ECOTOURISM, TOURISM AND BIODIVERSITY

Ajith Silva,
Tourism:

Comprises the activities of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business or other purpose.

*World Tourism Organisation (1991)*

SUN       SEA       SAND
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The organized mass tourist</td>
<td>Highly organized travel; minimum contact with destination culture; travel in large groups. Rely on the tour operator to arrange flights and accommodation; enjoy an element of liberty but will still tend to stay as a kind of Mass tourist.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The individual mass tourist</td>
<td>Tries to avoid the tourist track; make their own travel arrangements; learn the language of the place they are going to and attempt to associate with local people; retain some of the values and routines of home life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The drifter</td>
<td>Attempts to become part of the local community by living and working with them, least contact with other tourists and the tourism industry.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“Environmentally responsible travel & visitation to relatively undisturbed natural areas, in order to enjoy and appreciate nature (and any accompanying cultural features - both past & present) that promotes conservation, has low visitor negative impact & provides for beneficially active socio-economic involvement of local populations”

(Ceballos- Lascurain, 1996)
Components of Ecotourism

- Contribute to conservation of biodiversity
- Sustain the well-being of local people
- Include and interpretation/ learning experience
- Responsible action on the part of the tourist
- Delivered to small groups by small-scale business
- Lowest possible consumption of non-renewable resources
The term ECOTOURISM should only be used to describe;

- tourism activities in a natural environment;

- tourism that actually encourages conservation & helps society to achieve sustainable development.
As long as it is:

- nature based
- contributes to biodiversity conservation
- support well being of local people
- minimize negative environmental & socio-cultural impacts
- minimize consumption of non renewable resources
- stresses local ownership

IT IS ECO TOURISM!!
What are the reasons for eco tourism growth?

- increasing environmental awareness & interest
- increased media exposure to natural areas
- desire to see natural areas before they disappear
- increase dissatisfaction with traditional tourism destinations & products
- desire to go to novel destinations
- easier access to remote tourism destinations
“my intention is to generate environment friendly sustainable tourism instead of relying only on leisure seeking popular tourism”  pg. 164

“I will launch a program to fulfill the infrastructure and other requirements in order to attract 2.5 million tourists annually, by 2016”  pg. 164

Sri Lanka has exotic sandy beaches, Large greeneries, Historical places, variety of Climates, Spectacular Landscapes, a rich Biodiversity and friendly and welcoming people

* These distinctive opportunities will be utilized to develop the tourism industry as a major growth sector in the development of the economy.
Biodiversity

- Variety of living things, number of kinds
- Ecological diversity
  - different habitats, niches, species interactions
- Species diversity
  - different kinds of organisms, relationships among species
- Genetic diversity
  - different genes & combinations of genes within populations
One of the Global Biological Hotspots
HIGH BIODIVERSITY IN SRI LANKA DUE TO

- CLIMATIC VARIATION
- TOPOGRAPHIC VARIATION
- SOIL VARIATION
### Sri Lanka – Species Diversity and Endemism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faunal Group</th>
<th># of Species in Sri Lanka</th>
<th># of Endemic Species</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BUTTERFLY</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AMPHIBIANS</td>
<td>106+</td>
<td>90+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REPTILES</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRESH WATER CRABS</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRESH WATER FISHES</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAMMALS</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIRDS</td>
<td>482</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TERRESTRIAL SNAILS</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GROUP</td>
<td># OF SPECIES IN SL</td>
<td># OF ENDEMICS</td>
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<td>-------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>imqiam Ydl</td>
<td>3771</td>
<td>926</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Flowering Plants</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mrAkdx. Ferns</td>
<td>348</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mdis Mosses</td>
<td>566</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wlaud Ydl</td>
<td>222</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Liverworts</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>,hslk Lichens</td>
<td>661</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Coral Reef

Mhokodwana coral reef is a typical shallow fringing reef with an average depth of around 5 metres (16 ft). The coral reef reduces the coastal erosion and forms a natural breakwater. The coast of the national park extends 4 km. Generally, the coast is narrow, ranging from 5.50 m according to the climatic conditions of the year. Scuba diving is a popular recreation here.
The govt’s vision is to transform Sri Lankan tourism sector, by 2020, to be the largest foreign exchange earner in the economy, position Sri Lanka as the world’s most treasured and greenest island and attract high spending tourists while preserving the country’s cultural values, natural habitats and environment.

- 1 mil ➔ 2.5 mil ➔ 4.0 mil
- 81.8 US $ ➔ 200 US $ (next 10 yrs) (from high spending tourists)

**DIVERSIFICATION OF TOURISM IS A MUST**
“Tourism products will be diversified with special emphasis on eco-tourism. Adventure tours (safaris, jungle tours, mountain trekking) will be provided, tapping the tourism potential of the natural topological values of the country”.

# Underwater Exploration, Aquatic adventures, and sports in the sea, Natural water streams and reservoirs,
# Boat riding in reservoirs and rivers,
# Exploring Magnificent Coral Reefs, Coastal Fishing, Dolphin and Whale Watching,
# Bird Watching,
# Ayurvedic Healthcare, Agro-tourism
World’s Largest Terrestrial & Marine mammal SW & NE
“Community based tourism and tourist villages are also to be promoted to increase value in tourism based activities linking with rural economy, harvesting seasons, wildlife, farming practices, art, culture and religions”.

SCOPE FOR ECOTORISM
THANK YOU.