

## The Right of Public Access: Potentials and Challenges for Ecotourism

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### Access and Sustainable Development

Even though the topic of public access in modern urban societies is generally associated with leisure, tourism and outdoor activities, it is important to remember that, fundamentally, access issues involve basic and ancient human–ecological aspects of resource use and identity. When we focus on human–landscape relations in an industrialized society, we find that there is a striking tendency to spatially separate important aspects of everyday life such as place of residence, place of work and place for recreation. The production landscapes for the fulfilment of daily needs such as food and clothes are more or less invisible.

From a technical point of view, environmental arguments can be used both in favour of, and against, small-scale and local integration. However, in democracies public understanding, motivation and inspiration are crucial for the long-term acceptance of an effective environmental policy. Territorial affinity is perhaps a necessary mental prerequisite for environmental awareness, in terms of making environmental problems palpable and understandable. In such a human–ecological context it may be argued that nature-oriented recreation activities and public access to the countryside are crucial for the development of urban dwellers' perceptions, attitudes and activities with regard to future sustainable human–nature relationships.

Tourism is a typical example of the tendency of modern industrial societies to separate different aspects of human life by space (holiday resorts, wilderness reserves, designated areas for second homes, etc.) and by time (leisure time, holidays, etc.). These designated places and time periods are linked together through huge communication networks (to a large extent driven by fossil fuels) that, together with various social, cultural, economical and on-site ecological problems, make tourism one of the most crucial challenges to sustainable development (Frändberg, 1998; Gössling, 2000).

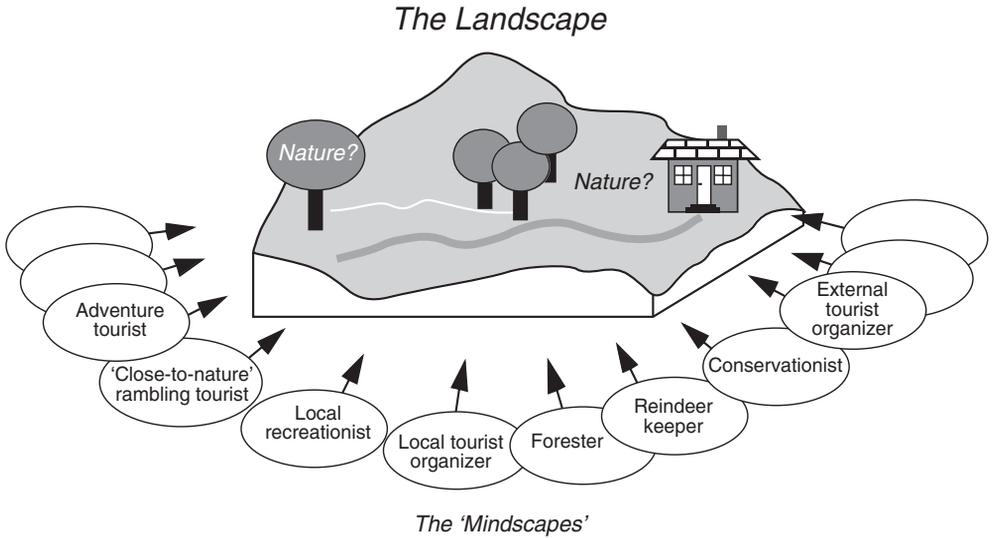
'Ecotourism' is one approach for providing a better linkage between tourism and sustainable development, and various aspects of the concept of ecotourism are discussed in this book. The general aspect highlighted in this chapter is the linkage between the more radical, 'dark green' ecotourism approaches and locally oriented, 'territorial' development strategies. Two distinct themes emerge:

1. The general tension with regard to development strategies between the large-scale functional designation of different places in fulfilling different special purposes *versus* the small-scale, territorial, multi-purpose use of local landscape (e.g. Friedmann and Weaver, 1979).
2. The often-claimed linkage between locally oriented territorial development strategies and more radical approaches to sustainable development such as 'alternative development' (Hettne, 1994), 'bioregionalism' (Barry, 1995) and 'ecoregional strategy' (Bahrenberg and Dutkowski, 1993), involving increased 'capacity of individuals and groups to control their own resources' (Adams, 1990, p. xiii).

Holden (2000, p. 192) relates ecotourism to the concept of 'alternative tourism': 'a kind of tourism that is often associated with the characteristics of alternative tourism [ ... ] is "ecotourism"'. He identifies, among other aspects, the 'small scale of development with high rates of local ownership [ ... ] maximised linkages to other sectors of the local economy, such as agriculture, reducing a reliance upon imports [ ... ] localised power sharing and involvement of people in the decision-making process'. It is easy to see linkages here to the more general traditions of self-reliance and deep ecology, as exemplified by Naess (1973) and Sachs (1974), the interest in local perspectives by the World Commission on Environment and Development (1987), and the subsequent Rio Conference with its 'Agenda 21' in 1992.

With regard to themes of access, human ecology, landscape relations, tourism, sustainable development and ecotourism, the 'right of public access' is of particular interest in Sweden. This holds true both from a more basic point of view as a leisure-related multi-purpose landscape perspective, and from a more practical point of view, i.e. as an important element in nature-based tourism and in the relation between the tourists and the local rural population. The basic principle of the right of public access in Sweden is defined in a brochure entitled *Common Sense and the Right of Public Access*, published by the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency: 'Do not disturb, do not destroy – that is the basic principle of Sweden's right of public access.' But before going deeper into the characteristics of the right of public access, a few general aspects of access need to be mentioned.

Various landscape perspectives – involving both mental landscapes (or 'mindscapes', Hågerstrand, 1991) and actual use and behaviour – can be found with regard to a specific physical landscape (Fig. 9.1; Sandell, 2000, 2005). Perspectives might include differences between local residents and tourists; between preservationists and foresters; between cross-country skiers and snowmobile tourists, etc. In addition, these different landscape



**Fig. 9.1.** Landscape perspectives.

perspectives change over time, due to, for example, external influences and technical development. Furthermore, perspectives could, at least to some extent, be different for the same person or group depending on the particular context. This means that when discussing access we need to remember that there is a broad scale of access perspectives that will be applied concurrently in the physical landscape. These access perspectives should not be limited to the understanding of legal regulations. They should rather be seen as richly nuanced social phenomena.

In other words, there are mental, legal, social, physical and economical dimensions of access (see also, e.g. Millward, 1991; Watkins, 1996). For an access issue to exist, there has to be an interest in utilizing the landscape (firewood, scenic view, game, etc.) *and* a situation where this utilization is controversial. Both aspects are obviously deeply rooted in a cultural context.

## The Swedish Right of Public Access

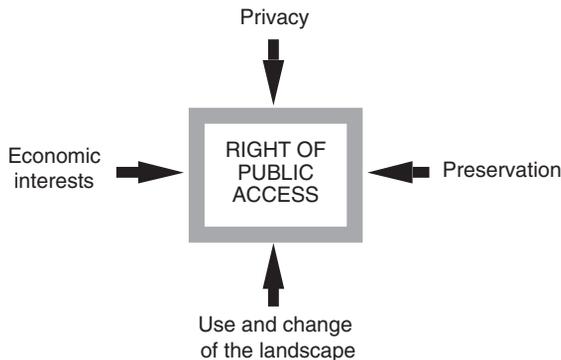
During the 20th century, paralleling the rise of the welfare state, the idea of outdoor life and its contact with nature was emphasized as fostering goals of various kinds in Sweden. 'The Swedish nature' and 'the nature-loving Swedes' became important mythologies shaping the modern Swedish nation. In the early part of the century, rapid industrialization and urbanization processes formed the background for great interest in physical leisure activities. With higher material standards of living, gradual shortening of working hours and the Compulsory Holidays Act (1938), it became possible for a majority of the population to have and make use of leisure time. Tourism, recreation and outdoor activities established themselves as impor-

tant economic, regional and professional fields of interests (for an overview see Sandell and Sörlin, 2000).

The 'Swedishness' of this relationship to nature must not be over-emphasized, but there is still reason to talk about a Nordic outdoor life tradition characterized by material simplicity and popularity (see also Viken, Chapter 4, this volume). This *allemansrätt* (the right of public access to the countryside), which means that everyone has the right – within certain restrictions – to move freely across private land holdings, to pick mushrooms, flowers and berries, etc., is a basic element of Nordic outdoor tradition. Traceable back to at least the county laws of the Middle Ages, aspects of this right can be regarded as a 'tradition' deriving from pre-industrial society. The tradition is about undisturbed movement through the countryside, provided that one did not disturb or damage the property of local inhabitants (Sandell, 1997).

Generally one is not entitled to take away or damage anything of economic value, for example trees, crops, birch-bark or acorns (used to feed the animals). This also means that hunting and fishing are not basically included in the right of public access, even though fishing with hand gear was subsequently allowed in some areas through special legislation. The survival of this right is probably largely attributable to the fact that Sweden is sparsely populated. Also, the tradition of freedom for farmers and the Germanic tradition of legislation, as opposed to the Roman, are conditions referred to in support of the right of public access in the Nordic countries today (Wiklund, 1995; Tordsson, 2000).

Preservation and conservation ideas derived from German and North American practice constituted limitations to the right of public access early in the 20th century – even though the ideas were often motivated by recreation interests. Whatever rights were 'left over', in accordance with the demands of no damage and no disturbance, became part of a 'free space' (Colby, 1988) that is now referred to as the right of public access (Fig. 9.2). Particularly during the 1930s, as a parallel to the development of a modern recreation policy, the term and the approach of *allemansrätt* became an important element of mass recreation in Sweden.



**Fig. 9.2.** The right of public access and the 'free space' between restrictions.

Today, a wide range of management methods are used for outdoor recreation and the conservation of nature, but the right of public access still holds a strong position in Sweden, both culturally and in practice. There are similar but, from the point of view of outdoor life, sometimes more restrictive, situations in Norway and Finland. Norway has a special law regarding the right of public access that takes into account the difference between the earlier village commons where public access is the basic rule, and the fields and meadows that were privately owned in pre-modern society (*utmark versus inmark*). In Denmark, in more southerly European countries or in the United States it is difficult to find any right of public access similar to the Swedish model (see also Colby, 1988; Millward, 1993; Watkins, 1996; Mortazavi, 1997; Sandell, 1997, 1998, 2001; Cordell and Betz, 2000; Brox, 2001; Kaltenborn *et al.*, 2001; Højring, 2002).

In modern times the tradition of the right of public access has to some extent been bolstered by legislation. Instances include: (i) the obligation of landowners in specific circumstances to make arrangements to let people pass through their fences; (ii) the prohibition of new constructions along shorelines; (iii) the inclusion of matters of conservation and responsible use in legislation concerning agriculture and forestry; and (iv) a special law prohibiting the driving of motor vehicles off-road for recreational purposes if there is no snow on the ground (which is important from the point of view of non-mechanized outdoor recreation).

In summary, the right of public access in Sweden is common law and can be seen as the 'free space' between various restrictive forces, mainly:

- economic interests;
- people's privacy;
- preservation; and
- the ongoing utilization of the landscape for agriculture, forestry and infrastructure (Fig. 9.2).

For instance, camping for up to 24 h is generally allowed, and traversing any ground, lake or river, swimming, making a fire, etc. are all permitted wherever the restrictions previously mentioned are not violated (Bengtsson, 1999). It should also be noted that as long as the participants do not threaten the boundaries of the 'free space' (Fig. 9.2), both organized and commercial activities can make use of the right of public access (Fig. 9.3). However, these activities faced new environmental legislation in the late 1990s. This resulted in strict demands with regard to the need for consideration, good local knowledge, suitable selection of place and sometimes the requirement to announce plans to the authorities, and to respect any restrictions they might impose (Sandell, 2001).

## Current Attitudes toward the Right of Public Access

In order to investigate, e.g. attitudes toward the right of public access in Sweden, a postal questionnaire was conducted ( $n$  7800) in 2004 as a part of

		Organized?	
		Yes!	No!
Commercial?	Yes!	Guides, directions, tours ...	Organized somewhere else, such as information, letting ...
	No!	Schools, day-care centres, Scouts ...	Family-based, individuals ...

**Fig. 9.3.** Organized and commercial activities can make use of the right of public access.

the large, multidisciplinary ‘Mountain Mistra’ research programme (Fjäll, Mistra 2005). This programme addresses various aspects of the high mountain region in the north of Sweden. Due to this regional context, the survey over-sampled in favour of the population in the region. However, a national sample ( $n$  1067) was also studied. In total, there were 5291 responses, with a response rate of 65% in the four northernmost counties of Sweden and a response rate of 57% in the rest of Sweden. Results presented in the following are weighted to reflect a random sample of the total adult Swedish population (ages 16–65 years).

As Table 9.1 shows, support for the current right of public access is very strong. For example, a total of 96.1% agreed (86.1% in total agreement and 10.0% in partial agreement) with the statement that it is important to defend the right of public access. This could be compared with 61.7% who rejected (41.1% totally and 20.6% partly) the statement that a landowner should have increased opportunity to restrict the current right of public access. From these data it could be argued that the right of public access, at least as a concept, holds a very strong public position in Sweden today, implying that any discussion concerning changes – especially with regard to limitations – must take this opinion into account.

Table 9.2 shows that about one-third of the sample thought that the right of public access could be a threat to animals and vegetation, even though a

**Table 9.1.** Support for the current right of public access in Sweden.

	It is important to defend the right of public access (%)	Land-owners should have increased opportunity to curtail the right of public access (%)
Total rejection	0.2	41.1
Partial rejection	1.3	20.6
Don't know	2.4	19.2
Partial agreement	10.0	16.3
Total agreement	86.1	2.8
Overall total	100.0	100.0

**Table 9.2.** Right of public access, conservation and legislation.

	The right of public access is a threat to animals and vegetation (%)	The basic content of the right of public access should be made clearer in the legislation (%)
Total rejection	26.9	2.9
Partial rejection	15.4	1.9
Don't know	19.9	29.9
Partial agreement	34.8	25.5
Total agreement	3.0	39.8
Overall total	100.0	100.0

larger proportion (42.3%) did not agree with this statement. Regarding the legal position of the right of public access, a majority (65.3%) agreed either in total or in part with the statement that its content should be made clearer in the national legislation. It could therefore be argued that people believe that there are some problems related to the right of public access concerning conservation values, and that it would perhaps be a good thing to try to clarify its legal position. However, it is also important to note that, according to this survey, the problems do not seem to be perceived as overwhelming.

As for the question of the right of public access as a basis for organized activities – commercial and non-profit – Table 9.3 indicates that about half of the sample (47.1%) wanted to restrict its use for commercial purposes, but only 18.2 % wanted to restrict its use for non-profit organizations.

Concerning the question of ‘Who is the public?’, with regard to public rights, Table 9.4 shows that about 55% rejected limiting the right of public access for tourism, while about one-third were in favour of such a proposal. Table 9.4 also shows that the statement ‘the right of public access should only be valid for people living in Sweden’ was rejected by 61.3% (48.0% totally and 13.3% partially).

An indicator of different tourist types and recreationists in relation to their views on access could be created by positioning respondents on the ‘purist–neutralist–urbanist’ scale. This scale is based on a set of questions (ten in this study) about general attitudes towards the management of backcountry areas in the Swedish mountain region, and can be used to

**Table 9.3.** Need for limitations to the right of public access, commercial *versus* non-profit.

	The right of public access should not be available for use by commercially organized groups, e.g. tourism business (%)	The right of public access should not be available for use by non-profit organized groups, e.g. Boy Scouts and Girl Guides (%)
Total rejection	19.8	46.6
Partial rejection	14.0	20.0
Don't know	19.1	15.2
Partial agreement	24.7	12.2
Total agreement	22.4	6.0
Overall total	100.0	100.0

**Table 9.4.** Need for limitations to the right of public access, tourists and residents.

	The right of public access should be more restrictive for tourists compared with the situation for local residents (%)	The right of public access should only be available for use by people living in Sweden (%)
Total rejection	42.2	48.0
Partial rejection	12.5	13.3
Don't know	11.0	9.9
Partial agreement	24.1	16.5
Total agreement	10.2	12.3
Overall total	100.0	100.0

divide the respondents into three visitor categories (cf. Fredman and Emmelin, 2001). The scale indicates the preferences of the 'purists' in terms of 'pure' wilderness (preferences for few facilities, few encounters and low human impact) via the 'neutralists' to the 'urbanists', who are interested in more developed tourism facilities and many social interactions (in accordance with the logic of a 'Recreation Opportunity Spectrum'; see also, e.g. Manning, 1999).

As indicated in Table 9.5, the strongest support in terms of total agreement for defending the right of public access is indeed found among the 'purists' (88.9% total agreement); however, if total *and* partial agreement is considered, all three groups show high levels of support ('purists' 97.6%, 'neutralists' 98.2% and 'urbanists' 95.2% (cf. Table 9.1).

It is reasonable to believe that the attitude towards recreation access in the rural landscape is linked to the type of relation the individual has to the landscape, something that involves what could be labelled as an urban-rural identity in terms of living (cf. different mindscapes in the introduction to this chapter). Therefore, the relationship between the question of commercial use was combined with two further questions:

- 'Are you, now or previously, working with agriculture, forestry, fishing, reindeer keeping or in the mining industry?'
- 'Do you or your family keep large domestic animals like cows, horses, sheep or reindeer?'

**Table 9.5.** 'Purists', 'neutralists' and 'urbanists' and their defence of the right of public access.

It is important to defend the right of public access	'Purists' (%)	'Neutralists' (%)	'Urbanists' (%)
Total rejection	0.5	0.0	0.1
Partial rejection	1.8	0.2	1.3
Don't know	0.1	1.6	3.4
Partial agreement	8.7	10.6	11.6
Total agreement	88.9	87.6	83.6
Overall total	100.0	100.0	100.0

From Table 9.6 it can be seen that the small (but with regard to rural development and more radical ecotourism nevertheless crucial) group of people with a more production-orientated relationship to the landscape is far more interested in limiting the right of public access to non-commercial use.

The 'purist-urbanist' scale was earlier used as an indicator of different categories of outdoor recreation styles and preferences. As shown in Tables 9.7, 9.8 and 9.9, these categories were then compared to the attitudes to the following three crucial questions regarding the right of public access and ecotourism: (i) access available to commercially organized groups; (ii) access should be more restrictive for tourists compared with the situation for local

**Table 9.6.** Attitudes towards commercial use of the right of public access.

	Now, or previously, working in agriculture, forestry, fishing, reindeer keeping or the mining industry (%)		Keeping large domestic animals such as cows, horses, sheep or reindeer (%)		
	No	Yes	No	Only for use within household	Yes, for livelihood
The right of public access should not be available for use by commercially organized groups, e.g. tourism business					
Total or partial rejection	35.2	25.5	34.9	20.8	7.2
Don't know	19.2	14.9	19.3	9.5	3.6
Total or partial agreement	45.6	59.6	45.8	69.7	89.2
Overall total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

**Table 9.7.** 'Purists', 'neutralists' and 'urbanists' and their perspectives on commercial use of the right of public access.

The right of public access should not be available for use by commercially organized groups, e.g. tourism business	'Purists' (%)	'Neutralists' (%)	'Urbanists' (%)
Total or partial rejection	29.1	34.3	38.8
Don't know	18.7	14.2	22.0
Total or partial agreement	52.2	51.5	39.2
Overall total	100.0	100.0	100.0

**Table 9.8.** 'Purists', 'neutralists' and 'urbanists' and their perspectives on the right of public access and tourism restrictions.

The right of public access should be more restrictive for tourists compared with the situation for local residents	'Purists' (%)	'Neutralists' (%)	'Urbanists' (%)
Total or partial rejection	52.1	53.9	57.6
Don't know	11.3	10.3	11.0
Total or partial agreement	36.6	35.8	31.4
Overall total	100.0	100.0	100.0

**Table 9.9.** ‘Purists’, ‘neutralists’ and ‘urbanists’ and their perspectives on the use of the right of public access by non-Swedes.

The right of public access should only be available for use by people living in Sweden	‘Purists’ (%)	‘Neutralists’ (%)	‘Urbanists’ (%)
Total or partial rejection	59.8	59.4	63.7
Don’t know	6.8	12.1	9.6
Total or partial agreement	33.4	28.5	26.7
Overall total	100.0	100.0	100.0

residents; and (iii) access should only be available for use by people living in Sweden? These issues are of special importance with regard to the more radical aspects of ecotourism linking the concept to a territorial strategy – a ‘localized’ and ‘self-reliance’ perspective as was discussed in the introduction. With the help of these three tables we see that – if compared with ‘neutralists’ and ‘urbanists’ – the ‘purists’ are generally more in favour of a ‘pure’ and ‘territorial’ right of public access where the local residents and people living in Sweden do have more access than tourists and commercial actors.

## Ecotourism and Public Access: Prospects and Challenges

At the outset of this concluding discussion it is important to note – as a multi-purpose use approach to landscape – that a prerequisite for the public access tradition is that one can ‘read’ the landscape. It is the landscape that tells one what is – and what is not – allowed. For instance, the way the land is being used may indicate how sensitive it is for people walking across it, and the weather tells one how safe it is to make a campfire. It is also notable that the current right of public access in Sweden, even though mentioned in the Constitution, is *not defined in the law* other than through the ‘left-over’ perspective illustrated earlier (Fig. 9.2). Therefore, content and role of the right of public access in Sweden are clearly linked to habits, socialization, education, etc. The situation could, of course, become more complex in an increasingly multicultural society with growing mobility and tourism (cf. Williams and McIntyre, 2001). In other words, more diverse mindscapes will meet each other in the physical landscape, and sometimes they will have very different perspectives of what could be seen as reasonable for inclusion in the ‘free space’ of the right of public access.

As mentioned previously, the ‘free space’ of the right of public access is restricted not only by what is not allowed, i.e. restrictions of economic activities, privacy and preservation, but also in terms of the restriction of the ‘use and change of the landscape’ (Fig. 9.2). With a few exceptions, the right of public access does not give any right to demand how the landscape should be used or transformed by forestry, agriculture or infrastructure. The value or content of the ‘free space’ could, for example, be reduced by noise, crowding or landscape exploitation. Furthermore, the increasing ‘industrialization’ of agriculture and forestry makes it physically more complicated to traverse a

landscape on foot and often less interesting to do so. The spatial specialization of the landscape includes special areas reserved and arranged for recreational purposes, and here the right of public access could, in various ways, be overruled (e.g. in a national park). These developments will probably form an increasingly important framework for future perceptions of nature, landscape and environmental issues. From these general remarks, three themes emerge as being important for future interaction between the right of public access and nature-based tourism, especially ecotourism.

1. An important element of the right of public access is that it prevents tourism entrepreneurs from charging people for entering the general rural landscape (e.g. landowners who want to use the amenity values of their estate) if no special arrangements are involved that could be charged for, such as physical infrastructure or a service like guiding. This situation could lead to four different landscape management strategies:

- maintaining the current situation as long as possible and, for tourism entrepreneurs, concentrating on types of arrangements that could be charged for;
- eliminating the right of public access in general and moving to a situation more in line with (for example) North America, where landowners have a much stronger position;
- concentrating on designated areas (tourism entrepreneurs) where the right of public access could be overruled by authorities, e.g. in national parks or other reserves, and aiming to establish nature-based tourism that could include payment for entry to the landscape (e.g. by mandatory guiding); and
- changing, refining and developing the tradition of the right of public access towards a situation where the importance of tourism and recreation increases (e.g. as a development strategy in rural areas), as well as emphasizing the importance of outdoor recreation and landscape relations in terms of quality of life, democracy, environmental education and public health.

2. There are reasons to believe that the right of public access forms an important basis for peoples' interest in and experience of nature in Scandinavia. This is confirmed by the findings of the survey referred to (see also SCB, 2004). It is reasonable to believe (and interesting for further research to investigate) that this could be of considerable relevance for ecotourism, as a basis for interest and participation in nature-based tourism with a 'green' profile. It is also reasonable to believe that nature interest resulting from the right of public access is an important basis for knowledge generation and skills that, in turn, increase the public interest in further and more advanced nature-based activities. Such advanced nature-based activities, carried out in smaller groups, based on local knowledge and in more challenging environments and seasons, are typical ecotourism activities and could thus be charged for. However, we must face the fact that tourism is to a large extent *not* sustainable and, in the words of Holden (2000, p. 198)

to be 'totally green' means to 'not take holidays away from home at all so as not to harm the environment in any way, as a tourist'. Even though this is an extreme viewpoint in any tourism discourse, it is important to note that the right of public access is an important basis for the opportunity to make outdoor recreation available closer to home in ordinary landscapes.

3. A discussion of 'dark green' variants of ecotourism could in many ways bring us closer to some of the fundamentals of the right of public access. Besides aspects of multi-purpose use and adaptation to local nature and culture, issues of sustainable development could be raised. In the introduction it was mentioned that in democracies, public understanding, motivation and inspiration are crucial for long-term acceptance of effective environmental policies. The importance of traditions and local contexts with regard to civic community, locality and democracy illustrates the need to take both a spatial and a historical approach into consideration (Sandell *et al.*, 2005). For instance, territorial affinity could be a necessary mental prerequisite for environmental engagement. It seems reasonable to believe that the type and extent of public access to different types of landscapes influences the outcome. In other words: it is important to highlight the role of the right of public access (to what and for whom) for sustainable development in democratic societies (Sandell, 1999). The basic element of a considerate, multi-purpose landscape perspective in relation to the right of public access could also be seen as an important linkage to other related policy discussions, such as the idea of the 'commons' (cf. *The Ecologist*, 1992; Snyder, 1995).

As indicated above, there are four strategies for dealing with the right of public access in the future. Of these strategies, this author prefers the last alternative – to develop the tradition involving the importance of reading the landscape and the dynamic and cultural nature of the right of public access, as well as to provide linkages to environmental experiences and the struggle for sustainable development. This will demand changes and refinements of the right of public access to best fulfil its potential in the 21st century. The following proposals could be discussed (summarized from Sandell, 2001):

- To define the core of the right of public access in national legislation.
- To introduce insurances against damage for landowners with premiums paid by the tourism industry.
- To exclude the combination of organized and commercial use from the right of public access (the 'yes–yes' corner in Fig. 9.3), encouraging tourism entrepreneurs to have good, long-term local integration; and for landowners to give priority to amenity values in the landscape in relation to traditional production values (cf. Tables 9.3 and 9.6).
- To make it easier for tourism entrepreneurs to get in contact with and to make a deal with the landowners – collectively – when necessary.
- To make it easier to 'read' the landscape with the help of better maps, temporary local restrictions (e.g. during the breeding season of reindeer or certain birds) and GPS-based information systems.
- To emphasize the right of public access even more strongly (e.g. in

schools) as part of environmental education, as an important illustration of human ecology.

- To improve the role of outdoor recreation and nature-based tourism (including various aspects of the right of public access) in local, regional and national planning.
- To generate an international cross-cultural exchange of access perspectives with regard to tourism, democracy and the tensions between local and national and international interests and between utilization and conservation interests.

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# 10 Swedish Mountain Tourism Patterns and Modelling Destination Attributes\*

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## Introduction

Tourism has played a major social and economic role in the Swedish mountain region during the past 100 years. This development has been influenced by the interaction of enhanced access and the inherent attractions of the region's natural features. For most people, a vacation in the north of Sweden is associated with a stay in *fjällen*, widely understood as visiting an area where the mountains reach above the treeline. North of the 60° latitude line, Sweden consists primarily of a forested landscape of rolling hills, lakes and rivers; this region of bare mountains stretches over 1000 km in the north-west along the Norwegian border. Because of its northern location, the treeline is only 600–900 m above sea level and most parts of the mountain region are easily accessible to visitors.

The Swedish mountains provide excellent opportunities for tourism and recreation during both the winter and the summer seasons. In comparison with most other tourist areas in the subarctic and Arctic regions, the Swedish mountain region features a wider range of services and greater accessibility (Lundgren, 1995). While the region traditionally has been associated with farming, reindeer herding, forestry and mining, a decline in these industries has brought expectations regarding tourism to the forefront. The mountain municipalities comprise about one-third of Sweden's land area, but include fewer than 2 per cent of the total population. The 150,000 permanent residents are spread across 145,000 km<sup>2</sup>, with a population density of about one person/km<sup>2</sup> (Statistics Sweden, 2004). Most of the 15 municipalities in

\*This chapter is a synthesis of some of the tourism research from Mountain Mistra (Fjällmistra), a multidisciplinary research programme on the sustainable use of the Swedish mountain region supported by the Swedish Foundation for Strategic Environmental Research (<http://www.fjallmistra.slu.se>).

the mountain region are also characterized by decreasing population densities.

The Swedish mountains are not homogeneous throughout the region (see Fig. 10.1). In the south, the mountains of Dalarna primarily feature low alpine areas. Despite a moderate topography, some of the major downhill ski areas are located here, within a day's drive from the more heavily populated areas in the south. Further north, Härjedalen and the southern parts of Jämtland have an extensive network of cabins and mountain lodges, while northern Jämtland and Västerbotten have fewer tourism facilities. In the most northerly part of the mountain region, Norrbotten, the highest peaks reach above 2000 m. This part features remote and high alpine characteristics, including many glaciers. This is also where the major national parks are found, including the world heritage area of Lapponia.

It is not just what tourists do, but where they do it and how they prefer to do it, that are important. In a review of the tourism literature, Heberlein (1999) noted that national surveys of recreation participation at specific locations are rare. National surveys about participation in specific activities are more common, but they often ignore where these activities take place, which is essential for understanding regional impacts and opportunities within tourism. Recreation participation also has an important longitudinal dimension since tourism is not a static phenomenon. It will change, just as society changes under the influence of a large number of social, economic and environmental factors. Long-term recreation data are needed for assessing visitor impacts, facility planning and estimating the economic contribution that tourism would provide (Loomis, 2000).

However, once we have identified *how*, *where* and *when*, a subsequent issue is what factors affect destination choices among tourists? Knowledge of the determinants of consumer choices helps destination development agencies recognize and capitalize on their position within the market (Lindberg and Fredman, 2005). This knowledge also helps tourism producers and planners better understand ongoing changes in recreation participation, and provides valuable information needed for sustainable development of resources in mountain regions (Godde *et al.*, 2000; Thomson *et al.*, 2005).

This chapter summarizes findings from three associated studies of visitors to the Swedish mountain region. The first two studies provide a holistic view, using national samples to examine current tourism patterns and recent trends in the Swedish mountain region. The third study focuses on a specific group (cross-country skiers) in a specific area (the southern Jämtland mountain region), with the purpose of modelling destination attributes. Cross-country skiing assessments of any type are almost entirely lacking (one exception is to be found in Nogawa *et al.*, 1996), and in this chapter we assess the importance of selected attributes in ski trip decisions, and how the market share varies as destination attributes change.



Fig. 10.1. Swedish mountain region.

## Mountain Tourism Patterns and Trends

In order to understand better the patterns and recent trends within domestic tourism in the Swedish mountain region, a national survey of tourism participation was carried out by the European Tourism Research Institute (ETOUR). In the early autumn of 1999 a national telephone survey was undertaken using a random sample of 3506 Swedish households living outside the mountain area. Besides a number of questions related to their mountain visits, respondents were asked to give their name and address for a follow-up mail questionnaire. This questionnaire included more in-depth questions regarding participation in different outdoor activities, constraints and motivations (e.g. Fredman and Heberlein, 2005) and visitor expenditure, as well as a set of questions that replicated a national survey carried out by the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency in 1985 (Naturvårdsverket, 1985). Both surveys were conducted as mail surveys and sent to individuals aged between 15–70 (see Heberlein *et al.*, 2002 and Fredman and Heberlein, 2003 for details of the methodology).

## Current tourism patterns

In the 12-month period from September 1998, 23.6 per cent of the survey sample made at least one trip to the mountain region. Based on a national population of 6,118,000 we estimate that over 1.4 million adult Swedes visited the mountain region each year. Within a 5-year period, 43.6 per cent of the sample (equivalent to 2.66 million Swedes) reported taking a trip to the mountains. A majority of all mountain visits (85%) were for recreation or vacation: only 7 per cent made a trip to visit family and friends, and 8 per cent went to the mountains on a business trip. Looking at visits over time we find a bimodal distribution, with two-thirds of all mountain visits occurring during the winter (December–April), and one-third during the summer (June–September).

In May, October and November, mountain visits reached barely 1 per cent per month. In the summer, the most popular activity among mountain visitors was day-hiking (50%). Slightly over one-third engaged in nature studies and nature photography, about 30 per cent of the summer visitors went fishing, and 18 per cent did overnight hikes. In the winter, more than 80 per cent of the visitors went downhill skiing, fewer than 30 per cent did day-cross-country skiing and one-quarter snowmobiled.

Tourism is not homogeneous throughout the mountain region, as demonstrated in Table 10.1. While downhill skiing and cross-country day trips are more common in the south (Dalarna and Jämtland/Härjedalen), we find day-hiking, snowmobiling, angling and hunting to be more common further north (Västerbotten). In the far north, visitors to Norrbotten are more likely to participate in overnight hiking, angling, overnight cross-country skiing and nature studies. The proportion of visitors who undertake nature studies increases the further north one goes in the mountain region. The proportion of winter tourists is largest in the south (78% in Dalarna) and decreases further north (26% in Norrbotten). Consequently, Norrbotten is primarily a summer destination, while the southern mountains have a winter-driven tourism product.

**Table 10.1.** Participation in different activities by destination (multiple activities included).

	Visitors to ...			
	Norrbotten (%)	Västerbotten (%)	Jämtland (%)	Dalarna (%)
Downhill skiing	17.0	29.0	53.6	69.2
Cross-country day-skiing	9.2	14.5	20.5	23.4
Cross-country overnight-skiing	2.0	0.7	1.7	0.4
Day-hiking	34.0	28.3	21.7	15.5
Overnight-hiking	20.9	5.5	7.2	2.4
Snowmobiling	9.8	22.8	18.2	14.6
Angling	26.1	33.1	14.8	8.0
Hunting	0.7	3.4	1.4	0.5
Nature studies	26.8	21.4	18.3	12.0

## Recent trends

Results from the national surveys also disclose some significant changes in tourism patterns since the early 1980s (Table 10.2). By the late 1990s, the mountains of Dalarna had become the most popular holiday location in the mountain region. Thirty-four per cent of the Swedish adult population (2,117,000) visited this part of the Swedish mountain region during the final 5 years of the end of the last century. Thirty-two per cent visited the mountains of Jämtland (1,980,000), while only 7 per cent of the population visited Västerbotten and 10 per cent made a visit to Norrbotten (461,000 and 641,000 individuals, respectively).

The greatest changes came in Dalarna. The estimated 11.8 per cent unit increase corresponds to 807,000 individuals. This is more than the total of late-1990s visits to Västerbotten and Norrbotten. In the northern parts, there was a significant drop in the proportion of the Swedish population that visited Västerbotten (2.3%), while no such changes are observed for Jämtland and Norrbotten.

Not only are the destinations of mountain visits changing, but activities are changing as well. In the early 1980s, 22 per cent of the Swedish population made at least one trip to the mountains to downhill ski, while in the late 1990s this had increased to 36 per cent, an increase of 970,000 individuals. There was no change in hiking – about 21 per cent of the population visited the mountains and went day hiking during each of the 5-year periods (almost 1.3 million individuals). About 6 per cent of the Swedish population went overnight hiking on trails during the two periods and about 4 per cent went to the mountains for off-trail overnight hiking. Snowmobiling showed large increases, from 9 per cent in the early 1980s to 16 per cent by the end of the 1990s.

Finally, cross-country skiing (day trips) stayed stable at about 22 per cent (approximately 1.4 million individuals), and about 2 per cent made at least one trip in the 5-year period for overnight cross-country skiing. Neither type

**Table 10.2.** Changes in mountain tourism participation between 1980–1984 and 1995–2000 (data represent percentages of the adult Swedish population).

	1980–1984	1995–2000	Unit change
Dalarna	22.2	34.0	+11.8 <sup>a</sup>
Jämtland	29.7	31.8	+2.1
Västerbotten	9.7	7.4	-2.3 <sup>b</sup>
Norrbotten	11.2	10.3	-0.9
Downhill skiing	22.0	36.4	+14.4 <sup>a</sup>
Cross-country day-skiing	22.9	22.4	-0.5
Day-hiking	21.6	20.8	-0.8
Snowmobiling	9.4	16.1	+6.7 <sup>a</sup>
Overnight trail hiking	5.7	6.8	+1.1
Cross-country overnight-skiing	2.2	1.8	-0.4

Independent samples t-test: <sup>a</sup> Change significant,  $P < 0.001$ ; <sup>b</sup> Change significant,  $P < 0.05$ .

of cross-country skiing showed significant change between the periods. However, further analyses of cross-country skiing frequencies show an increase among those who, on average, ski less than once a year and a decrease among those who ski more often (Fredman and Heberlein, 2003).

## Modelling Destination Attributes among Cross-country Skiers

The above results show that a major winter activity in the Swedish mountains is cross-country skiing. The long season, the relatively flat terrain and the right of common access (i.e. the right of access to private land) make the countryside easily accessible and suitable for this activity. However, skiers in the backcountry often come and go in small unorganized groups, making their preferences less 'visible' compared to those of other, more organized groups (e.g. snowmobilers, downhill skiers). In order to learn more about this group, a choice experiment (CE) was used to evaluate how destination attributes, such as distance and the presence of snowmobiles, affect cross-country skiing decisions regarding where to engage in their activity. The purpose is to assess relative effects, including: (i) does change in a given attribute increase or decrease market share?; (ii) what changes in a given attribute have the greatest effect?; and (iii) which attributes have the greatest effect?

Cross-country skiers were surveyed in the southern Jämtland mountain (*Södra Jämtlandsfjällen*) region (Fig. 10.1). This region, of about 2300 km<sup>2</sup>, runs approximately 40 km from north to south, and consists mostly of bare mountains and forested mountain valleys. The landscape is diverse, with about 500 km of marked skiing and backpacking trails. The region includes a network of lodges and huts managed by the Swedish Touring Club (STF). The first step involved contacting visitors on-site at trailheads and rest-huts. Every visitor encountered by the interviewers was asked to complete a one-page survey, which included recording of names and addresses in order to receive the longer follow-up mail survey. A total of 565 skiers were contacted on-site and 374 mail surveys were completed, which represented 75 per cent of the mail surveys delivered and 66 per cent of on-site contacts (see Lindberg and Fredman, 2005 for further details).

### The choice experiment approach

Choice experiments are a type of conjoint analysis and one of several stated preference approaches (Louviere *et al.*, 2000). In conjoint models, respondents are asked to rate, rank or choose amongst multiple alternatives, with the latter being choice experiments. Each alternative is characterized by multiple attributes with varying levels (e.g. cost and trail quality), and each set of alternatives presented to respondents is called the choice set. The basic CE model structure uses random utility theory (Ben-Akiva and Lerman, 1985; Louviere *et al.*, 2000) to relate the probability that a certain alternative is chosen to: (i) the characteristics of the alternative (e.g. price and trail

quality); (ii) competing options; and (iii) characteristics of the individual (e.g. income). A linear-in-parameters form is assumed here, with respondent preferences or utilities for an alternative represented as a weighted sum of their preferences associated with each characteristic of the alternative.

The utility of alternative  $i$  out of a choice set with  $I$  alternatives is given by (subscripts for specific individuals are omitted)  $U_i = V_i + \varepsilon_i$ , where  $U_i$  is the utility of alternative  $i$ ,  $V_i$  is the systematic component of the utility function, and  $\varepsilon_i$  is a random error component.  $V$  is then characterized as  $V_i = \beta_k X_i$ , where  $\beta$  is a vector of coefficients and  $X_i$  is a vector of attributes associated with alternative  $i$ . The probability of choosing  $i$  is:

$$P\{i|I\} = P\{V_i + \varepsilon_i \geq V_j + \varepsilon_j; \forall j \in I\} \quad (1)$$

Assuming that the error terms are independently and identically distributed, extreme value with scale parameter  $\mu$ , the probability of choosing alternative  $i$  is the conditional logit model:

$$P\{i|I\} = \frac{\exp(\mu V_i)}{\sum_{j \in I} \exp(\mu V_j)} \quad (2)$$

With single data sets, as in this analysis, the scale parameter  $\mu$  is typically assumed to equal one. A fractional factorial design was used to create 16 CE scenarios included in the mailed surveys (each survey containing four scenarios, so four survey versions were created and administered on an alternating basis). In each scenario, two trails were described in terms of: (i) the distance from residence; (ii) the cost of using the trail (in the form of a daily fee); (iii) the presence or absence of shelters; (iv) the quality of the scenery; and (v) the degree of interaction with snowmobiles (Table 10.3). Each trail takes on different values for each characteristic. For each scenario, respondents were asked to report which of the trails they would prefer, or if they would rather not go skiing at all. Sample skier scenario wording, including the introduction to the CE task, is provided in Lindberg and Fredman (2005).

## Trail choice and market shares

Multinomial logistic regression was used to estimate a model of trail choice, based on survey responses. The model was then used to estimate how visitation and 'market share' are affected by the characteristics of the trails (Table 10.3). The 'base' market shares were calculated using the following parameters: (i) *distance*, 0 km; (ii) *cost*, 0 kr (kronor); (iii) *shelters*, none; (iv) *scenery*, average; and (v) *snowmobiles*, heard but not seen or smelled, for both Trail 1 and Trail 2. In the regression, *distance* is entered in linear form, while all the other attributes are treated as effect-coded dummy variables.

As indicated in Table 10.3, if both trails had these base characteristics, they would have had an equal market share of 46 per cent each, and 7 per cent of respondents would have chosen not to go skiing. The characteristics of Trail 1 were then changed, one at a time, with the characteristics of

**Table 10.3.** Estimated market share based on choice experiment responses; probabilities of choosing alternative trails; and Trail 1 market share relative to the base (shares do not always total 1 due to rounding errors).

Level of attributes	Trail 1	Trail 2	Don't ski	Relative market share (Trail 1 base, 100)
Base	0.46	0.46	0.07	100
Distance (km, base 0)				
3	0.46	0.47	0.07	98
10	0.43	0.49	0.08	94
25	0.39	0.53	0.08	84
Cost (k., base 0)				
20	0.21	0.69	0.11	45
50	0.14	0.74	0.12	31
75	0.07	0.80	0.13	15
Shelters (base, 0)				
Several	0.63	0.32	0.05	136
Scenery (base, average)				
Nicer than average	0.56	0.38	0.06	121
Snowmobiles (base, heard but not seen or smelled)				
Shared track	0.17	0.72	0.11	36
Not seen, heard or smelled, but allowed in area	0.51	0.42	0.07	111
Not allowed in area	0.58	0.36	0.06	126

Alternative 2 remaining at the base level. For example, if the distance between residence and Trail 1 had been 25 km rather than 0 km, market share for Trail 1 would have decreased from 46 per cent to 39 per cent. This new share of 39 per cent would be 84 per cent of the base market share of 46 per cent, as indicated in the 'Relative market share' column for 25 km. Most of the 'lost' visitors would now go to Trail 2, which remains at the base level of 0 km and thus becomes relatively more attractive (its market share would increase from 46 to 53 per cent). Some of the 'lost' visitors would choose not to ski (increases from 7 to 8 per cent).

Table 10.3 also illustrates that skiers are responsive to cost increases. The negative relationship between cost and quantity demanded is a basic microeconomic principle, so it is not surprising that Trail 1 loses market share as its price increases. However, most of the impact arises in the shift from 0 to 20 k., with relatively little impact arising from further price increases (Fig. 10.2). Responses clearly indicate opposition to any fee, even a relatively small one. A comparison of the distance and cost attributes suggests that visitors respond differently to changes in different attributes. In this case, changes in cost generate greater effects on market share than do changes in distance – a fee of 75 kr. would reduce the Trail 1 market share to 15 per cent of its base level, whereas a distance of 25 km would 'only' drive market share to 84 per cent of its base.

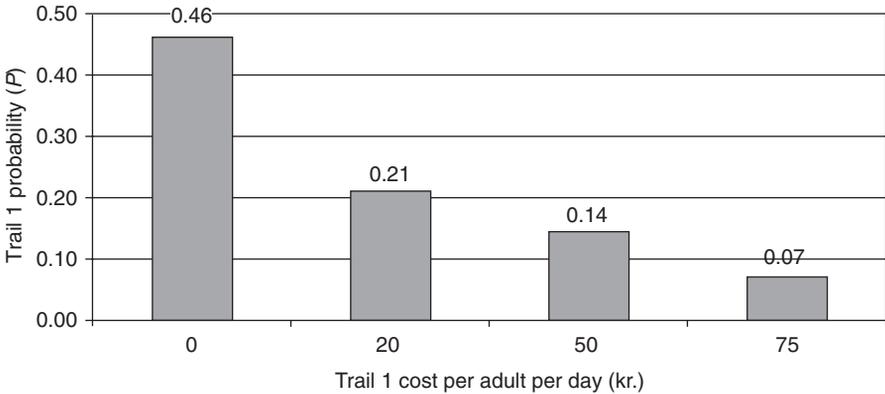


Fig. 10.2. Effect of cost.

Likewise, Table 10.3 shows that shelter enhancement has a greater impact than does scenery enhancement. Finally, the presence or absence of snowmobiles clearly has a substantial effect on the desirability of a destination among cross-country skiers (Fig. 10.3). For this attribute, the move from ‘shared track’ to ‘hearing, but not seeing or smelling snowmobiles’ has the greatest effect on market share, while further reductions in snowmobile presence increase market share, but not as substantially.

### Concluding Remarks

This chapter has summarized three associated studies of visitors to the Swedish mountain region, with special focus on cross-country skiers – one of the more traditional mountain recreation activities. These results can help tourism providers capitalize on their position within the market and help planners better understand ongoing changes in recreation participation.

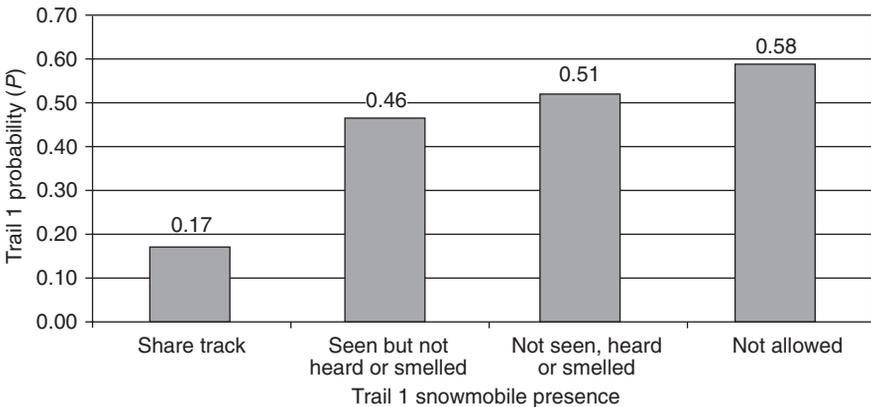


Fig. 10.3. Effect of snowmobile presence.

The comparison of two national surveys shows that mountain visitors in Sweden increasingly participate in downhill skiing and snowmobiling, and the growing use of the mountains is concentrated in the southernmost provinces. There seems to be a shift from the self-reliant individual Swede who goes to the mountains to hike and cross-country ski to one who goes to ride machines up and over the mountains. The latter group are tied to products that typically are sold or leased, and our results suggest that Swedes may now, more than 20 years ago, be purchasing their nature experiences. This provides economic opportunities for tourism providers. However, the impact of this trend on the sustainable development of resources in the Swedish mountain region is unclear, as is the role of ecotourism.

Are there opportunities for tour operators to commercialize traditional (typically non-motorized) nature experiences, and would this increase Swedish participation in activities such as hiking and cross-country skiing, that have seen declines? Likewise, can ecotourism offerings increase participation in these activities amongst international visitors to Sweden? Insofar as ecotourism experiences typically involve at least the perception of untouched nature, is there a conflict between ecotourism and expanded downhill skiing and snowmobiling participation? Responses to the CE scenarios indicate that increasing snowmobile presence can reduce a destination's market share for cross-country skiers significantly. In order to avoid negative coping behaviours or diminished satisfaction, recreation conflicts need to be solved through sound management and land use planning decisions. In this respect, research has an important role to play. For example, will the gains to cross-country skiers, and the tourism industry that depends on them, justify spatial separation of skiers and snowmobilers?

The pattern of price-responsiveness among cross-country skiers may also reflect a particularly strong attachment by this group to the principles of the right of common access, as well as the related tradition of Swedes not paying for this kind of skiing. As noted elsewhere in this volume, the right of common access has a strong position not only among cross-country skiers but among Swedes in general. But it has also been questioned whether this right is compatible with sustainable tourism development (e.g. Vail and Heldt, 2000). What we find in this chapter reflects a common dilemma for segments of the nature-based tourism industry. The attractions as such (that generate experiences and trigger travel decisions) cannot be sold, while economic impacts (if any) are primarily realized through the traditional tourism services (i.e. lodging, food and transportation).

This means, in contrast to the situation in most other industries, that many nature-based tourism operators do not have full control over their production process.

Under the right of common access, visitors cannot be excluded from access which implies that recreation facilities can be seen as public goods (see Heldt, 2005, for a discussion of the public good problem in a nature tourism context). The Swedish ecotourism accreditation system, 'Nature's Best' (see Gössling and Hultman, Chapter 1, this volume; Fredman *et al.*, Chapter 3, this volume), is perhaps one approach for capitalizing on this

experience component of the nature-based tourism system under an open-access regime. And, based on the findings in this study, those operators trying to develop new or improved products for the cross-country ski market should focus on the presence of shelters, avoidance of snowmobiles and the quality of scenery.

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# 11

## Environmental Concerns of Swedish Ecotourists: an Environmental–Psychological Perspective

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### Introduction

The rapid growth of the certification of ecotourism operators and products in Scandinavian countries, as well as in other countries, calls for an investigation of their consumers. Ecotourists often enter ecologically sensitive areas. The question raised in this chapter is whether these people are merely interested in carrying out certain activities (e.g. kayak tours, safaris) in a natural setting, or if they are also ecologically oriented in their attitudes and behaviour, and thus actively favour the protection of nature (Wight, 1993; Eagles and Higgins, 1998; Fennell, 1999; Page and Dowling, 2002).

Research on ecotourists is rare and usually refers to demographics and motives (Crossley and Lee, 1994; Wight 1996a, b, 2001; Blamey and Hatch, 1998; Meric and Hunt, 1998; Holden and Sparrowhawk, 2002; Juric *et al.*, 2002;). The main motives of taking part in ecotourism activities seem to be to experience natural environments and to learn about nature and wildlife (e.g. Blamey and Hatch, 1998; Holden and Sparrowhawk, 2002). Further motives identified are physical activity, improved mental well-being, experiences of new and different lifestyles and the achievement of prestige (e.g. Eagles, 1992; Wöhler, 2001). Other studies point to the lack of knowledge about the concept of ecotourism among tourists in general and even among ecotourists (Björk, 1997; Chirgwin and Hughes, 1997; Lew, 1998; Wurzinger, 2003a, b). It is possible that tourists sometimes engage in ecotourism activities without being aware of the fact that these are classified by others as ecotourists. Only a few studies deal with ecotourists and environmental concern (e.g. Luzar *et al.*, 1998; Choptain, 2000; Weaver and Lawton, 2002).

There is an absence of internationally uniform definitions for the terms ‘environmental concern’ and ‘ecotourism’. The World Tourism Organization (WTO) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

suggested a definition on the occasion of the International Year of Ecotourism in 2002. This definition embraces most of the main principles of ecotourism stated by Fennell (1999). According to this definition, ecotourists are understood as consumers of a type of tourism that takes place in natural areas and that is sustainable in its operations. This form of tourism should consider ethical aspects as well as increase awareness among individuals towards conservation of natural and cultural assets. Additionally, it should be small scale, which means that activities should be carried out in small groups respecting the carrying capacity of local areas. Ecotourism should support local people by providing economic benefits and employment opportunities. Moreover, the main motivation of the participants should be aimed at admiring and learning about nature and local culture.

## The Concept of Environmental Concern

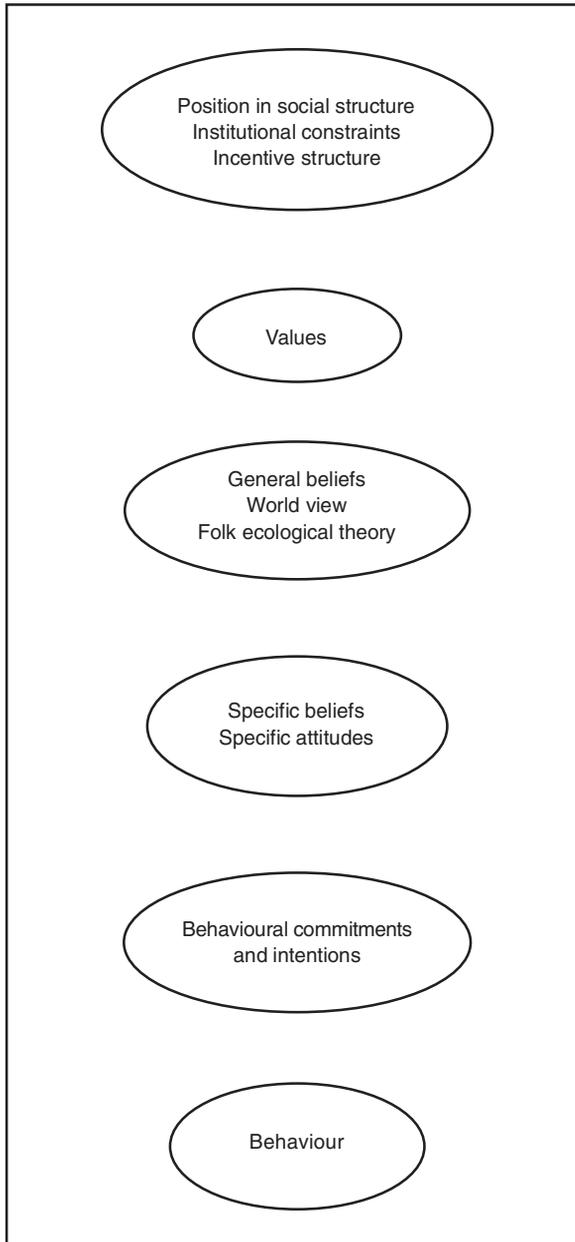
The term 'environmental concern' has been applied interchangeably with similar terms such as 'environmental attitudes' and 'environmental values'. 'Environmental concern refers to the degree to which people are aware of environmental problems and support efforts to solve them and/or indicate a willingness to contribute personally to their solution' (Dunlap and Jones, 2003, p. 365). Fransson and Gärling (1999) provide a review on this matter. Several social-psychological models have been suggested that link variables associated with environmental concern to actual ecological behaviour. The Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1988, 1991), for example, has been applied in order to offer an explanation of environmentally friendly behaviour such as the willingness to pay for abatement of forest regeneration (Pouta and Rekola, 2001). This model proposes that the actual behaviour is preceded by the intention to behave in a certain manner.

There are three additional factors that affect the behavioural intention: (i) the attitude towards the behaviour; (ii) a subjective norm; and (iii) perceived control over the behaviour. Beliefs about the positive or negative consequences of a specific behaviour have an effect on the attitudes towards the behaviour. The subjective norm includes normative beliefs about a behaviour; the perceived social pressure to perform or not perform the behaviour and whether others will favour or disfavour the behaviour. The perceived control over a behaviour is influenced by the beliefs about the control over a behaviour and consists of the perceived ease or difficulty of performing the behaviour. The perceived control affects behaviour directly as well as indirectly, mediated by the intention to behave in a certain way.

Another model applied in the context of pro-environmental behaviour is Schwartz's (1977) Norm Activation Model. According to this model, people will take conservation actions when they hold personal norms that are favourable to these actions. Personal norms are affected by social norms. Two factors mediate the personal norm/behaviour relationship: (i) the awareness of the consequences of the behaviour; and (ii) feelings of responsibility for carrying out the behaviour. Thus, variables antecedent to

ecological behaviour might be attitudes, subjective norms, awareness of consequences, perceived control and feelings of responsibility.

A relatively new model, the Schematic Causal Model of Environmental Concern (Stern *et al.*, 1995) puts some of these variables into a broader frame (Fig. 11.1). Stern *et al.* (1995) propose in their model that social



**Fig. 11.1.** Schematic causal model of environmental concerns (from Stern *et al.*, 1995).

structure has a major influence on the psychological variables of an individual embedded in this structure. Social structure shapes early experiences and, in turn, the values and general beliefs or the world view of an individual. It further directly influences behaviour and the perceived response to behaviour by certain opportunities and constraints. The major flow of causation in the model is believed to be top-down. Generally, the strongest effects are expected between adjacent variables, although non-adjacent variables may also affect each other. Values and world views act as filters for new information and ideas. General beliefs about the Earth and the relationship of human beings to the environment are causally antecedent to more specific beliefs and more specific attitudes (e.g. attitudes towards sustainable tourism). As a next step, intentions to behave in a certain manner are built and might lead to the actual behaviour.

## Environmental Concerns of Ecotourists

Despite definitional problems, the studies available about ecotourists point to the fact that ecotourists seem to be an environmentally concerned group of tourists (e.g. Luzar *et al.*, 1998). Ecotourists have been found to adhere more to an ecocentric perspective than to an anthropocentric one (Wearing and Neil, 1999; Weaver and Lawton, 2002). Instead of having unbounded faith in the ability of human beings to solve all problems by means of industrial and technical progress, ecotourists rather believe in limits to growth and have an ecological world view where they intrinsically value nature above human beings. These findings correspond to results where individuals who appreciate outdoor activities such as hiking and camping are more likely to have a conservationist attitude than those who prefer consumptive activities (Jackson, 1986; Ziffer, 1989; Hvenegaard, 1994; Silverberg *et al.*, 1996). Ecotourism activities have been suggested by several authors as being of non-consumptive and low-impact nature (Ziffer, 1989; Goodwin, 1996; Wallace and Pierce, 1996; Fennell, 1999; World Tourism Organization and United Nations Environment Programme, 2002).

Uysal and Jurowski (1994) studied different groups of national park visitors. Visitors whose main destination was the national park were found to be more concerned about the fragility of nature's balance than visitors who also visited other destinations and were 'day-trippers' or 'pass-through visitors', e.g. cruise ship passengers. The latter group seem to belong to a softer spectrum of ecotourists. Weaver and Lawton (2002), investigating overnight guests of two eco-lodges in a national park, distinguished 'softer' ecotourists, 'harder' ecotourists and 'structured' ecotourists. This distinction is an important contribution to present research on ecotourists. Harder ecotourists are characterized by being physically active, making longer trips, travelling in smaller groups, visiting less accessible destinations, liking offshore reefs or undeveloped coastal areas and expecting fewer services. Softer ecotourists share more characteristics with mass tourists in terms of volume, purpose of travel, reliance on an infrastructure of services and

expected guidance. Thus, they are likely to be more passive, travel in larger groups and might even be 3S (sea, sand and sun) tourists, spending one or two days as ecotourists within their conventional trip (Weaver, 1994, 2001). Harder ecotourists also express more ecocentric attitudes than softer ecotourists.

Weaver and Lawton (2002) identified a third group, 'structured' ecotourists, who seem to be placed between the hard and the soft extremes. In some regards they are comparable to harder ecotourists, in that they wish to support the economy of visited destinations, to donate money to the local communities and to the local natural environment as well as to learn about the natural environment. They also share some characteristics of softer ecotourists. For example, they favour comfort and are multi-purpose travellers just allocating a short part of their trip to an ecotourism experience. Structured ecotourists further prefer escorted tours, adequate infrastructure and interpretation.

Finally, a study carried out by Choptain (2000) focused on users of three different ecotourism sites. Ecotourists in two more natural, undeveloped sites were found to be ecocentric in their attitudes, while ecotourists who visited an eco-archaeological theme park, shared more anthropocentric attitudes and put more emphasis on culture as well as on historic travel motives.

## The Swedish Study

A study carried out in Sweden (Wurzinger, 2003a, b; Wurzinger and Johansson, 2005) analysed environmental concerns of Swedish ecotourists based upon the definition suggested by WTO and UNEP (2002). The study population were consumers of a holiday package certified by the quality label for Swedish ecotourism, 'Nature's Best'. The companies involved in the ecotourism product were also interviewed (see also Wurzinger, 2003a). The group consisted of 43 Swedish ecotourists participating in the following activities: (i) raft tours (on wooden rafts); (ii) sea kayaking; (iii) dog sledging tours; and (iv) bird watching. Each activity lasted 2–4 days, 58% of the interviewees were female and their age ranged from 18 to 64, with a mean of 40. This group was compared to a second group of tourists that shared similar demographics. The second group included 78 tourists visiting a spa location or visiting one of the two largest cities in Sweden, again for 2–4 days. All tourists from both groups were Swedish and all destinations were located within Sweden.

According to the Schematic Causal Model of Environmental Concern (Stern *et al.*, 1995), the two groups were analysed with regard to three variables: (i) general environmental beliefs; (ii) specific attitudes towards sustainable tourism; and (iii) pro-environmental behaviour. Similar to the findings in other countries, Swedish ecotourists were found to be a highly environmentally concerned group of tourists, as they shared more general environmental beliefs than city and spa tourists. General environmental beliefs were measured by the widely applied Revised New Environmental

Paradigm Scale (Dunlap *et al.*, 2000). The scale reflects a pro-ecological orientation in people's beliefs. Compared to city and spa tourists, ecotourists seem to be generally more concerned about human–environment relations. The Swedish ecotourists believed in the reality of limits to growth, the limits of technical progress and the possibility of an ecological crisis. They tend to believe that human beings do not have the right to rule over nature. Further, they were found to be especially worried about the fragility of the balance of nature.

With respect to their specific attitudes, Swedish ecotourists were found to share the attitude that it is good to consume local products or local services at the tourist destination in order to support local people. They were more positive towards this issue than city and spa tourists. Swedish ecotourists also worried about negative impacts to local people caused by tourists. Furthermore, they articulated the importance of tourism in not affecting indigenous people (e.g. Aborigines in Australia, the Sami in Scandinavia). The city and spa tourism groups were somewhat less concerned about the harmful effects of tourism on local and indigenous people, but the statistical difference between the two groups was only marginally significant. No differences between the groups were found for several additional specific attitudes referring to negative effects of tourism on nature.

The last level in the model concerned environmentally friendly behaviour. As measured by the General Ecological Behaviour Scale (Kaiser, 1998), Swedish ecotourists were found to show more pro-environmental behaviour in everyday life than city and spa tourists. Pro-environmental behaviour includes ecological awareness in consumer decisions, refuse removal – including refuse reduction, and ecological automobile use (reduced frequency and speed of driving a car). Further behaviours included were water and power conservation, as well as volunteering in nature protection activities. The results obtained in Sweden conform to prior findings. Ecotourists were found to donate money to conservation causes, to purchase environmentally friendly products and to favour preservation in relation to controversial environmental issues (Blamey and Braithwaite, 1997; Hvenegaard and Dearden, 1998).

A further issue so far neglected is ecotourists' mode of transportation (see Folke *et al.*, Chapter 14, this volume). The destinations of ecotourists are often remote and difficult to access by public means of transportation. The study found that a larger number of ecotourists than city and spa tourists used the car to travel to their destination. Using the car to travel contradicts the idea of ecotourism as a sustainable form of tourism. However, more city and spa tourists than ecotourists travelled by plane to the destination. The public transportation system is very well developed in Sweden and allows easy access to cities (Fall, 2003). Natural areas, however, are less accessible as the country is large in relation to its population density. Overall, ecotourists did not differ in their general travel patterns from city and spa tourists. In particular, they used aircraft for transportation as often as city and spa tourists when considering travel patterns over the year.

## Conclusions

Swedish citizens are generally environmentally aware (Gooch, 1995). Nevertheless, when comparing different groups of Swedish tourists, ecotourists were found to be more concerned about the environment than city and spa tourists. Swedish ecotourists seem especially concerned about the fragility of the balance of nature and the support given to local people by tourism. In terms of Weaver and Lawton's (2002) distinction of hard and soft ecotourists, it might be speculated that Swedish ecotourists belong to the harder end of the spectrum. In the study, the package tours were operated in accordance to the definition of hard ecotourism: small groups, physical activity, less comfort, etc. The ecotourists were also found to behave in a more environmentally friendly way in everyday life. Managers of natural areas, planners of ecotourism certification systems and others might use these findings for better planning of protected areas, etc.

Unfortunately, however, positive environmental attitudes do not necessarily lead to ecological behaviour, as exemplified by travel patterns of otherwise ecologically oriented Swedish ecotourists, who were found to use environmentally harmful means of transport such as the aeroplane as often as city and spa tourists, if measured over the year. Likewise, cars were also a popular means of transportation to ecotourism destinations. Discrepancy between attitude and behaviour is thus evident, which might be explained by reasons such as constraints (e.g. time and inconvenience) as well as the difficulty in changing already established habits of individuals (e.g. Spada, 1990; Bamberg, 1996; Nordlund, 2002). The findings point out that the mode of transportation seems to be an urgent issue within ecotourism research. Concepts need to be developed in the tourism industry to resolve this problem and make ecotourism activities as low-impact as possible. Even if a good infrastructure of public transportation is offered, there might be a lack of motivation to use it. Still, at least some of the ecotourists would use public transportation to a greater degree if this became a more attractive alternative. A project realized in Austria could serve as an example, where minibuses were linked to the public transportation system to make it easier for hikers to travel around locally (Glasl *et al.*, 1996).

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# 12 Rural Development Through Ecotourism

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## What is Sustainable Tourism?

### Non-profit conservation

Public protection and exposure of nature and cultural heritage is to a large extent regulated by law in the Scandinavian countries. The establishment of nature and culture reserves, national parks and world heritage regions is an example of conservation made by public environmental authorities. At the start of the process resulting in these protected areas, non-profit organizations may have been instrumental in preventing the destruction of valuable environments by formulating and visualizing the need for decisive action. A large amount of work in making inventories and influencing public opinion typically precedes measures for conservation. Without this effort, much of the nature and cultural heritage presently protected would certainly not have been preserved for future generations.

Once a rural area has been publicly conserved, a second phase of activity takes place. Authorities strive to make the protected areas accessible for the public by arranging facilities such as parking areas, exhibition houses, trekking routes, resting places, information boards, etc. These actions serve as a way of canalizing the mobility of visitors toward less sensitive paths, thereby making natural and cultural treasures publicly accessible. It is a common belief that accessibility by itself allows people to appreciate nature and culture and to become more aware of future protection needs. It can be questioned, however, whether extensive voluntary efforts, and public protection and exposure of nature and culture, promote long-term ecological and economical sustainability in rural areas. Neither volunteers, persons in authority nor visitors seem to add significant value to the local rural economy. Official efforts are seldom made to ensure that an increased number of visitors also add revenue to the local economy. Except for some

subsidies to landowners in the protected area, tax revenues are not spent to help landowners and local inhabitants develop natural and cultural resources in a way profitable to the rural area.

Consider the following example: a landowner has, like many generations before, taken care of the natural and cultural heritage in a rural area by using traditional cultivation methods. Thousands and thousands of hours have (literally) been ploughed back into the land, most of which has been non-profit. The land now represents an environment with extraordinarily high biological diversity. As a hot spot for nature and cultural heritage idealists, the land has been thoroughly inventoried by volunteers. Bird breeding has been investigated by the local ornithology group, insects have been collected and classified over the years by the regional entomological association and plants, fungi, mosses and lichens have been inventoried by the national flora association. Cultural heritage and historical places have been thoroughly documented by the local folklore society. Innumerable hours have been spent on inventory work by volunteers from non-profit organizations. Several red-listed species have been reported and attractively situated ancient monuments have been located on the land. All voluntary work has then been catalogued by local and regional authorities and kept in non-public databases. Today the land has become a nature reserve with strong restrictions on land utilization but with a tax-funded subsidy to the landowner as compensation. In addition, it has been made accessible to the public whose mobility is regulated by paths and signs. The place has thousands of visitors each year.

Now to some provocative questions: from where did the official authorities get the money that made it possible to conserve and expose this land? Was it from a sustainable use of rural resources, or was it from tax revenues from other – possibly unsustainable – environments? Why was the landowner punished by severe land-use restrictions rather than helped to utilize natural and cultural resources in economically and ecologically sustainable ways? How did the rural area gain economically from all the volunteers and visitors? Although the scenario seems to promote ecological sustainability, who will continue to use traditional cultivation methods when the landowner does not?

### **Profitability without sustainability**

An opposite scenario would be when rural landowners find alternative ways to exploit their land in a non-sustainable direction in order to attract tourists. By developing and marketing tourism activities, landowners can easily attract nearby regional visitors and accordingly canalize money to the local rural economy. Indeed, many tourism entrepreneurs in the countryside have understood and acted upon this possibility by developing mass-tourism facilities through which they make their living. Examples are animal parks, outdoor sport centres, amusement parks and temporary cultural events. More indirect examples are cafés, souvenir boutiques, guided tours, etc.,

which are all dependent on already well-frequented natural or cultural attractions. Without such tourism entrepreneurs, some rural areas would today be depopulated and much of the cultural landscape would have degenerated or been destroyed.

The question is whether this scenario promotes long-term ecological and economical sustainability in rural areas. No doubt, mass-tourism in rural areas can direct more money into the local economy. But at what ecological cost? Large numbers of visitors to the countryside are correlated with the frequent use of cars, large amounts of litter and wear and tear of the environment. This runs contrary to rural sustainability since an attractive countryside depends on biologically diversified landscapes.

Consider the following example: A landowner once owed a multi-functional rural area with a high biological diversity. The landowner 'understood' the signs of the time and rapidly rebuilt all ancient buildings, destroyed the central parts of the land by draining it and by making a large spruce plantation with an attractive motor-sports facility. The spruce plantation and motor-sports facility not only destroyed biological diversity but also became an effective barrier for many rare, wood-living insects, sensitive flowers with short-range seed dispersal, etc. These species previously used the land as an important corridor for dispersal between distant regions. As time went by the land and the whole region became progressively more monotonous from a biological viewpoint and no nature or culture idealists would even spend an hour in the area looking for interesting species. The landowner today earns quite a lot of money from tourists visiting the motor-sports facility and from spruce timber. The owner is exempt from any land-use restrictions and can easily expand the range of tourism activities.

Again, to some provocative questions: is the motor-sports facility not an excellent example of how the local economy can gain from innovative entrepreneurs helping visitors to spend money in rural areas? By ecologically destroying the land and thus causing volunteers and authorities to lose interest in it, did the owner not actually help in avoiding restrictions that otherwise would have hampered further development of the rural area?

## Can Ecotourism be a Solution?

A simple definition of ecotourism is ecologically and economically sustainable nature and culture tourism. The provocative examples above are not meant to be the only mutually exclusive alternatives, but rather to highlight the potential for combining ecological and economical issues in rural businesses. Some of the basic concepts of ecotourism are:

- being aware of the limitations of the destination;
- working actively with nature and culture protection;
- assisting the local economy; and
- working toward knowledge, the joy of discovery and respect.

The question is whether these fine words can be translated into practice. I

believe it is possible, and some examples exist where ecotourism has been the sole solution for long-term ecological and economical sustainability.

Public protection and exposure of valuable environments, as well as profitable private tourism initiatives in rural areas, both add to general welfare in the short term. Sensitive areas would otherwise have run the risk of becoming permanently destroyed and rural areas would have been depopulated. But through the concept and practices of ecotourism we gain an additional tool to plan creatively in combining ecological and economical thinking.

One example of this is the EC Interreg IIIB project 'Rural Development Connection' (RDC). Here, we had the opportunity to work with ecotourism profiling. The work has included many rural tourism stakeholders from organizations, enterprises and authorities. The experience gained from this project shows that a focus on ecotourism can bridge the gap between official demands for ecological sustainability and commercial demands for economical gain. By using the RDC project as a case study, I will argue that ecotourism is a superior way to reach sustainable rural development.

## **The General Misunderstanding of the Ecotourism Concept**

### **Suspiciousness or over-enthusiasm?**

When using ecotourism as a vehicle for rural development there are two issues related to the concept that need to be explored. First, there is a widespread scepticism towards the term 'ecotourism'. The word is commonly associated with the Green movement, organic farming, etc. Especially among tourism entrepreneurs, there is a general belief that such activities, and hence ecotourism, can never be profitable and are solely a matter for idealists. This attitude makes it difficult to raise the issue of ecotourism among entrepreneurs in the first place. The problem should not, however, be over-estimated in Scandinavian countries, whereas it seems more pronounced in countries to the south of Scandinavia.

On the other hand, over-enthusiasm for the concept of ecotourism can lead to a different set of problems. There are two general trajectories for becoming a ecotourism operator: (i) when enthusiastic ecologists endeavour to translate their idealism into profitable businesses; and (ii) when enthusiastic entrepreneurs add some variation of the prefix 'eco-' to describe their business for marketing purposes. In many cases the ecology-towards-economy trajectory results in non-profit operations and thus failure to develop sound ecotourism. For the economy-to-ecology trajectory there is a better chance of developing profitability but an obvious risk that ecological aspects become neglected. Both trajectories are opportunistic but the dangers can potentially be minimized by serious education in either business economy or basic ecology. Of course, there is no immediate connection between knowledge and behaviour.

## The need for concept clarification and dissemination

The International Ecotourism Society defines ecotourism as responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people. This definition tends to conserve the suspiciousness towards the term among entrepreneurs who equate ecotourism with the Green movement and non-profitability. For this reason I will instead define ecotourism as ecologically and economically sustainable tourism related to nature and culture. Neither the word 'Green' nor the word 'profit' is ugly in this respect.

The content of ecotourism can be described by using the six basic criteria for approved ecotourism used by Nature's Best. Here, sound entrepreneurship within ecotourism includes:

- being aware of the limitations of the destination;
- working actively with nature and culture protection;
- working actively with environmental issues;
- assisting the local economy;
- working for knowledge, the joy of discovery and respect; and
- guaranteeing quality and safety all the way through the tourist consumption chain of events.

A clear definition and some basic criteria alone cannot persuade new or established tourism entrepreneurs to become interested in ecotourism. Repeated dissemination of the concept is also crucial. In the region of Skåne Nordost, southern Sweden, I have noticed different responses to dissemination of the ecotourism concept. Several 'Green idealists' – as well as 'greedy entrepreneurs' – were not initially receptive to the ecotourism concept, but this gradually changed. Today these persons represent key resource persons in the development of new ecotourism products in the region. In Skåne Nordost, Nature's Best labelling practices have been instrumental in the success of ecotourism as a vehicle for rural development.

Nature's Best is an eco-labelling system focusing on quality all the way through the tourist consumption chain rather than on environmental issues alone. Environmental issues are still important as one part of the marking system but there is also a focus on favouring the local economy, working for knowledge, the joy of discovery and respect, and on guaranteeing quality and safety along the way.

It is a great opportunity to utilize a well-established national ecotourism labelling system for the development of rural nature and culture tourism in general. Nature's Best, taking into account both the 'ecological' and the 'economical' side of ecotourism, presents a challenge for many entrepreneurs. The certification criteria force the revision of established routines in tourism operations and businesses in order that they become sustainable in the long-term. Not all entrepreneurs are able to meet all quality demands, but the confrontation with the certification process and protocols can itself result in higher awareness both of ecological values and of economical realities.

Once an ecotourism arrangement has become certified by Nature’s Best, this triggers other tourism enterprises with similar profiles – or those in the same region – to work toward the same goal. The basis of utilizing a quality labelling system and spearheading prototypes for rural development works like a pyramid: the ultimate goal is to reach the top of the pyramid with certified arrangements, but the climb upwards in the system promotes sustainable development in itself.

If a project, authority or association has dedicated money for ecotourism development, the capital should ideally stimulate activities within the pyramid at all levels, as this leads to both rural and sustainable development. Figure 12.1 suggests possible activities that could be fed into the pyramid.

### How to Improve Nature and Culture Tourism

Nature and culture tourism products can be categorized according to level of complexity as products and services, arrangements or travel packages. Products and services can be defined as any tourism activity that can be sold as a separate part. An overnight stay in a youth hostel, a ticket for a guided tour or a souvenir are typical examples. Such products and services are often subject to strong market forces and become profitable only in combination with large volumes of visitors. Simple products and services seldom influence tourist destination choice.

A more complex type of tourism product could be termed ‘arrangements’, including different combinations of food, accommodation and activities. Examples could be: (i) rental of a bicycle, including packed lunch and a biking tour map; (ii) a guided tour, including field barbecues

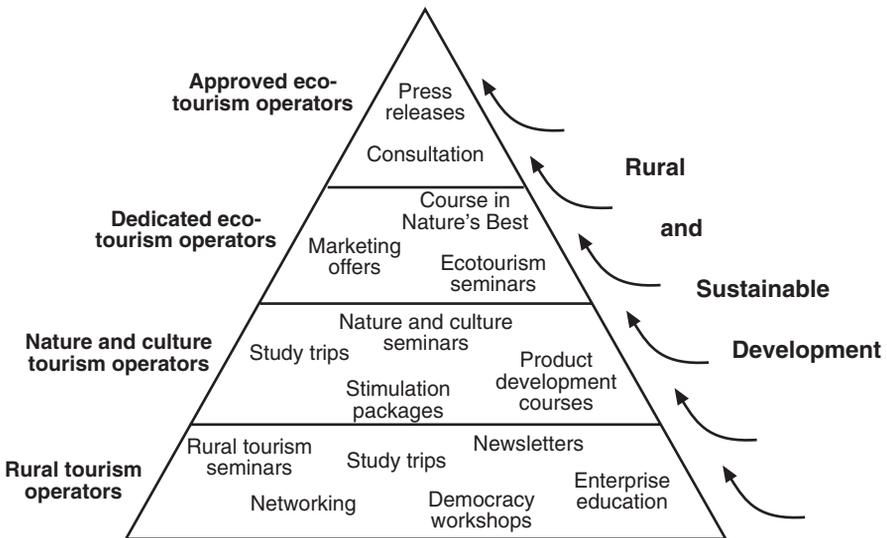


Fig. 12.1. Possible activities in a sustainable rural development process.

and overnight stays in a tent; or (iii) a bed and breakfast stay, including golf course fees. Arrangements are typically directed towards groups of customers, preferably from the national/international market.

Finally, travel packages include everything a tourist would need when visiting a region. Such products are often customer-specific and suitable for the export market. Examples are: (i) an all-inclusive, 5-day fishing package; (ii) a weekend stay at a spa hotel; and (iii) a trekking package, with a local guide for a week. Travel packages are more advanced than other types of tourism products and include collaborations between different enterprises, agreements with travel agencies for marketing, etc.

The single most important factor in improving sustainable rural tourism in Scandinavia is that of developing more and better nature and culture travel packages. There is presently an under-utilized potential for this kind of product development among tourism entrepreneurs, but a number of issues must be analysed:

- How can tax revenue be optimally allocated in order to promote product development in the rural tourism sector?
- How can collaboration between different tourism stakeholders be stimulated?
- How can links to tourism actors in other countries be developed?
- How can the quality of tourism products be upheld?

The Rural Development Connection (RDC) in Skåne Nordost provides some preliminary clues.

## **Ecotourism in Skåne Nordost**

### **Skåne Nordost – a case study**

The RDC project has worked with ecotourism as its project focus since the beginning of 2004. The idea has been to utilize the Swedish national ecotourism quality marking system, Nature's Best, as the apex in the pyramid model (Fig. 12.1) and to stimulate rural tourism development in the southern Swedish region of Skåne Nordost. This region is the southernmost wilderness area in Scandinavia. It has a landscape characterized by small-scale agriculture and a mixture of deciduous and conifer woods with numerous lakes. As with most rural areas the region has suffered from depopulation, and supply within the rural tourism sector has been dominated by simple products and services.

The owners of the Swedish part of the RDC project are the tourism organizations in each of the seven municipalities within Skåne Nordost, the regional branch of the Swedish farmers' organization, the region Skåne and Kristianstad University. A network of several hundred rural entrepreneurs and other stakeholders is available to the RDC project. The strategy for rural development thorough ecotourism is to offer as many activities as possible at all levels within the pyramidal model.

The results from the RDC project are highly encouraging. Ecotourism can be an engine for rural development, at least under certain conditions. Since the beginning of 2004, two entrepreneurs have become certified with Nature's Best, the first ones in Skåne, and at least five more had filled in application forms for the next round of approval in mid-2005.

A number of new nature and culture tourism products in the form of arrangements have been developed at a lower level in the pyramid, examples being:

- Nature and culture weekend in Östafors.
- A quick course in Skåne cookery.
- Stroll among volcanoes.
- Riding adventures in the Göinge forests.
- Safari and sightseeing in Kristianstad Vattenrike.
- Fishing for pike in the River Helge Å.
- Try Zander angling.
- Bat safari in Tykarpsgrottan Cave.
- Fossil hunt and cave expedition.

Altogether, through activities such as seminars, workshops, courses, study trips and fairs, more than 1000 participants from the rural network have been registered. From discussions with several participants, I conclude that entrepreneurs in general appreciate the ecotourism focus. Changes in attitudes towards ecotourism represent a good prerequisite for intensified sustainable rural development.

I see two main obstacles to using ecotourism in rural development. It is no surprise that *lack of money* is an obstacle that can hamper rural development. Without capital to feed the pyramid, focus on rural development is easily lost, especially since no single authority works exclusively with sustainable rural development. However, temporary project staff can function as mediators between authorities and entrepreneurs. On the other hand, rural stakeholders are generally suspicious of project money that suddenly appears, finances a couple of project individuals and then disappears. It is therefore crucial to focus project money on activities that generate visible results. This is especially challenging when developing entrepreneurship 'software', i.e. skills and practices, rather than infrastructure 'hardware'.

The second obstacle for rural development through ecotourism lies in *lack of consistency*. By this I mean that a clear, long-term focus is needed if ecotourism is to be an effective vehicle for rural development. It is, for instance, important to plan for long-term utilization of developed skills within a project even before the project starts. In particular, press releases and dissemination through newsletters from authorities need to be consistent if rural stakeholders are to be successively convinced that they can benefit from a common ecotourism focus. In Skåne Nordost, the tourism organizations in the seven municipalities of the region have taken on the responsibility of continuing ecotourism development efforts made possible with EU funding from 2004 to mid-2005.

The RDC project has enabled the visualization of both possibilities and

problems for ecotourism as a factor in rural sustainable development. The most important result from the project is that the *process* towards certified ecotourism products is as critical as the actual approved products themselves. Activities at all levels in the pyramid shown in Fig. 12.1 promote sustainability, and it is not an absolute necessity that all ecotourism operators reach the highest level.

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# 13 Eco-traveller or Eco-site Visitor?

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## Route or Site Dimensions of Tourism and Sustainability

Many studies of tourism are focused more or less only on what is happening at a site or in a region. There are strong reasons for a more inclusive 'total trip focus' when studying behaviour of segments of visitors and their contribution to changes in the environment (Flognfeldt, 1997, 2005b). In the context of ecotourism, one clarification seems necessary: if *ecotourism* should be regarded as *the solution* to make the world more sustainable, tourism researchers should start to distinguish between *eco-travellers* and *eco-site visitors*. Ecotourism should then *include the whole trip*, both the visited site or destinations and the travelled route to and from that site. Studies of tourist behaviour *at a single site or destination* could then be labelled eco-site studies.

Two different geographical study fields of tourism, *destination focus* and *total trip focus*, will be an important background for this chapter, as well as showing some travel and destination behaviour patterns of different kinds. Models for trip-focused studies are discussed in depth in Flognfeldt (2005a), inspired by many sources, including Fridgen (1984, p. 33):

Travel to and from the destination site and experiences associated with these phases have been ignored. A better understanding of travel behaviour could assist in the marketing of secondary trips, staging areas, and minor attractions located in the vicinity of larger, more popular destinations. Such relationships require the cooperation of the psychologist and the tourist professional. Travelers, not laboratory subjects, must be studied in transit, at hotels, in their homes, and on site. The tourist professional can make this integrative work possible by being sensitive to the importance and implications of this type of research.

A tourism destination might be designed to suit most challenges of sustainability, but what takes place on the travelled routes to and from this

destination could often be at the opposite end of the sustainability spectrum. An example would be how a ski resort could be designed in accordance with criteria of sustainability but still be accessible only by private cars utilized by two or three passengers. This means that the local product from a destination point of view might be described as sustainable even if the travelling patterns of most visitors could not be described as 'sustainable tourism' in a complete travel circuit sense. Although the tourist's behaviour during a limited site visit might not sit well with the concept of ecotourism, the rest of that tourist's travelling route might be described as sustainable. Some urban visits fall into this category, as well as some activities like heli-skiing and jet-skiing. Thus, a more holistic travel pattern approach and several total trip travel behaviour studies are needed in analyses of sustainability and tourism.

When the term 'ecotourists' is used to describe a segment of visitors or visits without any remark about their behaviour during the rest of the trip, the concept of sustainability becomes more of a marketing slogan than a real concern for nature or the environment. Much of the 'Green tourism' concepts developed by hotels and destinations use such slogans, since these do not include a trip focus. By focusing more on the total trip or on the total experience affiliated to the trip, and even on the vocabulary researchers are using, the research would be more inclusive.

Many researchers use ecotourism more or less synonymously with some types of nature-based tourism. When that is the case, however, the level of man-made environment in the product becomes important. This means that visits close to pristine nature environments are often labelled ecotourism, regardless of how the tourist travels to the area, while visits to man-made venues based on nature-like alpine ski resorts are regarded as non-sustainable forms of tourism.

Also, the concept of sustainability in the context of tourism is underdeveloped. McCoy and Moisey (2001), however, introduce some ways of viewing sustainability:

1. *Sustaining tourism: how to maintain tourism industry businesses in the longer term.* This is a broad view more or less showing that a tourism industry or site should not be developed in a way that creates problems for its own existence. The problem of this view is the definition of how wide an area should be taken into account: the whole trip area, parts of the trip area or just the visited site?
2. *Sustainable tourism: a kinder, gentler form of tourism that is generally small in scale, sensitive to cultural and environmental impacts and respects the involvement of local people in policy discussions.* For some this means trying to reduce the worst effects caused by tourism, for others prevention of development at sites not suitable for some types of tourism.
3. *What should tourism sustain? Tourism as a tool for development.* Is solely actual behaviour at the visiting site important, or should problems caused along the travelled routes also be taken into account (Flognfeldt, 1997)?

In the early stages of building recreation activities in Scandinavia a hundred years ago, development of transport to give easy mass access to

nature, both coastally and in forests, was prioritized. Thus, electrical tramways like the Holmenkollbanen in Oslo and coastal shipping routes were extended to include embarkation points in the 'wilderness of that time'. This means that short recreational trips for most people living in Oslo became both ecologically and economically sustainable.

What consequences might different uses of definitions of sustainability in tourism and travel studies have? If this discussion includes some practical cases of development at destinations, tour operation and marketing, researchers might be able to regard tourist trips as more complex events, instead of just focusing on case studies on single sites.

One of the few studies trying to measure the transport effects of tourism was by Høyer (2000), who argued that 'since there is no tourism without travel' – at least in Norway – tourism is 'a major source of serious environment [*sic*] problems'. Therefore, the notion of sustainable tourism, according to Høyer (2000), should be linked to a concept of 'sustainable mobility'. Quoting an Austrian study by Lange (1995), he indicated that 40–60% of environmental loads were linked to the transport of tourists between home and destination. For some ecotourism destinations in northern Scandinavia this is probably an underestimation.

Figure 13.1 shows the main flows of ecotourism, or 'care-based', traffic to the Scandinavian countries.

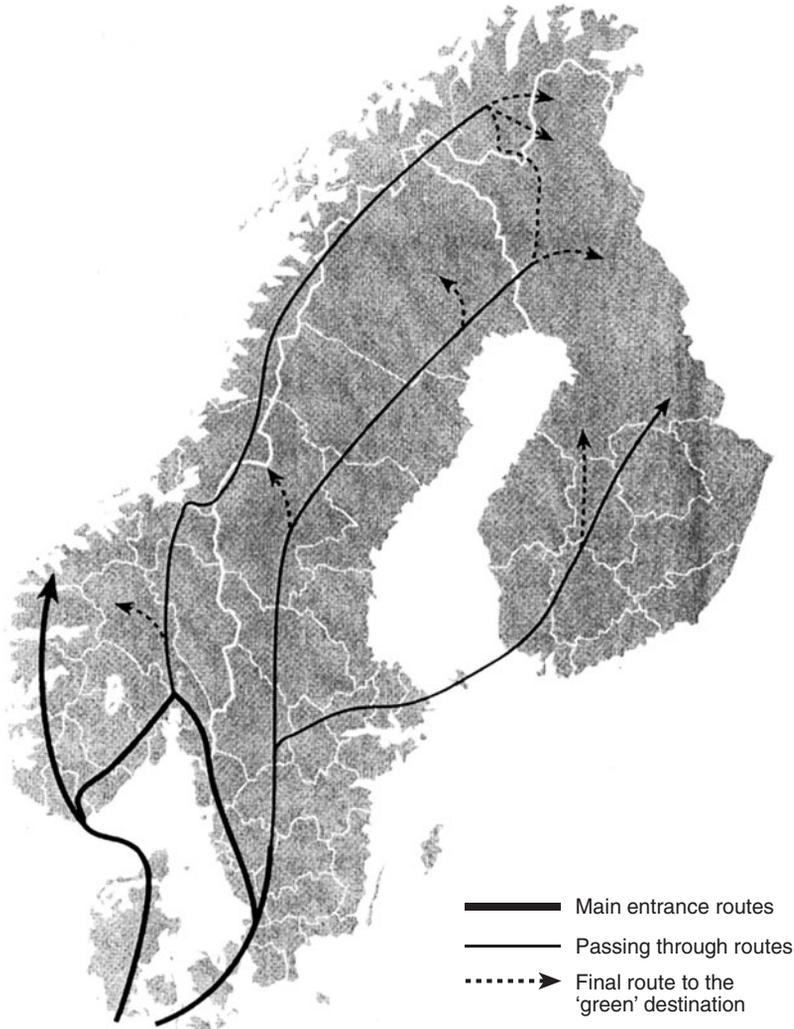
## Sample Cases

The starting point of this section will be to illustrate some typical travel behaviour patterns in rural Scandinavia – primarily Norwegian cases. Norway is a large, long and sparsely populated country. Thus, transport by air, road, rail or sea plays an important role in the composition of tourism products. For most tourism in Norway, transportation is so important that almost all tourism products must be regarded as 'non-ecotourism' if a complete trip focus is to be used. The cases described here are chosen to show what happens when the focus is changed from an 'at site only' to a 'complete trip' perspective.

### The coach trip to North Cape: a quick drive through most areas

Since the start of the 'Hurtigruten' (The Coastal Voyage) in 1893, a visit to the symbolic northernmost site in Europe has become the ultimate destination for many subarctic visitors (Hurtigruten, 2005). Someone has described the North Cape trip as one of the world's most famous 'tourism anticlimaxes' (unknown author). The reasons for travelling to the far North are not the most interesting part of this section, but such long trips to a 'sacred attraction' provide a good example to demonstrate the differences between eco-sites and eco-trips.

The coach tour through 'all Norway' (or in addition partly through



**Fig. 13.1.** Patterns of care-based traffic to the 'green' parts of Scandinavia.

Sweden and Finland) up to the North Cape has a long tradition. Slogans like 'Norway – the land of the Midnight Sun' dominated the early branding of Norwegian tourism. Usually these trips included long daily transport distances, short visits to a limited set of attractions along the route, overnight stays in chosen hotels with fixed meals and some non-detailed guiding.

The sustainability discussion of these trips has until now been limited to the North Cape Plateau. Is the massive investment in restaurants, information centres and so on really sustainable? Should not a short stop there be limited to 'a free nature experience' according to the image of the *allmannsrett* (Norwegian Law of Common Access to Nature)? To clarify this discussion about the site functions of North Cape as either a sacred part of nature or a tourism theme park, focus may be widened to include the trip to and from

this attraction. That discussion is not possible within the context of ecotourism, since the long trip either by car, coach, aircraft or Hurtigruten (the Coastal Steamer) means that the limits of sustainability are transgressed. Every trip to the North Cape is an energy-consuming one, and a sustainability discussion should concentrate on finding suitable solutions to reduce these.

### **Trekking in the mountains and along the coast: Jotunheimen area and Höga Kusten Leden**

Trekking or recreational walking has a long tradition in Scandinavian outdoor recreation. At an early stage Oslo (1898) built the electric tramway up to Holmenkollen to give people easy access to the large Osломarka area. Later, in 1916, this was extended to Frognerstøveten, and in 1934, another one was built to Sognsvann (Oslo Sporveier, 2005). These tramways gave access to nature, the ski-jump hill and made the slopes around the tramway available for exclusive housing developments. Organizations like Skiforeningen started developing a system of ski tracks that were designed also to be used as walking and riding paths during summer.

The experienced mountain trekkers are often regarded (at least by themselves) as *the ecotourists*. But these trekkers are often also very frequent airborne travellers – going to several continents – and the use of, and payment for, local resources to help local communities become more economically sustainable is not always evident.

Trekking in Jotunheimen is, from a destination point of view, a low-cost type of travel and it gives some contribution to the local economy. Also, the way accommodation is organized – most often as mountain lodges or chalets owned by Den norske Turistforening (the Norwegian Tourism Association, DnT) – means more leakages out of the local economy than if these dwelling units had been in local ownership. The impact on nature caused by trekkers, however, is small.

In recent years DnT has shown an interest in helping local production by introducing slogans like ‘short-transported food’. This could also include guided tours or local tour operation, but still most DnT activities in this sector are based on imported guides and tour organizers. ‘Short-transported guides’, i.e. local ones, should instead be introduced.

Coastal hikes were more common than those on well-developed and signposted mountain tracks until the late 1970s. Local work following the Swedish ‘Fysisk riksplan’ of 1971 (SOU, 1971, p. 75) started a new way of thinking about coastal nature as not simply a tourist resource, but also for hikers and nature lovers (Höga Kustenkommitten, 1974), and the report on the ‘Future of Ådalen’ indicated a more active use of coastal resources for hiking and shorter walking tours (Ådalenkommitten, 1986). Since these coastal routes are much closer to local recreation amenities, which often have surplus capacities and, importantly, better developed collective transport networks, the negative impacts of further development would be lower than in marginal mountain areas.

## Access to ski resorts: the Hafjell/Kvitfjell area and previous Olympic venues

Alpine ski resorts are not often regarded as 'ecotourism venues'. They are installations outside the outdoor recreation traditionalist's way of thinking. Such venues and the surrounding resorts use considerable energy resources both for slope preparation and for artificial snowmaking, as well as for heating the accommodation units. A large proportion of visitors today arrive in their own cars. By using the whole trip as a research unit, however, parts of this picture might be modified. Alpine resort development might be included in a more sustainable transport strategy, at least at some sites.

Hafjell and Kvitfjell are two ski resorts that were built or developed for the Lillehammer 1994 Winter Olympics and are both located close to the national railway system. New temporary railway stations were also built for these Olympics, to be used at times of high demand. This meant that low-energy transport could be introduced.

At Hafjell a project is now being launched based on the idea of reducing energy use drastically by utilizing a local mountain river both as water supply and as micro-hydropower producer. Instead of pumping water for snow production up from the valley, the water will be taken from the top of the venue. Perhaps a future energy consumption study will show that each alpine skier at Hafjell is using far less energy on the whole trip than ecotourists in the mountain areas do?

## Second-home owners may be the biggest contributors to the local economy?

Ownership of second homes means frequent use. Some families have had second homes at the same site for more than four generations and thus regard themselves at least as 'semi-locals' (Flognfeldt, 2002). Their behaviour at the site will usually be to aim to keep nature as pristine as possible. Other second-home owners will be investors primarily interested in the increasing value of their property, and will sell and move to another site if they have the opportunity to make a substantial profit.

More than half of Norwegian households have access to a second home. 'Access' means the possibility for non- or low-paid use at least one week annually. About 25 per cent of all accommodation used for holidays in 1998 was in second homes; for those staying in Norway during holidays the figure was 36 per cent (Statistisk Sentralbyrå, 2005).

Studies of second-home ownership and of their owners' use of the local environment shows that many cabin owners are as much interested in local sustainability issues as people living permanently in the community (Flognfeldt, 2006). Second-home owners often use local grocery stores and local craftsmen for services, and also participate to a large degree in discussions about further development of the local area.

## Hydroelectric power and tourism development

From the late 1960s until recently the discussion about further hydropower development in Scandinavia has been lively. Conservation and environmental groups have presented many arguments against further development in their own 'back yards'. They have also, however, frequently stated that such developments would mean a threat to future tourism in those areas. But areas where such developments have occurred have in several cases been successful in developing a new and more sustainable tourism trade. The reasons for this are many, some rooted in Norwegian legacy, some in market changes and some in infrastructure as new roads have given tourists access to new areas.

In Norway the best economic conditions, based on tax income, for local government are found in municipalities where hydropower production units or reservoirs are located. This is due to a system of taxation for power firms according to the location of water resources. Such electricity-producing municipalities are able to finance infrastructure for tourism development, including improved roads, tracks for skiing and walking, information centres and museums.

Many new roads giving access to sites of natural beauty were originally built in the construction period. Since the 1980s the constructors have developed the skill of taking care of nature. This means, for example: (i) using natural stone walls along the road instead of concrete; or (ii) creating artificial thresholds in the rivers so that the levels remain the same but the currents are slower. But it also means investment in parking areas along roads, and information facilities.

## Further Discussion of Ecotourism within a 'Total Trip' Focus

The word 'ecotourism' might be one of the most disputed ones in the whole tourism literature. It is often used either as a slogan or as a description of 'small-scale travel or visits' without any real discussion of the total outcome by any measurement. Butler (1990) has presented a list of some of the major problems of tourism:

1. *Ignorance* – of dimension, nature, power of tourism. In the theme of Butler's paper, seeing only what is happening within the borders of one's own area.
2. *Lack of ability* – to determine the level of sustainable development, i.e. capacity. Studies of the real consequences of further capacity or visit development are seldom of high quality – depending on the role of the investigator.
3. *Lack of appreciation* – to manage tourism and control the development. If such efforts are made they might be limited to a single area, for example a national park, often without any benefit to the surrounding areas.
4. *Lack of appreciation* – that tourism is dynamic, and causes change as well as response to change. New and better technical solutions might not be

introduced due to the fact that responsibility for this belongs to another (governmental?) body. In Norway formal responsibility for national parks lies with the Ministry of Environment, but many other ministries have their own responsibilities on some part-issues.

5. *Lack of agreement* – over levels of development, control and direction of tourism. Norway has no official tourism policy at the national level, meaning that each county and municipality must find their own way. Responsibility for different parts of national park management are, in addition, placed on different ministries.

This is a too short list to give an answer to what sustainable tourism might be, and the geographical scale is not fully addressed in this discussion. One of the definitions discussed by Page and Dowling (2002) on ‘responsible tourism’ was based on Hetzer (1965, quoted in Page and Dowling 2002):

1. *Minimum environmental impacts* – at what area level – site, region or nation – or Scandinavia? In practice, this discussion is often restricted to very small areas. No-one cares about impacts taking place outside their own areas.

2. *Minimum impacts on – and maximum respect for – host cultures*. Even ‘passing through areas’ might be regarded as a part of sustainability studies. The need for a highway passing through an area will not be included in the discussion of sustainability in, say, a mountain village 500 km farther north (Flognfeldt, 1997).

3. *Maximum economic benefits to the host country’s grass roots*. Urban-based eco-organizations do not always include local economic sustainability in their efforts. This is often described as a conflict between ‘local and tradition-based harvesters’ and ‘urban recreationists or *purists*’ (Kleiven, 2002).

4. *Maximum ‘recreational?’ satisfaction for participating tourists*. This could be restricted by local ignorance of possibilities, but also by an unduly narrow understanding of sustainability.

Such a set of definitions includes most of what happens during a visit to a site, or even in a country, but fails to include ‘whole trip characteristics’, as considered by Flognfeldt (1997).

### **Organized mass tourism to eco-sites: the real eco travel?**

In addition to the confusion surrounding the term ‘ecotourism’, many authors distinguish between *mass travel* and *alternative travel*, or *eco-travel*, as the two extremes of a continuum. For the behaviour of each traveller this might be a relevant distinction. From the more holistic travel perspective presented in this chapter it might be completely wrong. For example, what would happen if all mass travellers became ecotourists?

Butler and Waldbrooke (1991) have discussed the ‘Tourism Opportunity Spectrum’ in the study of different types of trips. The cases they present show that this could be a way of clarifying such questions. The term ‘eco-traveller’ is in a central way problematic. The most reliable and profound

definitions will exclude all travel as contributing in any way to a more sustainable development. A subsidiary definition would read something along the lines of: 'a tourist utilizing existing routes with *free capacity* might be regarded as an ecotourist. His/her trip does not require any extended use of energy since the train, bus or airplane would have done the transportation work regardless of his/her presence.'

The classical Leiper (1979) model (Fig. 13.2) shows that the complete ecotourism pattern must take into account environmental impact resulting from the total travel from home and back again, and that the eco-site visit is merely a short stop or bypass trip somewhere in the tourist destination region. With regard to research methods and conceptualizations of sustainable tourism, this means that we cannot interview tourists on an isolated eco-site and regard them as ecotourists. Unless we acquire access to comprehensive data about the other elements of their trip it is not even meaningful to discuss ecotourism.

This attempt to remove the ecotourism label from some segments of travelling to some specific destinations does not mean that destination management toward sustainability is a mistake or failure. Eco-site visits are important in creating, branding and marketing. Their aim is to influence the behaviour of visitors in a sustainable direction, and this is a very good intention. The Nordic countries have vast areas suitable for recreation in the vicinity of pristine environments. This type of tourism is valuable in its own right, and the means by which these visitors travel to and from these destinations should, however, be a central theme in future studies.

The problem is that visitors were told they were ecotourists, but when their travel behaviour is examined – e.g. air travel – this actually imposed considerable environmental loads. Different tourism products have been labelled 'eco' or sustainable without any real scientific investigation of how much each individual tourist really contributes to pollution and other kinds of environmental damage.

### Towards a more sustainable Norwegian tourism?

One strategy for making sites and travel more sustainable is to focus upon possibilities for using *excess capacity* instead of developing new products. A number of important principles for total travel analysis and eco-site development would then emerge.

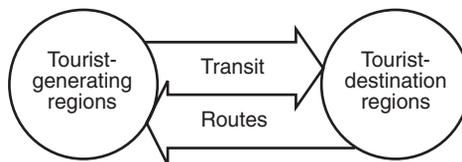


Fig. 13.2. The geographical elements of tourism (from Leiper, 1979).

Total route strategies:

- *Better capacity management* – utilizing ‘unused seats’ in a better way – and seats could be translated as cars or dwelling units if other parts of the tourism products are to be studied.
- *Stimulation of low-pollution travel* – revitalization of slow railroads (c.f. Canadian Rocky Mountaineer) and minimizing of single-passenger car traffic by price stimulation or even subsidies.
- *Trying to change the uses of modes of transport* – stimulating use of rail/bus combinations.

Eco-site strategies:

- *Stimulation of longer stay per tourist* – the tendency today is shorter stays, e.g. extended weekend trips instead of two weeks’ stay.
- *Stimulation of more use of ‘cold bed capacity’* – both by making it easier for cabin owners to rent out their capacity by lowering income tax for such rentals and by adding popular activity products to the areas of second homes.
- *Traditional green tourism strategies* – these are still important, even if they cannot be regarded as *the single solution*.

All these encouragements can be part of a national tourism strategy but, in Norway, a country that has separated the responsibility for environmental issues from the stimulation of trade into separate ministries with close to no intercommunication, such a ‘total tourism strategy’ is non-existent.

## Conclusions

Work and research to create solutions to the challenges outlined in this chapter are today still in a premature stage. Even if Høyer (2000) and others have made a start, Norway is lacking comparative studies of different travel options. In part, this is due to the lack of precise concepts. My contribution is an expanded focus, from just viewing a narrow site or destination to the total trip. All parts of a trip should be examined and discussed if ecotourism is to become a meaningful concept.

Studies on European travellers to Scandinavia illustrate these challenges. Even if such trips cannot be regarded as ecotourism, they are important for local communities and should therefore be encouraged. Those living in Scandinavia’s marginal regions may be helped by the kind of tourism that:

- Generates areas of the local income by producing lower energy consumption products.
- Enhances the focus on valuable nature resources for future generations by allowing visitors to come.
- Result in a better collective supply of transport access, even for locals.
- Presents locals with job opportunities, at least seasonally.

Thus, every attempt to develop and improve sites for eco-visits is

important, but the claim that a stay at such a site equates to sustainable ecotourism is a marketing slogan.

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# 14 Ecotourist Choices of Transport Modes

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## Introduction

Ecotourism is often portrayed as a sustainable form of tourism, simultaneously contributing to nature conservation. This perception has largely been based on a perspective of looking at ecotourism performance at the destination, and excluding the impacts of transport to and from the destination. Recent studies have pointed out, though, that transport to the destination might indeed be the most harmful aspect of a journey from a climatic change perspective. For instance, Gössling *et al.* (2002) reported in their study of the ecological footprint of international tourism to the Seychelles – a self-declared eco-destination – that more than 97% of the energy footprint was as a result of air travel:

This implies that current efforts to make destinations more sustainable through the installation of energy-saving devices or the use of renewable energy sources can only contribute to marginal savings in view of the large amounts of energy used for air travel. Any strategy towards sustainable tourism must thus seek to reduce transport distances and, vice versa, any tourism based on air traffic needs per se to be seen as unsustainable. Obviously, these insights also apply to ecotourism based on long-distance travel.

(Gössling *et al.*, 2002, p. 208)

Similar findings were reported by Simmons and Becken (2004), who pointed out that energy use for long-distance travel was a major drawback of ecotourism journeys to New Zealand, and that transport to ecotourism sites would be energy intensive even within the country. As most international visitors to New Zealand arrive from Europe, ecotourism is clearly not sustainable. In an attempt to develop a more holistic understanding of the environmental impact of ecotourism, Hunter and Shaw (2006) examined the 'net ecological footprint' of ecotourism journeys by subtracting the tourists' 'at home footprint' from the 'journey footprint'. Their findings suggest that

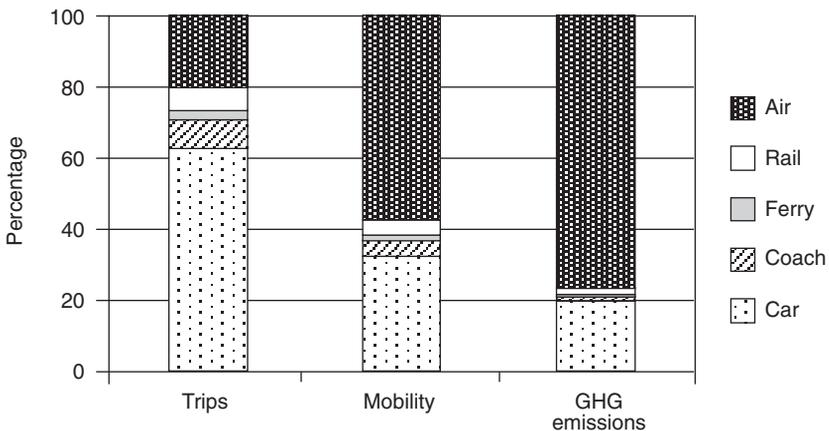
virtually all ecotourism causes an additional and often large footprint, making the ecotourists' lifestyles less sustainable. Overall, the importance of travel to the destination has thus been recognized as being of great importance in evaluating ecotourism's level of sustainability (see also Flognfeldt, Chapter 13, this volume).

Nevertheless, no study has so far investigated how ecotourists travel and whether their transport mode choices are more sustainable than those of other travellers. With this in mind, we investigated the travel behaviour of a sample of clients of a Swedish ecotourism operator (*Vildmark i Värmland*) to better understand the distances travelled by different means of transport.

## Transport and Tourism

From a global perspective, transport produces approximately 20% of the carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions and lesser shares of the other five greenhouse gases covered under the Kyoto Protocol. Figure 14.1 illustrates the distribution of different transport modes used in Europe (EU25) for international travel in 2000. The figure shows that the car is the most important means of transport, accounting for more than 60% of all trips. The car's contribution to mobility (distances travelled) is far lower though, with some 35% of all distances travelled by car, causing some 20% of all greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) in this sector.

The second most important transport mode for international travel in the EU25 is the aircraft, with some 20% of all trips made by air. Aviation accounts for almost 60% of the distances travelled, and almost 80% of the GHG emissions caused. Rail, coach and ferry are of minor importance as transport modes in European outbound tourism. Note that differences in terms of distances travelled and GHG emissions caused are a result of the different transport means and their contribution to global warming. Air



**Fig. 14.1.** Modal split of tourism transport in Europe (EU 25, 2000; from Gössling and Peeters, 2006).

travel releases emissions in the upper troposphere and lower stratosphere, 10–12 km above sea level, where they have a larger impact on radiative forcing than they do at the Earth's surface (IPCC, 1999; Sausen *et al.*, 2005). Aircraft emissions of carbon dioxide thus need to be weighted with a factor of at least 2.0 to make them comparable in terms of their radiative forcing. Note, however, that a factor of 4.0 is not unlikely, given the prevailing scientific uncertainty with respect to the role of clouds and their heat-absorbing properties (Schumann, 2004). Hence, a wide range of publications have suggested that tourism based on air travel is the most environmentally harmful form of tourism with respect to climate change (Bach and Gössling, 1996; Frändberg, 1998; Gössling, 2000, 2002; Høyer, 2000; Becken *et al.*, 2002; Gössling *et al.*, 2002, 2005; Ceron and Dubois, 2003).

## Approach and Method

All 62 Swedish ecotourism operators offering certified Nature's Best ecotourism products were contacted and asked for cooperation in this project. Only one company, based in the Swedish county of Värmland – *Vildmark i Värmland* – was willing to provide a database including group size, client home addresses and e-mail addresses ( $n$  1442 for the year 2004). *Vildmark i Värmland* had some 4000 clients in 2004, and the database includes only those who were willing to submit e-mail addresses. For this project, all clients in the database were contacted by e-mail or, in cases where e-mail addresses turned out to be inactive, by telephone (in cases where telephone numbers could be identified). In total, 423 tourists responded to the questions, and provided data on the transport modes chosen and the distances travelled. Data for an additional 202 tourists were calculated indirectly, as they travelled from the Netherlands with a local travel agency. No personal contact could be made with these Dutch tourists, but the travel agency stated that virtually all of their clients travelled to Sweden by car. Overall, data for 625 tourists were obtained, representing about 43% of the 1442 tourists in the database.

The representativeness of the sample is limited for several reasons. First, this study focuses on the clients of a single ecotourism operator and is thus not representative of all tour operators. Obviously, the length of the distances travelled is heavily influenced by the location of the tour operator in Sweden, as this influences the distance from markets. In consequence, a southern tour operator would yield different results from a northern one, even though certified ecotourism seems quite evenly distributed in Sweden (with some core areas further north; see Fig. 14.2), and Värmland could thus be seen as a location in the centre.

Secondly, attempts to reach tourists via telephone were more successful in Sweden, and the Swedish share of ecotourists is thus over-represented in the sample (see below). Finally, it is assumed that ecotourists went to Sweden with the main purpose of participating in the trip offered by *Vildmark i*



**Fig. 14.2.** Origins of clients of *Vildmark i Värmland* (dots represent ecotourism sites).

*Värmland*. The product – a trip down a large river on a self-build timber raft – is only 4 or 7 days' long and it is likely that a large proportion of the tourists have multiple travel motives. For example, many tourists might also visit friends or family elsewhere, or take a longer holiday elsewhere in Sweden or even in other European countries. In such cases, travel distances should be weighted, and only part of the overall emissions be attributed to the ecotourism journey (cf. Gössling *et al.*, 2005). This is not feasible, though,

given the lack of data, and the results need to be understood based on these premises.

The distances travelled were calculated by estimating the distances covered from the country of origin to the destination in Värmland. All means of transport (aircraft, car, coach and train) were considered, and calculations were made individually for each respondent. In order to estimate larger distances, e.g. from Canada or Australia, the great circle calculator provided by <http://www.chooseclimate.org> was used. Emissions were then calculated by multiplying distances (in passenger km, pkm) with a CO<sub>2</sub> emission factor (Table 14.1). Note that for tourists travelling by car, emission factors were corrected to match the respective number of passengers per car. Furthermore, an equivalence and a detour factor were included in calculations. Equivalence factors include the climate-related effects of emissions other than carbon dioxide (see discussion above). For surface transport (road, rail and shipping) this factor is about 1.05 and for air travel 2.70. Corresponding emissions are expressed in CO<sub>2</sub>-equivalents (CO<sub>2</sub>-e). The detour factor is used to include distances travelled in addition to the great circle distance. For instance, during take-off and landing, an aircraft will fly additional kilometres, and there might be certain areas that aircraft have to avoid, so this entails longer flight distances than the great circle distance. Likewise, surface transport cannot move directly from origin to destination, and a detour factor has to be considered for this as well.

Table 14.2 represents an overview of the data. As shown, the tour operator in Värmland received tourists from 12 countries, with Netherlands, Sweden and Germany representing the most important markets – in total accounting for 88.3% of all tourists. Of the 1442 clients of *Vildmark i Värmland*, data for 625 (43.3%) were gathered through e-mail or telephone contact, as well as indirectly through a travel agency (Dutch tourists). The distribution of respondents in the sample (625) matches the overall distribution by country (*n* 1442) rather well. For instance, in the sample Dutch tourists account for 41.1%, while the overall share of Dutch tourists is

**Table 14.1.** Factors for different transport modes (from Gössling *et al.*, 2005).

Transport mode	Emission factor for CO <sub>2</sub> (kg/pkm)	Equivalence factor	Detour factor
Air (EU)	0.140	2.70	1.05
Air (ICA)	0.120	2.70	1.05
Rail	0.025	1.05	1.15
Car	0.075	1.05	1.15
Coach	0.018	1.05	1.15
Ferry	0.070	1.05	1.05
Cruise ship	0.070	1.05	1.30
Bicycle/moped	0.010	1.05	1.15
Other	0.075	1.05	1.15

EU, European Union (i.e. flights with a maximum range of 2000 km); ICA, Intercontinental Air Transport (i.e. flights with a range greater than 2000 km); occupancy rates: air, 70% (European Union), 75% (ICA); cars, 50%; long-distance rail, 60%; coach, 75%.

**Table 14.2.** Sample details.

Country	e-mail contact	Telephone contact	Indirect – via travel agency	Responses <i>n</i> (%)	Tourists by nationality <i>n</i> (%)	Average group size
Netherlands	55	0	202	257 (41.1)	625 (43.3)	4.3
Sweden	55	186	0	241 (38.6)	397 (27.5)	5.9
Germany	35	51	0	86 (13.8)	252 (17.5)	4.9
Denmark	11	6	0	17 (2.7)	54 (3.7)	6.8
UK	2	0	0	2 (0.3)	43 (3.0)	3.1
Switzerland	0	2	0	2 (0.3)	30 (2.1)	3.8
Belgium	7	0	0	7 (1.1)	20 (1.4)	2.9
Norway	10	0	0	10 (1.6)	10 (0.7)	5.0
Czech Republic	0	0	0	0 (0)	4 (0.3)	4.0
France	0	0	0	0 (0)	4 (0.3)	2.0
Australia	2	0	0	2 (0.3)	2 (0.1)	2.0
Canada		1	0	1 (0.2)	1 (< 0.0)	1.0
Total	177	246	202	625 (100)	1442 (100)	–

43.3% (all clients of the tour operator). However, Swedes are over-represented in the sample, while a number of other nationalities are slightly under-represented.

## Markets and Transport Modes in Swedish Ecotourism

As evident from Table 14.2 above, *Vildmark i Värmland* had a substantial number of clients from a wide variety of countries in 2004. The majority of these (43%) came from Netherlands, partially as a result of the operator's cooperation with a Dutch travel agency. The large number of tourists acquired through the travel agency also points at the importance of marketing channels and cooperation in networks, something that is as yet unusual in Swedish institutionalized ecotourism.

The second largest market for the tour operator (28% of clients) was Sweden. This is surprising, as Swedes should in theory not necessarily buy ecotourism products for at least two reasons. First, as pointed out by Hultman and Andersson Cederholm (Chapter 7, this volume) and Sandell (Chapter 9, this volume), 'nature' is a predominant feature in Swedish recreation, and Swedes are generally familiar with outdoor life. Hence, it could be assumed that many Swedes would rather plan outdoor vacations individually. Secondly, the cost of ecotourism products is often substantial, in this case up to €1000 for a 4-day family-trip (four people, including food, tent, sleeping bags and other gear). Clearly, there should thus be a cost argument for many Swedes not to participate in this journey. However, the product offered seems unique enough to generate substantial domestic demand, and, as stated by *Vildmark i Värmland*, Swedes now seem to be changing their opinions, by looking at ecotourism in terms of a consumable

product. Overall, the company has few discussions with clients about the prices charged, and they decided to increase prices for the 2005 season.

The third group of importance are the German tourists, accounting for 18% of the clients. Germans are an important market for Sweden in general, and it is not surprising that ecotourism products have great appeal, given the dense population of Germany. Furthermore, as the income levels of Germans travelling to Scandinavia will usually be substantially higher than the average Swedish income, the price level of ecotourism products does not seem to influence this market.

Tourists from other countries are less frequent, even though Denmark, the UK, Switzerland and Belgium are of some importance. Norway accounts for less than 1% of the clients, which might be surprising given the Norwegians' high income levels and the fact that their interest in nature should be similar to that of the Swedes (Viken, Chapter 4, this volume). A possible explanation here is that there is simply no market close to the Swedish border, as population is scattered in this area. Furthermore, Norwegians might – as argued by Viken (Chapter 4, this volume) – be less interested in organized ecotourism.

Table 14.2 also shows that there are substantial differences in group size. Even though the data cannot be seen as representative given the small overall number of participants from several nationalities, there is evidence that ecotourists travel in groups. For instance, the average group size of tourists from the UK was 3.1, while it comprised on average 6.8 persons in Danish groups. Group size is of great importance because larger groups need to be handled differently from smaller groups by the tour operator. For instance, a larger number of kayaks, horses, etc. might be needed and transport needs to be organized in larger vehicles. Larger groups also generate higher turnover, while environmental impact from transport might be lower if it is organized accordingly.

Table 14.3 shows that the distances travelled by different nationalities vary substantially. For instance, the average return distance of Norwegian tourists

**Table 14.3.** Distances and emissions.

Country	Average round distance travelled (pkm)	Emissions per tourist (kg CO <sub>2</sub> -e)
Netherlands	2,662	123
Sweden	741	29
Germany	2,605	96
Denmark	1,274	69
UK	3,574	1,057
Switzerland	3,608	1,368
Belgium	3,026	157
Norway	520	18
Czech Republic	–	–
France	3,624	656
Australia	31,676	10,564
Canada	11,472	3,773

is 520 km, indicating that only Norwegians living in proximity to Värmland and the ecotourism operator are likely to participate in the timber raft journey. Next lowest in terms of distances travelled are the Swedes, with an average return distance of 741 km. The average one-way distance from the operator is thus about 370 km which, given the total length of the country of almost 1600 km, indicates that most tourists might be attracted from rather close by, including the Stockholm urban agglomeration, with an estimated 1.7 million inhabitants. Distances increase substantially for other markets. For instance, Germans travel some 2600 km, the Dutch 2660 km, Britons 3570 km, and the Swiss 3600 km (return distances). Finally, Canadians and Australians covered some 11,500 km and 31,700 km, respectively.

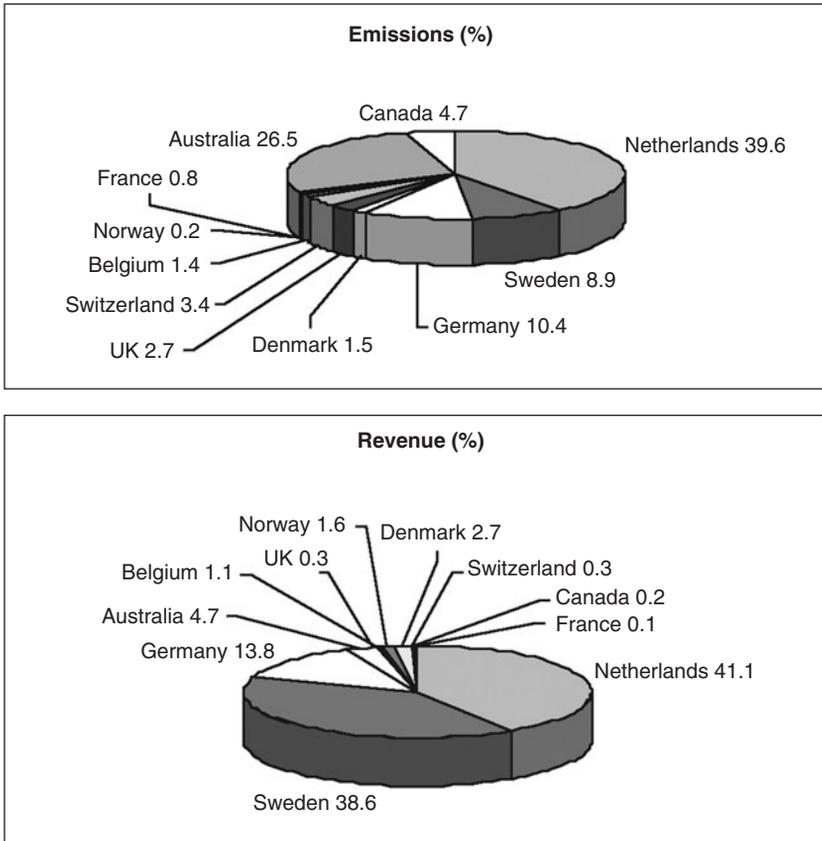
Clearly, it is not likely that the timber raft journey was the only motive for many tourists to come to Sweden. Furthermore, distance calculations are based on few tourists, and can thus not be seen as representative. Nevertheless, the results illustrate that the location of markets is of great importance in ecotourism, particularly if looking at emissions and environmental impact. Average emissions from Swedish ecotourism amount to 29 kg per tourist, as opposed to more than 10.5 t for each Australian tourist. The minimum amount of emissions caused was 6 kg – by a Swedish tourist. Overall, Swedes also seem to use more environmentally friendly means of transport, i.e. trains and coaches. Of 241 tourists, 152 had arrived by car, 60 by coach, 27 by train and coach and two solely by train. Of the remaining tourists included in this sample ( $n$ , 384), only ten had used trains or coaches to come to Värmland. In terms of the means of transport chosen, Swedes are thus far more likely to choose environmentally friendly transport than other tourists, which also explains their low per capita emissions.

In contrast, tourists arriving from Great Britain or Switzerland caused particularly high emissions because they have travelled by air to Sweden. For instance, an average Belgian tourist covering roughly 3000 km by car emits some 160 kg of CO<sub>2</sub>-e emissions, while a tourist from Great Britain will emit more than one ton of CO<sub>2</sub>-e emissions for a journey that is only around 20% longer (3600 km).

The importance of emissions also becomes evident when comparing the economic and environmental importance of different markets (Fig. 14.3). Assuming that, on average, each of the tourists contributes the same amount to the tour operator's turnover, it is quite obvious that the amount of emissions in comparison to economic performance of different nationalities is paramount. For instance, Swedish ecotourists accounted for 38.6% of the turnover of *Vildmark i Värmland*, but they caused only 8.9% of the emissions. Vice versa, Australian tourists accounted for 26.5% of the emissions (not considering multi-purpose travel), but generated only 4.7% of the revenues.

## Sustainable Ecotourism?

The analysis of the travel behaviour of ecotourist clients of *Vildmark i Värmland* reveals that there are great differences in terms of the modes of



**Fig. 14.3.** Emissions *versus* revenue, by nationality.

transport chosen, distances travelled and emissions caused. Results show favourably low rates of emissions for Swedish and Norwegian tourists, while emissions of tourists from Australia and Canada, the UK and Switzerland are several orders of magnitude greater. This is largely as a result of air travel, once more confirming that any tourism based on air travel causes disproportionately large emissions. This kind of tourism needs to be regarded as unsustainable, as world average per capita emissions of 3.6 t CO<sub>2</sub> in 2002 (UNDP, 2005) are known to be unsustainable (IPCC, 2001). Clearly, many industrialized countries face severe reduction needs with, for example, reductions of 60% by the year 2050 being considered in the UK (Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, 2005).

The lesson to be learned is clear: sustainable tourism – and ecotourism in particular – must focus on emissions caused by transport to and from the destination. As technological change can contribute only to minor gains in fuel efficiency, while total emissions are increasing with the growing number of people participating in travel (Gössling and Peeters, 2006), ecotourism operators should seek to attract tourists from geographically adjacent areas.

Currently, however, there seems to be little awareness of the importance of transport: for instance, the Swedish Ecotourism Association has very strict criteria for certification (see Gössling, Chapter 6, this volume), and certified ecotourism operators are forced to use engines (in boats, cars, etc.) that are cutting edge in terms of fuel efficiency.

While such criteria foster energy-efficient behaviour and energy consciousness, they are insignificant when compared to emissions caused by travel to and from the destination. Clearly, any mechanical advances in fuel efficiency for air- or land-based transport might lead to marginal savings in comparison to the overall energy used for participation in an 'eco-journey'. The situation becomes even more controversial given the fact that the Swedish Ecotourism Association celebrates the attractiveness of Swedish ecotourism worldwide as 'top-notch experiences and unique cutting-edge arrangements, which will put Swedish ecotourism on the world map and attract visitors from near and far' (SEF, 2005).

Likewise, many Swedish certified ecotourism operators offer journeys that involve long-distance travel. For instance, Polar Quest is an ecotourism operator located 'north of the polar circle', which raises general questions of distance. On its website, Polar Quest advertises journeys to Galapagos, South Africa or, as of September 2005, a trip to Antarctica: 'Come along to a penguin safari in Antarctica in December. Prices from SEK 39,500 (€4400), including flight from Stockholm' (Polar Quest, 2005). Examples such as these illustrate that the global-local nexus in Swedish ecotourism is blurred and that a major share of it is a contradiction in terms of sustainability.

This also leads to the question of 'Greenwashing' of ecotourism products in Scandinavia – do operators simply not know about the global environmental consequences of travel or do they not care? And what could be done to make ecotourism more sustainable in terms of distances travelled, transport means used and emissions? The answer is not simple. First of all, it seems of great importance to solve the paradox inherent in Swedish ecotourism. This paradox will persist as long as the focus of certification remains local – it is no convincing approach that ecotourism operators in Sweden are forced to switch to more energy-efficient engines to save another litre of fuel, while the Swedish Ecotourism Association encourages long-distance travel through the invitation of transcontinental tourists to Sweden, and while its members continue to offer long-distance ecotourism journeys abroad. In this context, it thus seems of great importance to provide better information to both the Swedish Ecotourism Association and its members on the role of emissions caused by different means of transport. This should then have consequences for marketing. The results of this study indicate that Swedish ecotourism would, in environmental and probably in social terms as well, profit from a stronger focus on Swedish ecotourists. Hence, the outward approach of marketing might be reversed, which seems feasible given the increasing national interest in ecotourism.

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# 15 Ecotourism and Indigenous People: Positive and Negative Impacts of Sami Tourism

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## Introduction

Historically, the Sami people in peripheral northern Scandinavia have subsisted on reindeer herding. However, during recent decades there has been a decline in the reindeer business activity and the modern reindeer herder is struggling to make ends meet. Today, reindeer herding is carried out by helicopter, motorbike, snowmobile and truck, aiming for large-scale food production (Lyngnes and Viken, 1998). Modern, restructured and motorized reindeer herding practices are physically demanding, which is why an increasing number of Sami are prevented from taking part in the work. This, together with lower prices for reindeer meat, force many Sami to look for new means of making a living, and tourism is often seen as an alternative (Pettersson, 2004).

Ideally, Sami tourism offers job opportunities, brings higher incomes and enables the spread of knowledge on the Sami culture. On the other hand, Sami tourism may jeopardize the indigenous culture because of over-commercialization or 'disneyfication'. Furthermore an increased number of tourists may harm not only the indigenous culture, but also the sensitive environment in which the reindeer-herding Sami live. The aim of this chapter is to present indigenous Sami tourism, and to discuss the positive and negative impacts resulting from a development of Sami tourism in Scandinavia. This impact is analysed from three different perspectives: economic, socio-cultural and environmental.

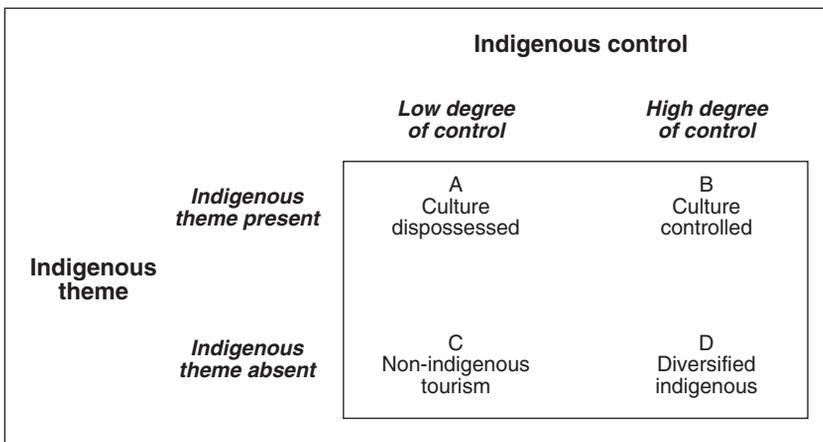
## What is Indigenous Tourism?

Reports referring to *indigenous tourism* are found in many different contexts. A central question is the actual contents of indigenous tourism. In the

limited research focusing on indigenous tourism, a number of different definitions can be found, which often state that it is indigenous culture and tradition – together with local environment and heritage – that form the basis for tourism development. One way of defining indigenous tourism is to use ‘the four Hs’ approach, as outlined by Smith (1996). According to this author, there are four different elements that are influential in the development of indigenous tourism. It is also these elements that the tourist experience is built upon. These elements are the indigenous *habitat, history, handicrafts and heritage.*

Hinch and Butler (1996) have made an attempt to define indigenous tourism using two key aspects: *indigenous control* and *indigenous theme* (Fig. 15.1). The term indigenous tourism can be applied to activities in which indigenous peoples are involved with varying degrees of control. The second key aspect is the degree to which the tourist attraction is based upon an indigenous theme. The focus of this chapter is primarily on Sami tourism (in the upper right-hand box, B), i.e. tourism with an indigenous theme and with a large degree of indigenous control.

Zeppel (1998) also considered the varying degree of control over tourism exercised by indigenous peoples. She has listed a number of different limitations that can help indigenous groups to control tourism development (Table 15.1). The control factors include limiting tourist use and access of both time and space. These limitations are argued as being of



**Fig. 15.1.** Indigenous tourism (from Hinch and Butler, 1996).

**Table 15.1.** Indigenous control of tourism for sustainable development (from Zeppel, 1998).

Controls	Examples
Spatial limitation	Hosts set limits on entry to homelands and sacred sites
Activity limitation	Hosts establish preferred or permitted tourist activities
Temporal limitation	Hosts indicate appropriate times for tourist access and use
Cultural limitation	Hosts set limits on access to cultural knowledge and rituals

assistance to indigenous peoples not only to exercise control over the development of tourism, but also to develop sustainable tourism. The examples listed below show that sustainable tourism development is dependent on the host's ability to define the limits themselves. When defining these limitations, however, indigenous hosts have to elicit the support of institutions and politicians.

Besides limitations initiated by the indigenous hosts, there are a number of general limitations and other factors that influence the number of visitors and the effects of tourism. For instance, the location of the indigenous tourism destination or attraction affects the accessibility and number of visitors. Geographical distance between the indigenous attraction and the location of visitor accommodation results in long travel time and high travel cost. National legislation, insufficient knowledge of language or cultural differences may be other limitations.

## Sami Tourism in Scandinavia

Sápmi, the land of the Sami people situated in the very north of Europe (Fig. 15.2), is characterized by its peripheral location, a lack of urban and infrastructure development and a sparse population. In Sápmi, as in other indigenous areas, these characteristics are not only restrictions but also

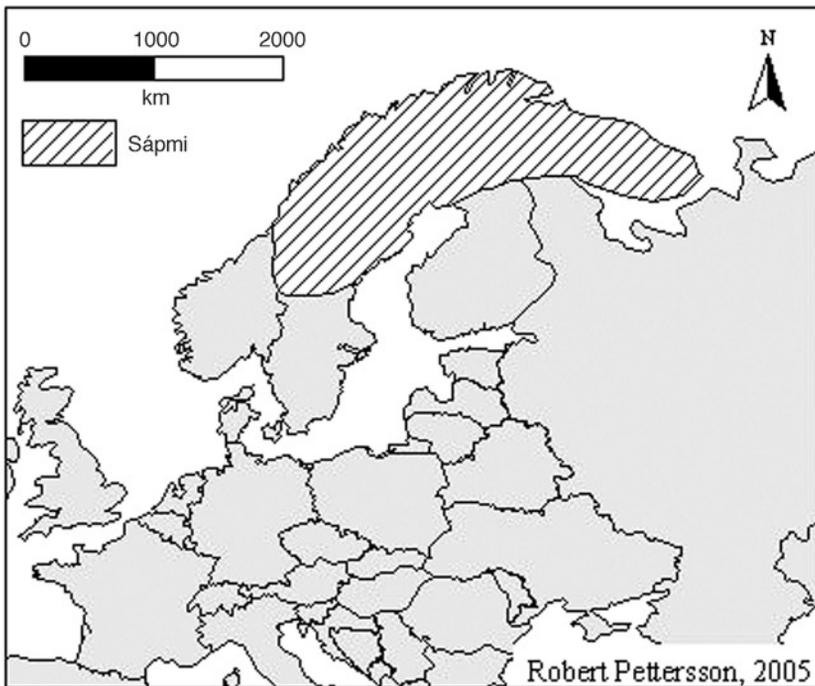


Fig. 15.2. Sápmi, land of the Sami people, in northern Europe.

important parts of the tourist attraction of the area. Today, most Sami live modern lives, although Sami culture is different from modern Western culture. The main differences are the Sami language, typical Sami symbols (including the reindeer and the Sami dress) and the ethnical minority's stronger anchorage in traditions (Viken, 2000).

Thus Sami culture, in combination with the wilderness of the landscape, attract an increasing number of visitors. In the Sápmi area, which has no exact borders, there are an increasing number of Sami tourism activities such as museums, cultural events, outdoor cultural sites and places where Sami handicrafts are sold (Müller and Pettersson, 2001). Presently, there is no overall legislation regulating or protecting the unique nature and culture of this area, although there are protected enclaves in the form of nature and culture reserves.

As is the case for many of the world's indigenous peoples, Sami culture attracts visitors especially from outside the destination area. The degree of involvement in tourism does, however, differ among the 60,000 Sami who inhabit the four countries which comprise Sápmi. The smallest group of Sami, about 2000, live in Russia on the Kola Peninsula. This group is deeply involved in a struggle for their rights to own reindeer and utilize the grazing land, and therefore there are hardly any tourism activities at all to be found in this area (Lyngnes and Viken, 1998).

In Finland, there are about 6000 Sami, but they do not have exclusive rights to reindeer herding, as the Swedish and Norwegian Sami do. In Finland many fortune hunters, Sami and non-Sami, have initiated controversial and criticised ventures in Sami tourism (Saarinen, 2001). Norway, on the other hand, with the largest population of 35,000 Sami, has many good examples of Sami tourism. Here, tourism development started several decades ago and from the very beginning the Sami themselves have controlled the process (Lyngnes and Viken, 1998). Sami tourism in Sweden, with about 17,000 native Sami, is also reasonably sustainable and Sami controlled. A large percentage of Sami entrepreneurs have newly established businesses, and the number of operators is increasing at a steady pace (Pettersson, 2004).

Many producers strive to create authentic experiences, but this is a problematic concept in a society and culture that is subject to change and development. Nevertheless, it is rather common that Sami tourism entrepreneurs market experiences such as Sami everyday life. Naturally, everyday Sami life has many similarities to the visitors' everyday life, a reason why Sami everyday life usually needs some adjustments to become attractive for the tourists. Thus most Sami tourism, as well as other kinds of tourism, is more or less arranged or staged (MacCannell, 1976; Chhabra *et al.*, 2003). In Sápmi there are ongoing discussions about how and to what degree staged attractions at staged meeting places may harm Sami culture (Viken, 1997; Green, 2000; Saarinen, 2001). Aronsson (1997) refers to museums and festivals as examples of staged attractions, two kinds of attractions both found in Sápmi.

In the peripheral and sparsely populated regions, where many of the

reindeer-herding Sami live, landscape, flora and fauna play an important role in tourism. Some tourist activities in Sápmi take place outdoors or in the indigenous habitat, as Smith (1996) calls it. In one way or another, all Sami tourism entrepreneurs in Sápmi market nature (habitat) or culture (heritage/history/handicrafts). By no means can all of these Sami tourism activities be referred to as ecotourism, but nature and culture are very important resources for future Sami tourism development. This makes sustainability a central issue.

Sami tourism entrepreneurs, at least in Sweden and Norway, seem to be reasonably aware of the importance of sustainable development. One proof of this is the fact that Sami tourism entrepreneurs in Sweden are over-represented among the companies that have been approved with the Swedish ecotourism label Nature's Best (see also Gössling, Chapter 6, this volume). Examples of labelled activities are: (i) day trip to a Sami farm; (ii) reindeer sledding and Sami wilderness; (iii) mountain ride with Sami guides; (iv) Sami farm experience; and (v) trekking with reindeer in the World Heritage Site, Laponia.

## The Impacts of Indigenous Tourism

Tourism brings people and cultures together and the resulting impact can be either positive or negative for the destination area (Robinson and Boniface, 1999; Mason, 2003). In the following discussion, examples are taken both from existing Sami tourism in Scandinavia and from indigenous tourism in other parts of the world. Indigenous tourism in, for example, North America and Oceania often has a longer tradition than Sami tourism (Butler and Hinch, 1996), and there is potentially a lot to learn regarding potential risks.

There are many ways of categorizing the impacts of tourism. In this chapter the impacts are divided into three dimensions: economical, social (socio-cultural) and environmental, the same categorization as used by Mathieson and Wall (1982).

### Economical impacts

Positive economic impacts (see Table 15.2), including visitor spending, employment and higher incomes, are often given as reasons for getting involved with tourism: tourism consumption brings income not only to the tourism entrepreneur. There will also be indirect economic effects in the local economy connected to tourism producers. Therefore, tourism spending is advantageous to many actors, from tourism entrepreneurs and hotel owners to local grocers and petrol station operators. This means that the economic impact from tourism, thanks to multiplier effects, is larger than simply the direct income for producers (Mathieson and Wall, 1982; Pearce, 1989). Sami tourism is often based in small villages far from larger

**Table 15.2.** Possible positive and negative economical impacts of indigenous tourism (remodelled from Mathiseon and Wall, 1982; Hall and Page, 2002; Pettersson, 2004).

Positive impacts	Negative impacts
Broader economic base	Capital outflows
Creation of employment	Costs of development
Higher incomes	External control
More varying occupations	Increased dependence
	More seasonal jobs
	Rise in local prices

towns. At these places even a small number of visitors can result in rather large positive economic impacts.

For the reindeer-herding Sami, tourism is the type of business that can begin at relatively short notice and without extensive preparations. Tourism is fairly easy to combine with other occupations like reindeer herding and hunting or fishing, and Sami tourism entrepreneurs often have earlier experience of combining many different occupations (Viken, 2000). Tourism brings a broader subsistence and economic base, and this makes the entrepreneur less sensitive to fluctuations in other businesses. For example, the annual outcome of reindeer herding is largely dependent on the grazing conditions each year. Revenues from reindeer herding also vary due to national changes concerning reindeer meat subsidies.

As seen in Table 15.2, not only are there possible positive impacts following the development of tourism: on the negative side there are, for instance, problems with seasonal variations. Tourism flows vary to a large extent during the year, with the peak season usually during the summer months. Many of the Sami tourism facilities are closed during the off-season, when entrepreneurs spend more time with reindeer herding or other subsistence activities.

Many of the Sami entrepreneurs starting a tourism business have to make some initial investments, and they are often dependent on new partners and suppliers (Pettersson, 2004). If a large proportion of these partners and suppliers are located outside the local area, Sami control becomes limited and capital outflow can be significant. Tourism can lead to a sudden rise in local demand, and a local price escalation may result from this, especially in small tourism destinations such as those found in Sápmi.

### Social impacts

The negative impacts discussed in Sápmi are primarily how tourism may damage or influence Sami culture and how it may disturb the reindeer herding. Social impacts may be hard to observe and thereby hard to control. However, there is only a limited number of examples from Sápmi indicating that Sami culture has been negatively influenced by tourism development. Table 15.3 lists some possible positive and negative social impacts.

**Table 15.3.** Possible positive and negative social impacts of indigenous tourism (remodelled from Mathieson and Wall, 1982; Hall and Page, 2002; Petterson, 2004).

Positive impacts	Negative impacts
Better social services	Alienation
Increased knowledge among visitors	Commoditization
Improved self-confidence	Criminality
Improved situation for women	'Disneyfication' of culture
More contacts	
Preserved indigenous culture	

Modern methods of reindeer herding utilize motor vehicles and are physically challenging. This makes it especially hard for women to participate in the reindeer-herding industry, and that is why Sami tourism can be an especially attractive option for women, offering employment and the possibility of staying in peripheral Sápmi, where other jobs or educational institutions are sparse. Another positive result of Sami tourism is the opportunity for transfer of knowledge about the Sami culture to visitors. In the long term Sami tourism may contribute to decreasing the antagonism that arises out of other peoples' ignorance and alienation (Petterson and Lindahl, 2002). This knowledge transfer about Sami and Sami culture has also been shown to be positive for Sami self confidence. Furthermore, increased visitor numbers in Sápmi offer Sami people an opportunity to expand their social networks.

One positive impact of indigenous tourism seldom mentioned is that it helps to preserve indigenous culture (Notzke, 1999). In Sápmi this can be seen by the fact that tourists provide the major market for the products of many Sami craftsmen. Without tourists much of the Sami handicraft, with its long tradition, would never be produced. Medina (2003) claims that tourism in Belize has contributed not only to the maintenance, but also the rediscovery of, Mayan culture. Old traditional dances and songs are reproduced as a result of research into the traditional culture. Similarly, a Sami tourism entrepreneur in northern Sweden, offering a mountain walk, states that thanks to tourism he has rediscovered his ancestors' way of training domestic reindeer to carry packs. On the other hand, tourist demand may also stimulate the production of non-traditional Sami handicraft, adjusted to suit the tourists.

If the tourism development at a destination or in a region is successful, one effect is the increased number of visitors. These visitors require all kinds of services, including groceries, restaurants and health care. Tourism often leads to the expansion of these services (Mathieson and Wall, 1982) which, in turn, offers local people better social services outside peak seasons.

A local society has a lot to gain by tourism development, but there are also risks. One of the risks of indigenous tourism is that it may give rise to the 'disneyfication' of indigenous culture. Indigenous tourism often involves staged, metaphoric and touristic images (Cohen, 1993). The traditional Sami attributes, e.g. the Sami colourful dress, the Sami tent and the reindeer, are often used to market the area to tourists. These attributes are in everyday life

seldom used in the way they are shown to tourists, and their tourism-related use risks ending up in over-commercialization.

Due to their colourful dresses and different culture the Sami are often exposed in the media. Sami culture is also used by both Sami and non-Sami promoters to sell Sami or non-Sami destinations or products. This contributes to the spreading of a rather exotic Sami image (Viken, 1997; Saarinen, 1998). Due to distance and time constraints, many people are not able to visit Sápmi. The Sami image in media and marketing gives non-visitors an inaccurate picture of the indigenous culture, and first-time visitors may arrive with unrealistic expectations (Müller and Pettersson, 2005). Tourism marketing and Sami tourism itself both run the risk of contributing to the commoditization of Sami culture and the creation of Sami stereotypes (Cohen, 1993; Saarinen, 1997; Waitt, 1999; Viken, 2000).

Longer periods of interaction between hosts and guests may lead to a situation where hosts are forced to adjust their life and their culture to suit the visitors. Pedersen and Viken (1996) describe the tourism interaction in Sápmi as a transformation from Sami nomadism and Sápmi as a harvest land towards Sápmi as a playground for global tourism. The 'tourism-adjusted way of living' can lead to a feeling of alienation, where the hosts tend to be alienated from their own culture. The 'it's-safe-to-leave-the-door-unlocked-mentality' of the inhabitants in peripheral Sápmi, where everybody knows each other, may change if the number of tourists (outsiders) increases. Often, growing tourism is followed by other negative social impacts such as crime and feelings of insecurity.

## Environmental impacts

To be aware of and control impacts not only on cultural values and practices but also on the natural resources upon which tourism is based is essential for the sustainable development of a destination (Hall and Lew, 1998). Tourism experiences with indigenous people often take place in peripheral areas with fragile ecosystems (Zeppel, 1998). Sami tourism in northern Scandinavia is no exception to this rule, and a discussion about environmental impacts resulting from a development of tourism is important (Table 15.4).

Some Sami communities state that they have become involved with tourism in order to control visitor movement to areas where they will not disturb reindeer. By directing tourists it is possible not only to protect the wildlife, but also to protect sensitive environments. However, this depends on Sami control of the local tourism economy. The reindeer-herding Sami have for generations lived close to nature, and they use nature rather than consume it. Tourism brings tourists and nature together, and this forms a unique opportunity to focus on environmental and sustainability issues. Sápmi is a meeting place for tourists and Sami people, and as such it is an arena that highlights the risks and opportunities of tourism in fragile environments and the necessity for well-defined management strategies.

Tourism development can bring several types of negative environmental

**Table 15.4.** Possible positive and negative environmental impacts of indigenous tourism (remodelled from Mathieson and Wall, 1982; Hall and Page, 2002; Petterson, 2004).

Positive impacts	Negative impacts
Increased environmental awareness	Erosion
Protection of wildlife and environment	Littering
Visitor management strategies	Noise
	Overcrowding
	Pollution

impacts. Some types of tourism cause noise pollution because of the use of motor vehicles such as snowmobiles, four-wheeled motorcycles and helicopters. Motor vehicles, but also hikers and bikers, may cause erosion in fragile environments (Tolvanen *et al.*, 2005). Despite improved exhaust silencers and exhaust emission control systems, motor vehicles may cause discomfort (Lindberg *et al.*, 2001) and have long-term detrimental effects on flora and fauna.

However, the number of tourists and motor vehicles used in the Sami tourism industry is limited. Furthermore, studies show that only a few Sami tourism activities take place in the fragile parts of the Sami habitat (Müller and Petterson, 2001). A large proportion of visitors to Sápmi experience Sami culture at museums, visitor centres and during Sami tourism events. Tourists are often found in towns and not in nature. The habitat as a base for Sami tourism activities is still limited, although other forms of tourism and non-tourism activities may affect nature and culture.

Thus, Sami tourism (often small-scale with small visitor groups) is not an immediate environmental threat. An exception to this rule may be Sami tourism events and festivals, such as the winter festival in Jokkmokk, Sweden, or the Eastern Festival in Kautokeino, Norway, where many visitors are gathered in a limited area for a limited period of time. These events can cause littering, noise and damage (Müller and Petterson, 2005).

Carrying capacity is a concept often referred to in discussions about environmental impact. Carrying capacity can be defined as the maximum number of people that can use a destination without unacceptable changes taking place. Attracting a large number of visitors is not an end in itself. Neither tourists nor locals gain when the number of visitors becomes too large. The destination then risks losing its exclusivity and may become too crowded, both for hosts and guests (Smith, 1989). Researchers and tourism entrepreneurs no longer talk in terms of an optimal number of visitors. Instead, the concept of carrying capacity is used to indicate the degree of change involved and its direction. Carrying capacity is thus about the assessment of the level of change that is deemed acceptable (Walmsley and Lewis, 1993). The challenge in Sápmi is that a large number of stakeholders, Sami as well as non-Sami, must come to an agreement about the level of acceptable change. At the same time, the larger challenge for many Sami tourism entrepreneurs may be to attract enough visitors to make a profit.

Sami tourism will probably never become a mass tourism industry. On

the contrary, it has the potential to remain small scale where tourists can learn from Sami interaction with the environment. However, in small hosting societies and in sensitive environments, even a small number of visitors may result in crowding and overuse of resources such as fish and game. Small visitor numbers limit the impact of tourism, but also require higher tour prices (Zeppel, 1998).

## **Concluding Remarks**

Whether a change is seen as positive or negative depends on goals, values and the observer. It is also the case that although individuals – both hosts and guests – are aware of the negative impacts of tourism, they may still be receptive to the overall benefits from tourism. Furthermore, tourism impacts are often hard to distinguish from other forms of impacts.

Indigenous tourism initiates a debate about the commoditization and ‘Disneyfication’ of indigenous culture. Many people support indigenous people in their assertion that nobody other than themselves should define what is authentic or not, and how indigenous tourism should be developed. However, indigenous people themselves are divided into two groups. One of these groups stresses the opportunities in commoditizing indigenous culture, while the other focuses on the risks. Tourism development is a balancing act between these opposing views and practices.

Tourism related to Sami culture or to other ‘endangered cultures’ is seldom discussed in relation to ecotourism. If tourism development results in unsustainable practices and discomfort among Sami actors, this will lead to long-term problems. Staged tourist attractions and experiences may jeopardize Sami culture. On the other hand, attractions without any commoditization involved would hardly attract any visitors at all (Selwyn, 1996). After all, it is the difference between Sami culture and the everyday life of tourists that constitutes the Sami tourist attraction.

Interesting examples of indigenous experiences, both emerging and existing, can be found at many different places in Sápmi and in other parts of the world. These tourism enterprises are in fact competing for the same segment of visitors, and this can be beneficial for all involved stakeholders if operational knowledge can be transferred. Ultimately both hosts and guests will benefit from the development of well-organized and sustainable indigenous tourism. However, the first question to ask is if, and to what extent, indigenous peoples themselves are interested in becoming involved in tourism activities.

If there is a great demand for indigenous tourism in the future, it will become increasingly important to control various kinds of impacts. Because of the potential opportunities and risks involved, and the lack of existing knowledge regarding Sami tourism, there is a great need for continued research.

Earlier research (Hinch, 1995) proposed four tourism management principles, drawn from experiences of indigenous tourism. First, a greater

control of tourism development is required. Secondly, in view of the complex issues that tourism entails, education programmes are essential. These education programmes would be as important for the hosts as they would be for the guests. Thirdly, tourism should not be viewed as the only strategy for economic development, but as one component of a diversified strategy. Finally, tourism development should be limited to a level that allows for effective local control, and this implies slow growth and small-scale development of local natural and cultural resources. These and similar management principles define a good platform for the future development of sustainable indigenous tourism in Scandinavia and elsewhere.

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# 16 Hunting Tourism as Ecotourism: Conflicts and Opportunities\*

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## Introduction

Only a few of the hunting tourism events in Sweden are certified by the Swedish Ecotourism Association. This kind of tourism has, however, great potential, presupposing that cultural and social aspects are taken into consideration. Both local moose-hunting teams and hunting tourists contribute in different ways to viable rural communities. The hunting teams help to maintain the sense of community and sense of place that its inhabitants develop over time. Hunting tourism supports the local economy by providing alternative sources of income to farming. Both these socio-cultural and economic issues are necessary for a viable community even though, as shown in the following text, they can also work against each other. The material for this study was gathered in Locknevi in southern Sweden, a parish with 500 inhabitants spread out over five villages. All names in the text are fictitious.

## Moose Hunting in Sweden

Every year many of those who have moved from Locknevi return with a son or another relative to take part in the moose hunt held during the first week of October. Hunting is sometimes described as holy, and it engages men with different backgrounds – and also a few women. For long periods in history the peasants had no or few rights to hunt, even though poaching occurred; individuals or small groups used to hunt small game. Today the most common game are moose and roe deer, but both species were rare before 1950. This kind of hunt is organized in teams consisting of up to 20

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landowners and their relatives. Roe deer are usually hunted by smaller teams. All hunts are strictly regulated with respect to both the handling of weapons and which animals to shoot. The regulations are often controlled by the hunters' associations, which also arrange the obligatory hunting classes. The meaning of hunting can be captured in six keywords: ritual, nature, animals, egalitarian friendship, maleness and place.

### *Ritual*

The practice of hunting could be viewed as a ritual. Keesing (1981, p. 517) described the ritual as 'a stylized pattern of behaviour, in most cases culturally patterned collective behaviour'. Rituals in hunting contribute to the unity of the team and indirectly they also help to maintain the local community. Two examples of almost universal rituals in hunting are the distribution of meat and trophies. According to Johansson (2000), hunting was never entirely about private consumption of the meat, as far back as historians can tell. Sharing the meat is an ideal in older anthropological texts, and is still found in the moose-hunting practices of today. Since moose hunting began in the 1950s, the meat has been distributed among the hunters, irrespective of their social status. However, in the last decade, many of the teams have given the meat to the respective landowners, even if they have not taken part in the hunt. In contrast, the trophy, usually the antler, has a strong symbolic value and is always given to the person who shot the animal.

### *Nature*

Hunters talking about hunting use metaphors like 'genes', 'instincts' and 'inherited in human nature'. Excitement and freedom are other common words frequently used to describe hunting, pointing it out in juxtaposition to the demands of civilization. The perception of human–nature relations varies from nature as an object to nature as a subject in relation to ourselves, or a condition inside ourselves: 'the human nature'. As in agriculture there are moments in hunting where an organic view of nature is activated, for example when the hunters speak about hunting in a sensuous way, using sight, sense of smell, hearing and taste. Abram (1996) described this kind of perception as a reciprocal exchange between the body of the subject and its environment. In this process neither the one who experiences nor the phenomenon that is experienced is passive.

### *Animals*

The game and the dogs are common issues of conversations during a hunt. The hunters tell anecdotes about how clever the game is. Their supposed cleverness and their great abilities to survive in the forest are challenges for the hunters and many of them spend much of their leisure time in the forest studying the behaviour of the animals. Killing an animal is not always the aim, but when an animal is killed the norms prescribe that it should be treated with respect. A real hunter should be able to slaughter an animal in a

neat and tidy way. This is sometimes difficult for those who are not used to rural life.

### *Egalitarian friendship*

'Hunting means that everybody is out in the forest and everybody is equal', says Peter, who is a hunter living in Locknevi. Irrespective of ownership, profession and other signs of status outside the hunting environment, the team is built on reciprocal social relations (Ekman, 1991). The social space of hunting is informal and characterized by what anthropologists call a 'joking relationship'. A sign of the informal and egalitarian atmosphere is that the cars are left unlocked. You are supposed to jump into the nearest car without asking for permission when moving between different stands. The older hunters, especially, value the informal get-together more than the shooting itself.

The egalitarian and reciprocal relations in a team have a clear demarcation from the outside world. The hunters often tell jokes about people from outside, and guests have to stand some mild provocation. In earlier years the teams used to compete, but this has become less visible since the authorities in the 1980s suggested local moose-management associations. Thirty out of 32 teams in Locknevi have joined this association.

### *Maleness*

Hunting is sometimes describes as a ritual 'to make men out of boys', and the ideal is continuity between the generations. Children frequently take part in the hunts, mostly boys but also girls. Stories about older hunters glorify the lonesome hero (Sandgren, 1956; Johansson, 2000). Today the norm of the hunter corresponds to that of the farmer; a socially well-adjusted man willing to cooperate (Ekman, 1991).

Both agriculture and hunting are changing, like the male norm. Female hunters are getting more common and the few in Locknevi now feel accepted. These women who actually shoot – and not only drive the game – have all moved to Locknevi. The other women find it difficult to kill an animal and are also afraid of being criticized for not being good enough. When a woman, who moved to Locknevi 25 years ago, invited another woman as a guest during a hunt, some members of the team reacted in a negative way. The link to the real hunters (male, preferably landowners born in Locknevi) had become too weak and she had inadvertently crossed an invisible border.

### *Place*

When passing a site during a hunt someone often tells an anecdote about what has happened there before. The stands where the hunters wait for game are named after persons or a characteristic situation. Through this continuous denomination the place becomes part of the hunt instead of an

object for the hunt. The way the local hunters perceive the place illustrates the concept of place as a time–space relation (Massey, 1994; Casey, 1996). Abram (1996) suggests that a well-known landscape communicates with us and reminds us by addressing all our senses. Telling anecdotes about what happened at different places when passing them is a way of mediating the memory of a landscape.

## Hunting Tourism

In the 1980s, one landowner in Locknevi (Kjell) started to lease hunting permits for moose and roe deer to German and Danish hunters. Kjell is considered an entrepreneur – always first to try something new, and hunting tourism is a small activity besides his forestry. He lives in a neighbouring parish on family property and the property he owns in Locknevi also used to belong to his family. Kjell does not, himself, hunt. If there are a few hunters coming for a weekend he gives them a map showing where they can hunt. The hunters stay in cottages and they pay per day or per animal they shoot. Kjell keeps the meat but the hunters get the trophy, in this case the antler. The larger groups staying for a week are taken care of by a Danish hunting leader, Jens, who is familiar with the land and who hunts together with the group.

By the time Kjell started his business the moose population was increasing rapidly throughout the whole country and hunting tourism had become an opportunity for landowners. Today about 260 enterprises in Sweden are involved with hunting tourism, approximately half of them situated in northern Sweden, which is dominated by forests and where game is more common (Swedish Tourist Authority, 2003). Many of these enterprises are engaged in other activities like farming, forestry or other forms of tourism. Twelve enterprises are members of the Swedish Ecotourism Association, and nine out of these are located in northern Sweden (Ekoturismföreningen, 2005). Hunting tourism is still a small branch, but with a potential for growth. A hunting tourist is defined as ‘a person who temporarily leaves his daily surroundings (household, working place) to hunt’ (Swedish Tourist Authority, 2003). Most of them are Swedish, but foreign hunters are eager to come. Compared to countries with a more developed hunting tourism, such as Scotland and Poland, Swedish prices are rather low. Swedish landowners hesitate to invite foreign hunters, though, both because of the more complicated arrangements and because of the sceptical attitudes that local inhabitants sometimes show.

After a few years another landowner, a farmer, followed Kjell’s example by leasing hunting permits on a short-term basis. Like Kjell he does not, himself, hunt and he leaves all arrangements to the Danish hunting leader, Jens. During the 1990s some other landowners commenced hunting tourism on a different basis; all of them were hunters and sometimes they hunted together with the tourists. Jens now leases the whole or part of the hunting permits on seven properties on long-term arrangements, which he then

personally leases out as permits on a 1-week basis. In Denmark Jens is a truck driver, but he spends five weeks every year in Locknevi. He cannot take part in all hunting trips since there are several groups at different places at the same time.

An even smaller-scale form of hunting tourism is carried out by one of the moose-hunting teams in Locknevi, which invites Danish paying guests to join the team during the first moose-hunting week. In addition to their own land, this team leases property from a company, which is paid for with the money from the Danish hunters. Other teams have discussed or tried the same kind of arrangement. Another form of hunting tourism is where some landowners invite foreign guests to hunt, in exchange for a reciprocal hunting visit with them.

### **The landowners' and foreign hunters' perspective**

Local economic development is the motive behind hunting tourism and one of the principles of ecotourism. Throughout the years Jens has become familiar with the landowners and hunters in Locknevi. He has heard the criticism of hunting tourism, even though he has never been criticized himself. He has only good experiences except for the occasion when a landowner asked him to suggest a price for taking care of the deer hunt. Jens suspects that the landowner used him to increase the price for the Swedish team leasing the hunt on his land. Jens is aware of the fact that he pays more for leasing than what is common and that 'his' hunters pay more than Swedish hunters do.

Kjell, the entrepreneur, is used to being criticized for the projects he carries out. He suspects that he would have met more acceptances, if he had been a hunter. Being excluded from the community of hunters who live in or have moved from Locknevi, he is aware of the importance of personal relations. He states that those who criticize him do not know him. Some of the hunters in Locknevi know him from school and joke in a friendly way about him.

Kjell is sympathetic to the critique on raising prices for leasing hunting permits. When he started his business, the local newspaper wrote an article with a headline about how Kjell had thrown out those who used to lease the hunting permits on his property and replaced them with Danish and German hunters. Kjell explains that they were friends who had hunted for free, but since he is known as a businessman people think that business is all he cares for. In the same article the regional hunting advisor thought that landowners ought not to engage in hunting tourism. Kjell describes the situation in the 1980s:

I was a member of the regional board of LRF [Swedish Farmers Association] and I thought this [hunting tourism] could be a niche within agriculture and forestry. [...] I wanted to discuss this with the LRF. The chairman got offended and said it was not a question for the LRF. They [LRF] thought this should be settled by the hunters' association, but they are the opposition party, not the

landowners. At that time many people didn't consider hunting as something connected with agriculture and forestry. They did it as a hobby and not as a part of the business. That is possible if you have a good economy, but the properties were expensive. If I had been a hunter I would have been appreciated, but I don't hunt – I only get money. They are envious.

At the beginning of the 1990s, LRF changed its attitude and started to support hunting tourism as a way of making more money out of the forest. Kjell is proud to be recognized but at the same time the competition with other landowners lowers the profit compared to that in the 1980s. He is very concerned about the ownership and the right to control his own property. He does not manage his forest in the new environmentally friendly way, where one should leave high stubble, seed pines and fallen trees after felling in order to increase biological diversity. 'Sometimes the interests of nature conservation do not correspond to mine. I might not want the lumber and I might violate the law to keep it tidy', Kjell explains.

Kjell has renovated the houses on his property in Locknevi and uses them to accommodate the hunting tourists. The neighbours appreciate that he looks after the buildings but they do not approve of his refusal to join the local moose-management association. 'Those who don't join are put on the black list', Kjell says. One reason for him not to join is that he has properties in different areas with different management associations, and he wants the same rules for all hunters he administrates. He wants control over his business and his property and sometimes this is more important than maximum profit. For example, he hesitates to take certain tenants because of the risk that they could be the 'wrong' kind of people.

Two of the landowners stopped their tourist business; they felt that it had a negative influence on their own hunting experience, but they think it is up to people themselves to decide what to do with their property. One of them had paying guests in the team but he got fed up with the comments from others about how much 'your bloody Germans' got of the meat. The other team members also complained that the Germans never took care of a dead animal. Other landowners had more positive experiences of hunting together with the visitors: 'It's always nice when people you know come and visit. We usually spend a few days at his place, so I have been to Denmark many times. The Danes and the Germans are good at shooting' (Yngve, hunter living in Locknevi).

Thanks to Jens, who organizes most of the hunting tourism, there is a certain amount of continuity in the hunting tourism in Locknevi. He brings knowledge about the place and the people. The Danish hunters that return are building up their own relation to the place and there are similarities between the Danish and the local hunters. But even though the Danish hunters also value the experience of being in the forest, the excitement when they come across an animal and the joy of the male friendship, hunting is not as complex as for many of the hunters in Locknevi. For most of the Danes it does not matter if they are in Locknevi or somewhere in Poland, according to Jens. They do not have the opportunity to become familiar with the game as individuals as some of the local hunters have. The

sense of community is probably not so strong in the foreign teams since they often consist of new members every year. Those who return lack strong bonds with each other and each other's relatives. Kjell captures their situation: 'They buy a hunting experience and everything else is up to me to arrange.'

The foreign hunters that are paying guests in a team have a stronger relation to the place compared to those involved on a larger scale in hunting tourism. Bo, a hunter from Locknevi, who was a paying guest in Kenya, says that he had 'much more fun than the dollar tourists in the lodges'. He believes this to be a more genuine experience that people are willing to pay for.

The Locknevi team who has six Danish guests every year is one of the more traditional teams, with several elders and distribution of the meat among the hunters and not the landowners. The Danes are treated both as guests and customers. There is no doubt that they are welcome and the friendship seems mutual. They rarely take part in the conversation during the breaks though, partly because of language difficulties and partly because they have a different role from the other team members: they do not have to drive the game and the hunting leader tells them where to go and gives them a lift to and from the stand. They are not allowed to take any meat, but they get to keep the trophy.

A guest should not leave empty-handed, and several times the members of the hunting team have complained about the poor outcome for the Danes. 'There are far too few moose shot and it's bad for the Danes who have travelled so far', Karl-Gunnar says. A customer should have value for money, and when one of the Danes shoots a moose one of the local hunters comments that it is good 'so that they will return next year'. This polite treatment could be interpreted both as the host's care and the salesman's service. The team has not discussed how to behave and since the situation is new they have improvized and ended up with this mix. Basically, the Danes are guests, but everybody is conscious of the fact that they are also useful. Exploiting someone is not socially acceptable and the following quotation reveals ambivalence about the activity and an eagerness for mutual benefit:

Well, I might have exploited them a little, but they find it fantastic just to come here and sit down in silence. In Denmark you can't find a place to hunt without hearing the traffic or other sounds in the background. So they pay for the sense of community and for the silence. [...] Maybe someone thought it was a bit strange in the beginning. Since they paid more than we they were supposed to have some advantages. But I don't feel ... it has worked out good, really well. [...] Other hunters might complain that we bring Danes and Germans to Locknevi.

(Karl-Gunnar, hunter and landowner in Locknevi)

## The local hunters' perspective

Many of the hunters and other inhabitants in Locknevi are sceptical of hunting tourism, but there is no open conflict. Their criticism can be

summed up in cultural, social and ecological aspects. The critique based on cultural arguments concerns the meaning of hunting and the way it changes through money and strangers. Both phenomena affect the wholeness of hunter–forest–game–place–history that many of the hunters perceive. The critique mirrors what many of them think is the ethos of hunting: the mix of excitement, being in the forest and the spirit of community that has developed in a certain place over time. The social aspects of the critique concern the changing identity of inhabitants in Locknevi. This is caused partly by the fact that those who do not own land have difficulties in gaining access to a hunting team when prices are rising. Furthermore, social relations are affected when it becomes more important to own land. The ecological aspect concerns game preservation.

### *Cultural aspects – money*

When people in Locknevi talk about hunting tourism they often compare how much a hunting permit costs for the Swedes, the Danes/Germans and for the Danish hunting leader Jens:

Money has ruined the hunt [...] when they brought the Danes, the Germans and the money. The game does not belong to the property – that's the way it is. A moose walks 50 km. He [Kjell] can sell the meat for 2500 [SEK] and the trophy for 5000; that's ridiculous. They have the right to do it, but it takes away the joy for the neighbouring teams.

(Ronny, hunter, resident in Locknevi all his life)

Even those who understand why people engage in hunting tourism can be critical towards the activity. 'If I didn't hunt myself I might do the same, but from a hunting point of view it's a damned thing', says Conny who is a hunter in Locknevi. Most people who do not own land themselves understand that landowners have a need to utilize the available resources of the property. To what extent hunting tourism is accepted is a matter of scale and whether the landowner, himself, hunts. Few are critical towards small-scale tourism when the hunting team invites paying guests. Magdalena, a hunter living in Locknevi, points out the importance for rural people of utilizing the resources themselves: 'Otherwise people come from the city and build fishing camps and other things.'

What happens is that money dissolves the relations between the hunter, the forest, the game and the place. The price produces instrumental values (resources), effectively replacing intrinsic values. A price demands a measurable object and relations between the components of a system must be severed (Evernden, 1987). Tourism is a phenomenon where instrumental values are produced from what used to be intrinsic values. According to Urry (2002, pp. 141–161), tourism both consumes and produces places. Consumption is made possible mainly through the 'Tourist Gaze', which objectifies 'the Other', including both people living in the place and the place itself. The Tourist Gaze is created from signs, such as when the tourist sees two people kissing in Paris, thus capturing the 'timeless, romantic Paris' (Urry, 2002, p. 3). With money the

tourist buys the right to use different objects, including the right to shoot certain animals. Moreover, place production is achieved through the gaze and money. What the tourist looks at or buys becomes a tourism goal.

With examples from today's medieval role play around Swedish castles, Svensson (1997, p. 44) illuminated the conflict between farmers' production and tourists' consumption of the landscape. These actors exist in different landscapes with different interpretations of its history. Instead of creating a situation in which modernity is contrasted with tradition, we could learn something of how to handle the culturally complex cultivated landscape that is the result of both consumption and production landscapes.

One example of the difficulties in putting a price on values is when the authorities of New Zealand tried to value a nature reserve of religious importance for the Maoris (Vadnijaal and O'Connor, 1994). The inhabitants were not able to value the place as an object since it existed together with them: 'There are things, dimensions in life that are beyond money' (Vadnijaal and O'Connor, 1994, p. 379). The Maori perception of the holiness of their place in New Zealand and the hunters' perception of the forest in Sweden reminds one of the enchantment of nature that the scientific revolution tried to disenchant by reducing the world to measurable components (Berman, 1981). The question is: whose perspective should be considered? When the visitors with their purchasing power also have the power to interpret the situation, then the result will be an objectification of the landscape no matter whether the inhabitants are able to value the place in that sense or not.

### *Cultural aspects – strangers*

People in Locknevi do not consider themselves as xenophobic, and they stress that they do not dislike the foreign hunters. Instead, they direct their critique towards the landowners who are responsible for ensuring that the Danes and Germans (whom they brought in the first place) follow the rules. Those who have met the Danish hunting leader and have hunted together with the foreigners have a positive attitude towards the individual foreign hunters, even though they sometimes make jokes about them. However, as a group the foreign hunters represent 'the Other', a strange body which does not belong to Locknevi. This view is revealed in expressions like 'now the Danes are invading' (Katrin, hunter who moved from Locknevi), or 'large hordes of Danes' (Kerstin, who lives in Locknevi and does not hunt). This kind of critique refers to the Danes (who are now in a majority) not hunting as the local hunters do. As an example they are accused of not following the rules about which kind of moose are allowed to be shot, which is important since the animals cross the boundaries between properties. 'They shoot everything on four legs', says hunter Kristian.

Erik and Kerstin are farmers in Locknevi who do not hunt. They make a distinction between hunting for pleasure, which they find ridiculous and disgusting, and hunting for household requirements, which they find acceptable. Hunting tourism is definitely hunting for pleasure, according to them:

ERIK When they hang out roe deer and hares as trophies, as if they want people to see, I think it's so ridiculous.

KERSTIN That is more for pleasure...

ERIK Yes, it's only for pleasure, I don't know.

KERSTIN There is no need really.

ERIK No, I think that if it's necessary the reason for hunting is to keep a balance in nature, and maybe to get some meat. Before it was necessary, but this I don't know. It's only exploitation I would say, when it goes too far. I don't say that it should be forbidden, but ... It is a bit disgusting sometimes, I'd say.

KERSTIN I think so too when they come for a week.

ERIK But of course, it's a way to...

KERSTIN To earn money, yes. No, I don't like it.

The hunting tourists in Locknevi are viewed as a strange phenomenon, provoking comments such as 'culturally different', 'cultural clashes', 'unwritten laws', 'strangers' and 'proper behaviour'. The Danish hunters are probably not aware of the symbolic actions that make them look different. An ideal (but not always the practice) is that alcohol and hunting do not fit well: 'We got fed up when we had collected two sacks of empty bottles of beer and liquor', says Katrin, who used to let a cottage to Danish hunters.

Another kind of criticism concerns the way that foreign hunters treat the game and the dogs. Folke, a hunter in Locknevi, complains: 'They shoot all kinds and throw it on a car roof so that the blood is dripping along the doors.' They are also criticized for the way they dress: 'It looks a bit stupid when the Danes are coming dressed in camouflage clothes and lifting their legs high when walking on the roads', says Irene, who does not hunt. The tourists are also accused of being trophy hunters. Egon, who does not hunt says: 'We all know that the Germans are happy to collect our moose traffic signs. Therefore it's easy to understand that they appreciate the antler.' Maybe the behaviour of the foreign hunters does not differ that much from some of the local hunters, but it is used as proof that they are different.

There are differences in the way the Danish and the German hunters are viewed. The Danes understand Swedish and appear more familiar, but in contrast to the Germans they are very numerous, and they often hunt without a Swedish guide. The German hunters are considered more careful, both with alcohol and shooting. On the other hand hunting is considered an upper-class activity in Germany, which goes against the local ideal of an egalitarian community. The combination of the hunters being foreign and paying makes some of the inhabitants feel excluded from the forest. This is expressed by Kerstin, who is a tenant and does not hunt: 'It feels like I'm intruding though I have all rights in the world to walk there.'

Some people suppose that when Swedes hunt abroad they behave differently compared to local hunters and that they are viewed with the same scepticism as foreigners in Locknevi. Axel, who moved back to Locknevi, explains the local standpoint as being suspicious of everything that is

different: 'There is dissociation from everything foreign, and I mean foreign from Locknevi's perspective. Everything from Vimmerby [the nearest town] to Brussels.'

Scepticism towards everything foreign is, according to Urry (2000), typical of local communities and expresses a will to maintain borders. In the struggle to maintain a community, be it a hunting team, a parish or a nation, the need exists for a border between those who belong to the community and those who do not, between 'we' and 'they' (Cohen, 1985). The flexibility that many inhabitants show in other contexts is difficult to uphold when 'they' are so many that they come out as an anonymous entity.

A stranger is someone impossible to classify, neither friend nor enemy (Bauman, 1990). The stranger is crossing borders and is treated differently in a village than in a city. There is no place for a stranger in a small community and s/he is quickly classified into either friend or enemy. In the abstract systems characterizing urban settlements the opposite of a friend is no longer an enemy, and not a stranger in Bauman's sense, but just someone you do not know (Giddens, 1990, p. 119). This is in contrast to the situation in local communities, and it is normal to meet a stranger, otherwise it would not be a city (Asplund, 1991, p. 52).

Locknevi is a community with concrete relations between the inhabitants, even though these relations are also embedded in abstract systems guaranteeing social infrastructure and the welfare of individuals. Criticism directed towards the hunting tourists does not have to be xenophobic, but mirrors ambivalence about how to classify this 'strange body'. As individuals the foreign hunters are rather easily classified as friends. This explains why it is easier to accept small-scale hunting tourism. Large groups coming for a week, and people hunting without any contact with the local hunters, are more difficult to include in the perception of hunting as an activity among equals.

### *Social aspects – exclusion*

Hunting tourism is causing higher prices for hunting permits and some relatives and friends of the landowners cannot afford to hunt any longer. This highlights hierarchies and class perspectives. Erik reflects on this: 'The sad thing about it [hunting tourism] is that the ordinary blue collar workers with limited finances cannot afford it. It triggers the prices and everything.' The space for an informal exchange economy diminishes, which affects mostly people on a low income: 'Now I lease the hunting and I also hunt, myself. He [who hunts on his property] doesn't pay anything, but he is an electrician and helps me in the house. Many Swedes cannot accept money [from friends and relatives] and then the foreigners come and offer big sums' (Hans, hunter living in Locknevi).

When hunting tourism becomes an alternative it is tempting to put a price on one's own hunting time. One landowner says he experiences a conflict between himself hunting and letting hunting permits. He establishes

the fact that the hours he hunts are expensive hours compared to the income he gives up.

For some of the inhabitants without land, hunting forms an important local network and a meeting place. For the first and second generations of people who have moved from Locknevi hunting is a link to the community, irrespective of whether they own land or not. Hunting is not so common among the younger generation, one reason being the high cost. If these groups (the young and those who have moved) give up hunting it will affect their identity in relation to Locknevi, since there are rather few networks based on local identity, except for the local voluntary associations.

### *Social aspects – changed relations*

When the landowners accept payment for hunting it affects not only the access to hunting, but also the social relations in the community. If a person accepts money a risk exists that s/he exploits someone. The logic of the market economy is not evident to some elderly people in Locknevi, who argue that the price some of the foreign hunters pay 'does not correspond to reality'. For them the price is not a point where supply meets demand, as in market pricing relations. Instead, a price reflects egalitarian relations where people agree in consensus about what is reasonable for them. Neither the landowners nor anybody else is expected to take advantage of their position and ask for 'too much' or offer 'too much' money. This is based on norms like 'good neighbours do not ask for money from each other' and 'a balance between rights and obligations should be maintained'. Violating these norms can cause conflicts.

One expression of social tensions occurs in disputes about boundaries. One hunter in Locknevi says that hunting tourism has affected the previous good relations between his own team and the neighbour, who leases all the permits to the Danish hunting leader. A common, and seemingly eternal, dispute connected with hunting is when hunters cross a property boundary to follow an animal trail. So far there is no open conflict, but hunters tell stories about animals they have found on their property, dead after wounding, without anybody having been told. This kind of behaviour is assumed to be connected with the foreign hunters. Most of all, the local hunters strive for good relations with the hunting tourists:

We have decent relations towards them. [...] The Danes have crossed our borders on some occasions. They are not familiar with the territory and that is nothing to make a fuss about. You shouldn't create bad relations. I think we have an agreement that if something happens we should contact each other. If an animal goes in [to another property] and lies down, you are allowed to shoot it.  
(Sune, hunter who has returned to Locknevi)

Everybody agrees that there is a huge responsibility on the landowner to ensure that foreign hunters comply with the rules. It is also expected that the landowner acts according to the norms. One of the landowners points out that his hunting tourists have strict rules to follow and that they also have an

interest in game preservation. Another landowner remarks: 'There are rumours about that they wounded some animals and that they drank too much liquor. Sometimes they might have done so, but it is not the individuals that should be blamed but those who arrange the hunting opportunities' (Lars, hunter and farmer in Locknevi).

Fiske (1991) offers a theory about four elementary forms of human sociality. The first one is Communal Sharing, consisting of a collective identity based on equality and inclusiveness, which is typical for relatives. The second form is Authority Ranking, a form of asymmetrical and hierarchical relations, common among people with different status where privilege and duty are important. The third form, Equality Matching, emerges when coping with differences through reciprocal relations where it is common to share, take turns or give back 'eye for an eye and tooth for a tooth'. The fourth form, Market Pricing, is based on measurable values, where people exchange goods after analysing the profit and loss situation. Depending on the cultural context these forms of relations exist in different combinations, even though one of the four always dominates. The choice of form is partly dependent on how the people involved are used to relating to each other. People often transfer relations they are familiar with to other contexts. To be able to communicate, people have to agree on which kind of relation they have in a certain situation.

Based on these forms of relations, hunting tourism could be interpreted as a way of gradually replacing Communal Sharing and Equality Matching with Market Pricing. This change had already occurred before the advent of hunting tourism, but hunting tourism speeds up the process. Ownership is highlighted, illustrated for example by the distribution of meat. Where it used to be the activity, the hunting, that was rewarded, it is now often only the ownership of land that qualifies for distribution of meat, thus giving way for Authority Ranking. When hunting becomes more expensive, ownership of land will be even more important for hunting opportunities. Hunting tourism would be impossible without a norm that gives ownership priority over the custom that local people have the right to hunt.

### *Ecological aspects – game preservation.*

Foreign hunters are blamed for the decline of roe deer and moose. This critique is manifested in statements such as: 'They shoot everything that moves.' Many of the villagers understand that foreign hunters want to get value from the money they have invested, but they also say that they probably would do the same in that situation. The hunters are also alleged not to stick to the rules, since they do not care about the place or the community. However, most people point out that the responsibility lies with the landowner and not with the individual hunters.

Local statistics show that foreign hunters shoot less game than local hunters. National statistics show that game is declining all over southern Sweden irrespective of who is hunting. The ecological argument therefore seems to be more a sign of distrust of the 'Other' than of relevance in the

context of the game stock. On the contrary, there is generally – for the rest of Sweden – a need to shoot more animals since Swedish hunting teams usually do not fulfil their quota.

## Conclusions

Hunting tourism has, without doubt, a potential to fulfil the principles of ecotourism in terms of supporting local economies, while it can also be environmentally sustainable. However, hunting tourism is also an activity where economic aspects could violate cultural and social aspects. As the example of Locknevi shows, both the meaning of hunting and the social relations involved in hunting can be negatively affected. However, there are accepted trade-offs between the landowners' need to find new sources of income and the meaning of hunting for the hunters. One option for minimizing conflicts might be for the landowner to take part in the hunt together with the tourists. Another is for the team to invite the same paying guests every year, using the income collectively for tenancy or equipment. These approaches would strengthen communal and individual relations in accordance with local social and cultural norms, as opposed to market-based and hierarchical relations. While maintaining cultural integrity, this would simultaneously open up new sources of income.

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# 17 Policy, Planning and Governance in Ecotourism

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## Introduction

Ecotourism policy may be defined as whatever governments choose to do or not to do with respect to ecotourism (Hall, 2004). This definition of public policy covers government action, inaction, decisions and non-decisions, as it implies a *deliberate* choice between alternatives (Hall and Jenkins, 2004). However, such a simple definition masks the complexity of ecotourism policy and planning, particularly in the Scandinavian context. Understanding ecotourism policy and planning is inherently difficult in part because, even on a global basis, there are very few specific agencies that are solely dedicated to ecotourism, although there tend to be various governmental bodies that have interests in ecotourism. Such a situation means that ecotourism policy making cannot be readily identified with single agencies and is, instead, diffused through the policy-making system. Arguably, ecotourism becomes even more complex a policy concept because of the difficulties that exist in arriving at a readily agreed upon definition of what it actually means.

The issue of definition that has plagued attempts to define 'ecotourism', as well as 'tourism' in a more general policy setting, is not merely an academic argument because how can you set policy for something if you cannot define it, or at least arrive at agreed-upon definitions that key policy actors may agree with (Hall and Jenkins, 2004)? It is therefore with this substantial policy problematic that this chapter sets out to chart some of the key elements in ecotourism policy and planning in Scandinavia. The chapter is structured around three main sections:

1. A description of ecotourism as a policy field.
2. The institutional arrangements that surround ecotourism.
3. The role of governance in ecotourism planning and management.

## Ecotourism as a Policy Field

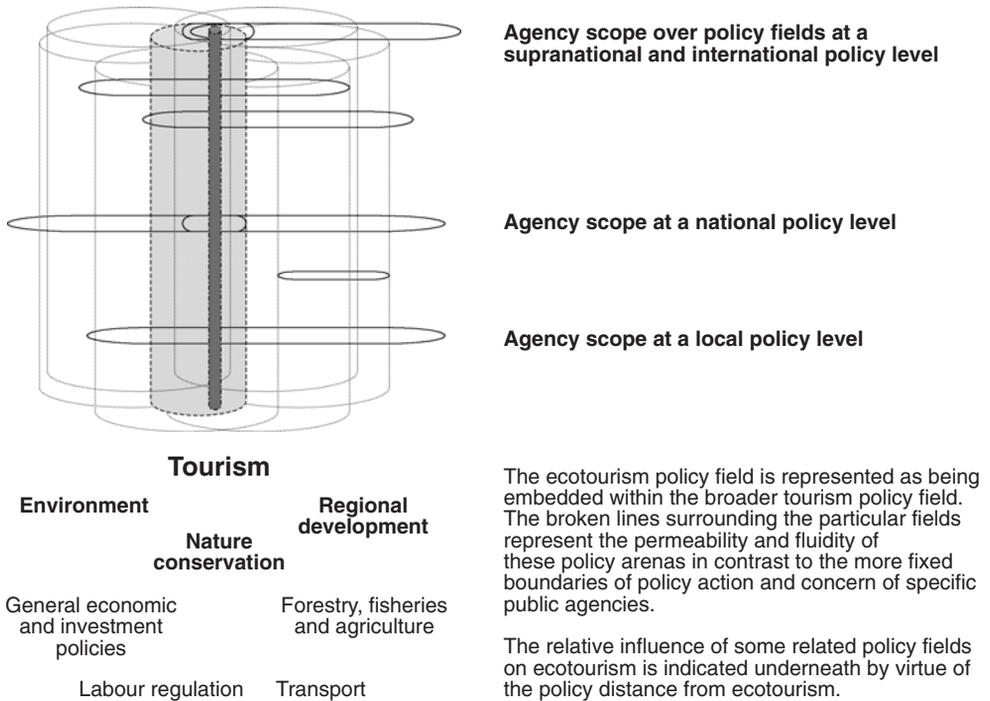
The notion of ecotourism policy described above is derived from the approach of Hall and Jenkins (2004) to tourism policy. Such an approach focuses on public policies that 'stem from governments or public authorities [ ... ] A policy is deemed a public policy not by virtue of its impact on the public, but by virtue of its source' (Pal, 1992, p. 3). For an ecotourism policy, therefore, to be regarded as public policy, at the very least it must have been processed, even if only authorized or ratified, by public agencies. This is an important distinction because it means that the 'policy may not have been significantly developed within the framework of government' (Hogwood and Gunn, 1984, p. 23).

In the case of ecotourism, such a situation will often be extremely important because of the role of various enterprises in influencing government policy development: (i) tour operators; (ii) forestry companies; (iii) business associations, e.g. the Swedish Ecotourism Association; (iv) special-interest groups, e.g. the World Wide Fund for Nature; (v) interest groups that also have substantial tourism business dimensions, e.g. the Norwegian Mountain Touring Association (Den norske turistforening); and (vi) other non-government policy actors such as universities and significant individuals. However, to further complicate matters, policy making occurs at multiple levels, from municipalities through to supranational agencies such as the European Union and the Nordic Council.

However, arguably of most importance in understanding ecotourism policy making in the Scandinavian context is the differentiation between ecotourism policy, i.e. policies that have been developed specifically for the purpose of managing, regulating or promoting ecotourism, and policies that affect ecotourism, i.e. public policies that either through their scope or because of their specific intent affect or influence ecotourism such as policies for the protection and maintenance of biodiversity, which represents the key resource for ecotourism (Christ *et al.*, 2003; Hall, 2006).

Within Scandinavia there is arguably no ecotourism public policy per se, but instead there is a significant ecotourism policy field that is constituted through a range of closely related policy arenas concerned with such areas as: (i) tourism – especially sustainable tourism; (ii) regional development; and (iii) biodiversity and nature conservation – particularly with respect to park and reserve policies that provide a focal point for many ecotourism experiences. In addition, more generic policy fields related to, for example, the environment, fishing, forestry, labour and investment will also influence ecotourism in various degrees. The nature of these interrelationships is illustrated in Fig. 17.1. Seen in this way, public policy is therefore a process. Policies are formulated and implemented in dynamic environments where there is a complex pattern of decisions, actions, interaction, reaction and feedback (Hall and Jenkins, 2004).

A good example of the extent to which policy from a non-tourism field affects ecotourism is that of the policies of national park and environmental authorities. Although ecotourism occurs on more than just national park land, national parks have long been recognized as having a significant role to



**Fig. 17.1.** Ecotourism policy fields, in the Scandinavian context.

play as ecotourism resources. Nevertheless, the policies that influence national park aims, functions and management are determined by much more than ecotourism considerations. For example, Metsähallitus, the Finnish Forest and Park Service, reports that the role of the Finnish network of protected areas can be defined as:

Finland’s protected areas form a varied network intended to preserve for present and future generations a suitable number of representatives and ecologically viable areas of all the ecosystems and natural habitat types occurring in Finland, taking into account geographical variations and the various stages of natural succession. Protected areas also have a very significant role in achieving and maintaining the favourable conservation status of habitat types and species. (Metsähallitus, 2000, p. 6)

Under the guidelines the network of Finnish protected areas must primarily preserve the following categories (Metsähallitus, 2000, p. 7):

**1.** Areas of natural habitat, particularly habitat types characteristic of the Finnish landscape, and habitats, landforms and features which are endangered.

As part of this aim, or additionally, the following should be preserved:

- 2.** Natural gene pools and ecosystem diversity.
- 3.** Species, geological and geomorphological features, especially species and features which are either naturally rare, or threatened or declining as a consequence of human activity.

4. Landscapes and habitats shaped by previous generations, including the cultural heritage associated with the Finnish countryside, along with endangered domesticated plant and animal breeds.
5. The natural succession of ecosystems and other natural processes at various stages.
6. Areas of outstanding natural beauty.
7. Wild areas.

The guidelines then go on to note that ‘only within the limitations set by the requirements of conservation, the network of protected areas should also aim to facilitate’ (Metsähallitus, 2000, p. 7):

8. Research and monitoring work on the state of the environment.
9. Environmental education, promoting understanding and interest towards nature.
10. Outdoor recreation.

Significantly, the guidelines then go on to state explicitly that ‘the economic utilization of protected areas for ecotourism, for example, is permissible where it does not endanger the achievement of conservation aims’ (Metsähallitus, 2000, p. 7). Indeed, earlier in the report, it is noted that the growth of ecotourism and an increase in the number of visitors to protected areas is indicative of a more favourable opinion towards nature conservation. Yet tourism is regarded as the only one of the ten different uses of the Finnish protected area system that requires a policy statement, the others being: (i) everyman’s right; (ii) fishing and hunting; (iii) photography; (iv) local residents; (v) traffic; (vi) forestry; (vii) mineral prospecting and mining; and (viii) leasing land. Indeed, ecotourism is not explicitly defined within the guidelines although its economic dimension is noted, which therefore suggests that ecotourism is regarded as commercial tourism use of protected areas by firms as opposed to access by independent travellers.

Interestingly, the document outlines the policy boundaries for Metsähallitus with respect to tourism planning. According to Metsähallitus (2000, p. 42), the agency does not intend to develop its own activities in the field but instead will:

aim to provide a framework and opportunities for independent enterprises in the field of ecotourism. The aims of sustainable ecotourism must be agreed upon with all interested parties (local residents, the tourism sector, other local organizations, etc.) by drawing up a strategy for tourism following the principles of participatory planning.

To a great extent the Finnish experience mirrors other Nordic approaches with respect to the relationship between national park policy and ecotourism. Similarly, all the Scandinavian countries and Finland have an agency that seeks to manage broader environmental issues. For example, the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency (Naturvårdsverket) has the responsibility for implementing a series of environmental quality objectives; these have been established by the Swedish Parliament with the aim of guiding Sweden towards being a sustainable society by the year 2020, with the

objectives also acting as benchmarks for all environmentally related development in Sweden (Naturvårdsverket, 2005). The environmental quality objectives are based on five principles:

- promotion of human health;
- preservation of biological diversity;
- preservation of cultural heritage assets;
- preservation of long-term production capacity of ecosystems; and
- wise management of natural resources.

The objectives are:

- reduced climatic impact;
- clean air;
- natural acidification only;
- a non-toxic environment;
- a protective ozone layer;
- a safe radiation environment;
- zero eutrophication;
- flourishing lakes and streams;
- good-quality groundwater;
- a balanced marine environment;
- flourishing coastal areas and archipelagos;
- thriving wetlands;
- sustainable forests;
- a varied agricultural landscape;
- a magnificent mountain landscape; and
- a well-built environment.

Although the efficacy of the 16 objectives may be debatable in terms of their contribution to achieving sustainability by 2020, they nevertheless act as significant parameters for other policies, regulations and guidelines developed within Naturvårdsverket, including national parks, nature reserves and outdoor recreation under which ecotourism is subsumed. Although many Swedish national parks were established prior to the creation of Naturvårdsverket, and had their origins as much in a desire to encourage tourism as in nature conservation, all national parks and recommendations for new parks come under the authority of Naturvårdsverket, with the final authority resting with the Swedish Parliament. Interestingly, such designation may actually serve to encourage tourist visitation.

In their study of visitors to protected areas in the mountain areas of northern Sweden, Wall and Fredman (2005) reported that protection status did matter to tourists, although there was substantial variability with respect to visitors and the type of status. In the case of travel to Fulufjället National Park, results indicated that German visitors, high- and low-income visitors, first-time visitors, visitors participating in nature studies and visitors obtaining information about the area from newspapers were more likely to visit because of national park status.

A final example of the extent to which policy from a non-tourism field

affects ecotourism is that of the policies of firms or corporations, particularly when they are major landholders. Sveaskog, a company that is wholly owned by the Swedish state, is Sweden's largest forest owner. The company manages 4.5 million ha of land, of which 3.4 million ha is productive forest land, and accounts for 15% of all Swedish forest ownership. As part of its environmental strategy, Sveaskog is establishing 34 ecoparks that account for approximately 5% of productive forest land. According to Sveaskog (2005, p. 10): 'An ecopark is a large, contiguous forest landscape with high natural values and nature conservation ambitions. Here ecological values take precedence over financial values. Many ecoparks are prioritized landscapes for outdoor life.'

This policy suggests that such ecoparks, although not used for commercial timber harvesting, will still be suitable for tourism purposes. Indeed, Sveaskog (2005, pp. 18, 34) noted that about 30,000 people hunt on Sveaskog's lands every year, with 57,000 fishing permits being sold in 2004, while about 40 different natural experience products were also available to approximately 85,000 other customers in that year. Perhaps in recognition of the debate as to whether hunting and fishing constitute ecotourism or not, Sveaskog instead use the concept of nature-based tourism in their documents:

Sveaskog works to develop nature-based tourism, within hunting, fishing and natural experiences. Nature-based tourism means that activities take place in harmony with nature and that the environment is a natural part of the experience. Nature-based tourism is also based on saving resources and on learning close to nature, which increases customer awareness of different natural environments. Nature-based tourism must always have a clear environmental profile.

(Sveaskog, 2005, p. 34)

Nevertheless, they also noted that the company's focus on hunting, fishing and natural experiences is conducted on 'commercial terms' (2005, p. 34), and in a manner that they argue 'complements access to the forest offered by the right of public access' (2005, p. 36). Such an approach, which is not uncommon in Scandinavian policy documents, appears to suggest that ecotourism – or nature-based tourism – is seen as a commercial activity that is commercially based, i.e. through operators and guides, rather than as individual-based, i.e. the general public accessing forests and other landscapes and engaging in ecotourism-related activities as individuals through their utilization of rights under common law (*Allemansrätt*). Such a situation may also mean that ecotourism-related policies and strategies may therefore be commercially based and thus faced with substantial difficulties in terms of operation and innovation, in terms of being able to package products and recreation opportunities that may also be available non-commercially.

However, such a situation with respect to the relationship between *Allemansrätt* and tourism also highlights the need for the development of a better understanding of the manner by which policies are developed to cover the mobilities and impacts of travellers in the 21st century rather than those of the Middle Ages. Indeed, while the existence of *Allemansrätt* may arguably

potentially reduce some of the pressures of tourism on national parks by virtue of other lands acting as a substitute for nature-based experiences, ease of access does not reduce pressure on the environment per se in absolute terms. Therefore, perhaps more than ever, there is a need to understand the institutions in which policies are developed and implemented and the relationships between those bodies.

## Institutional Arrangements

'Policy making is filtered through a complex institutional framework' (Brooks, 1993, p. 79). However, institutional arrangements have received relatively little attention in the tourism literature (Hall, 2003; Hall and Jenkins, 2004). Institutions are 'an established law, custom, usage, practice, organization, or other element in the political or social life of a people; a regulative principle or convention subservient to the needs of an organized community or the general needs of civilization' (Scrutton, 1982, p. 225). Institutions may be thought of as a set of rules, which may be explicit and formalized (e.g. constitutions, statutes and regulations) or implicit and informal (e.g. organizational culture, rules governing personal networks and family relationships). Thus, institutions are an entity devised to order interrelationships between individuals or groups of individuals by influencing their behaviour (Hall, 2003).

Within the context of environmental and resource management the importance of studying the significance of institutions has long been recognized. For example, O'Riordan (1971, p. 135) observed that:

One of the least touched upon, but possibly one of the most fundamental, research needs in resource management [and tourism management] is the analysis of how institutional arrangements are formed, and how they evolve in response to changing needs and the existence of internal and external stress. There is growing evidence to suggest that the form, structure and operational guidelines by which resource management institutions are formed and evolve clearly affect the implementation of resource policy, both as to the range of choice adopted and the decision attitudes of the personnel involved.

In the Nordic situation the notion of *Allemansrätt*, as noted above, clearly has an important institutional dimension that affects the capacity of decision makers to restrict individual movement in certain types of environments, as well as in distinguishing between commercial and non-commercial activities. Arguably, in Sweden and the other Nordic countries, *Allemansrätt* is seen as much as a representation of culture and identity as it is a means to regulate and control environmental access and property rights: and it is very hard to regulate culture. Indeed, this situation has long been noted, with Simeon (1976, p. 574) observing that institutions 'place constraints on decision-makers and help shape outcomes [ ... ] by making some solutions harder, rather than by suggesting positive alternatives'. He goes on to note that, in the longer term, 'institutional arrangements may themselves be seen as policies' (1976, p. 575).

Institutional elements such as *allemannsrätt* are representative of ‘soft’ institutions that consist of custom or usage as opposed to ‘hard’ institutional elements, such as those of organizational structures and law (Hall, 2003). In the case of the latter the institutional arrangements for ecotourism policy and planning in the Nordic countries are extremely complex, as they occur over a number of scales and include the activities of a significant number of supranational bodies, as well as state and sub-national organizations (Table 17.1). Significantly, in terms of policy development and coordination, institutions relate to each other both vertically and horizontally within overall policy structures with, in some cases, institutions from different levels of governance collaborating together on specific projects. Clearly, this may therefore create conditions for policy chaos, an issue that will be returned to in the final section of this chapter. However, this section will describe some of the different forms that institutional involvement in ecotourism takes, particularly at the supranational scale.

One of the most important institutions in the Nordic context is the European Union (EU); Denmark, Finland and Sweden are members, while Iceland and Norway have well-developed economic and political relationships with the EU. The EU does not have a specific directorate for tourism, although tourism is used as a tool in a number of policy areas, particularly with regard to regional development and peripheral regions (see Clement *et al.*, 2004 for a review of the environment and sustainable development integration in Nordic structural funds).

In terms of nature conservation that provides sites for ecotourism visitation, the EU has a range of policy mechanisms that, in turn, may be integrated with international policies and institutions. For example, EU nature conservation policy is founded upon a combination of international agreements, the most important of which is the Convention of Biodiversity, which was adopted in 1992, and European policy measures such as the Birds Directive (1979) and the Habitats Directive (1992). These agreements provide the institutional basis for European biodiversity programmes such as Natura 2000 and wider EU conservation policy. Under Natura 2000 all EU states are required to take steps to ensure that natural habitats and species in the network receive ‘favourable conservation status’:

**Table 17.1.** Multiple scales of institutional arrangements for ecotourism policy and planning in the Nordic countries.

Scale	Examples
International	World Heritage Committee; UNESCO; Convention on Biodiversity; RAMSAR convention; UNESCO Biosphere Reserves programme
Supranational	European Union (EU); Nordic Council of Ministers; Nordic Council; Nordic Environmental Cooperation; Baltic Council; Northern Forum
National	Metsähallitus (Finland); Miljøverndepartementet (Norway); Naturvårdsverket (Sweden)
Subnational	Provinces; communes; municipalities

Natural habitats must be large enough, important structures and functions must exist, and there must be viable populations of species typical of the habitat. With respect to species there must be a sufficient number of individuals within the area, reproduction must take place and the species habitat must be large enough.

(Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, 2003, p. 6)

According to the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, there were almost 4000 Natura 2000 sites in Sweden as of April 2004, covering a combined area of more than 6 million ha. The procedures by which sites have been recognized illustrate the interrelationships between top-down and bottom-up policy-making, with the sites having been selected by the county administrative board in each county following consultation with landowners and other authorities. Selection decisions were then reviewed by the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency prior to a decision by the Swedish government, with the sites then being proposed in turn to the EU Commission (Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, 2003, p. 8).

Significantly, in terms of ecotourism-related use of such areas, each site must have a conservation plan that states permissible and non-permissible activities, with visitor access usually being encouraged where this does not endanger high-value species or habitats. The value of such a programme for ecotourism is that it helps secure the resources base on which ecotourism depends through regulatory protection, management plans and nature conservation agreements. In addition, such programmes may assist with the transfer of knowledge between locations, as well as being of assistance in gaining financial support for projects.

Although ecotourism is a major benefactor of biodiversity policies and strategies, ecotourism operations do not appear to be major actors in the development of such policies. Nevertheless, this is arguably as much an indication of the lack of specific structures for tourism policy making within government institutions in Scandinavia as it is of an indication of interest or knowledge within the tourism industry. For example, even though the Norwegian Biodiversity Policy and Action Plan (Ministry of the Environment, 2002) explicitly recognizes recreation and tourism as receiving direct-use values of biodiversity resources, there is little discussion of the extent to which the tourism industry – with other industries – can be integrated into the policy-making process. However, perhaps in a reflection of the Nordic split between tourism as commercial visitation and recreation as individual outdoor activity, there is nevertheless substantial attention given in the policy document to the role of outdoor recreation groups as NGOs in participating in the development of national policy guidelines (Ministry of the Environment, 2002, p. 50).

The Nordic Council (which includes the Åland Islands, Denmark, Faroe Islands, Finland, Greenland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden) is also actively encouraging tourism as part of its trade and market agenda. According to the Nordic Council of Ministers (2003, p. 1):

The development of Nordic cooperation concerning the tourism industry has gathered momentum in recent years. The emphasis is on economically, socio-

culturally and environmentally sustainable tourism. The perspective is to establish the Nordic countries as a leading region in the development of a form of tourism that functions as a lever for sustainable social development and meets the demands for tourism based on experiencing nature and on activities that do not adversely effect the local population, the environment or nature.

The Nordic Council have developed a number of tourism institutional arrangements and projects that have been concerned with ecotourism. In 1999 the Nordic Council of Ministers took the step of establishing a Tourism Ad Hoc Working Group, to support the Nordic Council of Ministers and the Committee of Senior Officials in tourism-related issues. In 2003 the Tourism Ad Hoc Working Group released a report on a proposal for a common Nordic action plan for sustainable tourism that was primarily concerned with sustainable tourism policy, knowledge and competence development for proactive tourism, and product innovation and marketing. Ecotourism is specifically noted in the report only in terms of 'eco-labels' with respect to the development of sustainable tourism products, although the report does note the broader contextual issues of making tourism sustainable as well as – significantly from the perspective of the role of institutional arrangements for ecotourism – the importance of supranational dimensions of European tourism development, including (Nordic Council of Ministers Tourism Ad Hoc Working Group, 2003):

1. The Global Agenda 21 process.
2. The WTTC/WTO/Earth Council Agenda 21 for the Travel and Tourism Industry, the World Tourism Organization Global Code of Ethics and other WTO guidance.
3. Multi-stakeholder initiatives, such as the UNEP/UNESCO/WTO-supported Tour Operators' Initiative for Sustainable Tourism Development.
4. The Convention of Biological Diversity.
5. The European Union's Sustainable Development Strategy and EU statements with respect to European Spatial Development Perspective, the Environmental Action Programme, European transport policy and Corporate Social Responsibility.

However, the lack of specific detail on ecotourism in the report of the report of the Ad Hoc Working group is perhaps a little surprising given that the Nordic Council of Ministers' Working Group for Nature, Outdoor Recreation and Cultural Heritage had previously commissioned a report on Ecotourism in the Nordic Countries (Nordisk Ministerråd, 1998). Although the report primarily had a Swedish focus and utilized a World Wide Fund for Nature approach to assessing ecotourism, several findings of the report raise substantial questions about the extent to which firms actually contribute to environmental protection. The actual impact of the report on ecotourism business behaviour appears negligible. Similarly, the report also developed an ethical code to be recommended to tourists, which does not appear to have been implemented by the various Nordic countries' agencies or firms.

Unlike many EU decisions, the Nordic Council of Ministers represents a mechanism for policy coordination and advice rather than an authority with

binding regulatory authority. Therefore, the policy directions of the Nordic Council provide a context only for ecotourism development in the Scandinavian region. This is not to say that the activities of the Nordic Council are without value. Indeed, work with regard to environmental cooperation (Nordic Council of Ministers, 2004) and visitor management strategies (Erkkonen and Storrang, 2005) may well have some beneficial affects for ecotourism – and tourism in general – should the results of such work be effectively transferred to relevant stakeholders.

The examples provided in this section provide only a brief account of institutional involvement in ecotourism. It has concentrated primarily on the implications of supranational organizations such as the Nordic Council and the European Union and the consequent significance of ecotourism at the levels of the nation state and local government. However, the capacity of policy at one level of authority to impact that at another is seen to be variable, no matter what the inherent qualities of the policy are. The large number of institutional actors in ecotourism in the Nordic countries can be seen to be providing an extremely complex policy environment, the outcomes of which are plagued with uncertainty. The final section therefore utilizes the concept of governance as a means of explaining potential future directions for ecotourism policy in the region.

## Governance

The impacts of globalization and the neo-liberal political project have arguably led to a situation in which there is a multilayered governance architecture consisting not only of the national state, but also the local state, supranational bodies, non-government organizations and the private sector. Kooiman (1993a, p. 6) argues that governance has become an inter-organizational phenomenon, and that it is best understood through terms such as ‘co-managing, co-steering and co-guidance’, all implying more cooperative methods for identifying and achieving policy goals.

Kooiman (1993b, p. 258) defines governance as: ‘The pattern or structure that emerges in a socio-political system as a “common” result or outcome of the interacting intervention efforts of all involved actors. This pattern cannot be reduced to one actor or group of actors in particular.’ Similarly, Morales-Moreno (2004, pp. 108–109) noted that: ‘We could define governance as the capacity for steering, shaping, and managing, yet leading the impact of transnational flows and relations in a given issue area, through the inter-connectedness of different polities and their institutions in which power, authority, and legitimacy are shared.’

The notion of governance as the steering of policy in transnational space is one that has substantial bearing on ecotourism-related policies in Scandinavia, given the multiplicity of policy levels and institutions. Such a multiplicity clearly has potential for policy chaos, given the possibilities of different organizations with different values and agendas seeking to push policy in different directions. Furthermore, the majority of tourism policy is

developed 'behind the scenes' in Scandinavia, as elsewhere around the world, since tourism policy issues rarely become public issues and therefore open to public scrutiny, except in relation to local-level development issues. This means that most tourism-specific policy is developed by a very small number of stakeholders and only in a very closed fashion, and often without reference to alternative policy strategies.

In contrast, many of the policy areas that affect ecotourism – such as nature conservation, the environment, forestry and regional development – are far more open policy arenas, with multiple stakeholders engaged in policy debate. For example, in official institutional terms alone, the Norwegian biodiversity policy had participation by 15 ministries and the Sámidiggi (Sami Parliament) in the development of policy actions (Ministry of the Environment, 2002). The potential for successful policy implementation is greatly increased as a result of the involvement of the parties that will implement policy in the formation of that policy.

In contrast, for example, the Nordic Council of Ministers Tourism Ad Hoc Working Group (2003) Road Map For Sustainable Tourism in the Nordic Countries could perhaps best be described in policy-making terms as poorly formulated ('almost useless'). Indeed, it is remarkable that the Report itself acknowledged that there would be a substantial gap between policy making and implementation, yet it was still produced:

Several problems were acknowledged throughout the process of Action Plan development. These were related to: (i) securing the representation of the relevant stakeholders in the workshop; (ii) securing the participation of representatives from all Nordic countries; and (iii) securing the dissemination of the proposed strategy and action plan to tourism SMEs in the region.

(Nordic Council of Ministers Tourism Ad Hoc Working Group, 2003, p. 12)

Perhaps, not surprisingly, the supposed road map has proved not to have guided the direction of tourism in the region at all (see also the earlier report *Towards a Sustainable Nordic Tourism* (Nordic Council of Ministers Tourism Ad Hoc Working Group, 2001)), with the logical question perhaps being, why bother? Apart from the cynical answer that it provides consultants with employment, an additional response is that such documents and exercises can be used by policy makers to indicate that they are interested in a policy issue and are 'doing something', even though the impact of what they are doing may have little or no immediate impact 'on the ground' in terms of what tourist firms or tourists actually do.

However, in the longer term the amalgamated weight of such material may serve to steer policy in certain directions, although in the case of ecotourism this is likely to include only very minor regulation of ecotourism firms or ecotourists, if at all. While perhaps, more seriously, the effects of ecotourism and tourism overall have, up to now, been discussed only with reference to the destination, and not in relation to the overall travel of any ecotourist.

In terms of ecotourism policy and planning, this author therefore remains rather sanguine about its prospects in Scandinavia. Foremost, there is little ecotourism policy per se and it is not immediately likely that an

agreed-upon set of ecotourism policies for the region will be forthcoming. However, there is a substantial range of policies in existence that affects ecotourism. In relation to issues such as biodiversity and nature conservation, these resource-based policies are often well considered and have included multiple stakeholders. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said of the development of tourism policy in the region, which tends to be highly fragmented in terms of a failure to connect diverse institutions and stakeholders, is lacking in strategic direction and is often trying to achieve multiple – and sometimes conflicting – tasks, particularly with respect to achieving both growth and environmental conservation.

Policy success, in terms of implementing policy goals, where it does occur, tends to be at the local level in the region, where diverse stakeholders can be brought together and institutional participants have greater authority to act. However, the potential of many such policy successes seems relatively short-term, as they often depend on external funding in terms of transfers of capital from supranational and national bodies. Nevertheless, some of these developments do manage to last several years. The reasons for such success usually relate to the development of cooperative structures between stakeholders and the mutual development of both policy and actions that will implement policy. Unfortunately, these lessons have often not been learned at the supranational level.

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