

# Introduction to Ecotourism

## Nature-based tourism

Tuesday, 03/06/2025

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**Hochschule  
für nachhaltige Entwicklung  
Eberswalde**



# Today's topics

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- I. Intro, support of protected areas, discussion
- II. Principles, Goals and Future Opportunities of Ecotourism (guest lecture)
- III. Case study: Jahoo Keo Seima Wildlife Sanctuary (guest lecture)

# Follow up

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Please sum up the main messages of yesterday's presentations

- **Use post-its** for the main points
  - headline + key messages
- **Learnings**
  - What were your main learnings / aspects that you would like to share with the others?
- Form 2 groups each (BIOM/NTM) – split main topics
- prepare the boards for 20-30 min
- present for 5-10 min

# Today's topics

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# Definition of Ecotourism

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**Ecotourism is responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and sustains the well-being of local people** (and involves interpretation and education).



# Introduction Ecotourism

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- **Difficult situation of nature conservation, especially in emerging countries:**
  - under-staffed/-funded paper parks
  - widespread rural poverty and lack of participation
  - Different political priorities; government failure
- **Growing demand for nature-based tourism**
- **Main strategic goal: to use ecotourism for the sustainable economic valorisation of biodiversity**





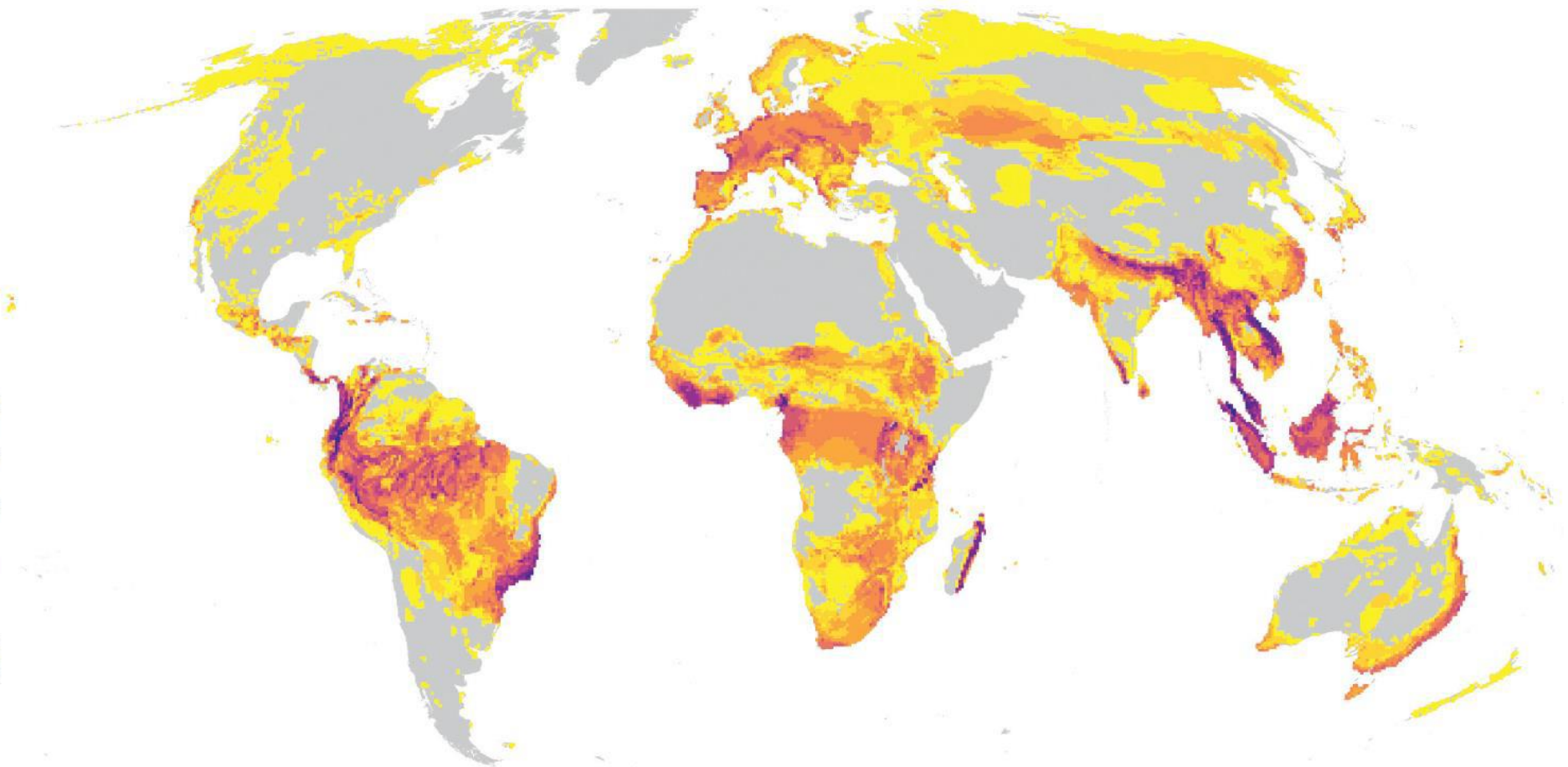
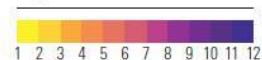
# Introduction Ecotourism

## Biodiversity at risk

**Figure 8: Global hotspots of risk**

The relative importance of each pixel across species and threats as measured by the number of times a pixel falls into a hotspot region for any taxon or threat. Hotspot regions are defined as locations containing the highest 10% of numbers of species at risk from each major threat and taxonomic group. Source: Harfoot et al. (2022)<sup>6a</sup>.

Key



# Introduction Ecotourism

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## Biodiversity at risk vs. billions of incomes annually

- Worldwide tourism turnover estimated to be around USD 6 trillion at the time
- Global network of functioning PAs would require USD 30 billion= 0.5% (47 billion if marine areas are included)
- Buying all land in the world's biodiversity hotspots would cost about USD 100 billion



Costa Rica Tourism Board



# Introduction Ecotourism

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## Goals of Ecotourism

1. **Minimize** physical, social, behavioral, and psychological **impacts**.
2. Build environmental and cultural **awareness** and **respect**.
3. Provide **positive experiences** for both visitors and hosts.
4. Provide **direct financial benefits for conservation**.
5. Generate **financial benefits** for both **local people** and **private industry**.
6. Deliver memorable **interpretative experiences** to visitors that help **raise sensitivity** to host countries' political, environmental, and social climates.
7. Design, construct and operate **low-impact facilities**.
8. Recognize the rights and spiritual beliefs of the **Indigenous People** in the community and work in partnership with them to create empowerment.

# Introduction Ecotourism

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## Does Ecotourism really work?

- What risks does such a strategy entail?  
What could go wrong?
- What would be needed to make it work?



**More during the next session!**

# Introduction Ecotourism

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## Main developments

1. Ecotourism was a **buzzword** in the 1990s and early 2000s. It preceded and stimulated the broader sustainable tourism debate.
2. Ecotourism has become **an important economic factor** and mostly **supports conservation** goals in several countries.
3. Rural **value chains** and **community empowerment** have been **limited**.
4. Effective **visitor management** techniques do exist, but local **management capacities** must be in place for their implementation.
5. The **climate change challenge** has hardly been taken up.
6. Ecotourism is **not** a promising strategy where **scenic attractiveness is limited** or **framework conditions are unfavourable**.
7. Effects of voluntary contributions (travelers' philanthropy) are limited. Adequate **fee systems** are required to **generate substantial revenue** for conservation.

# Introduction Ecotourism

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## Goals of Ecotourism

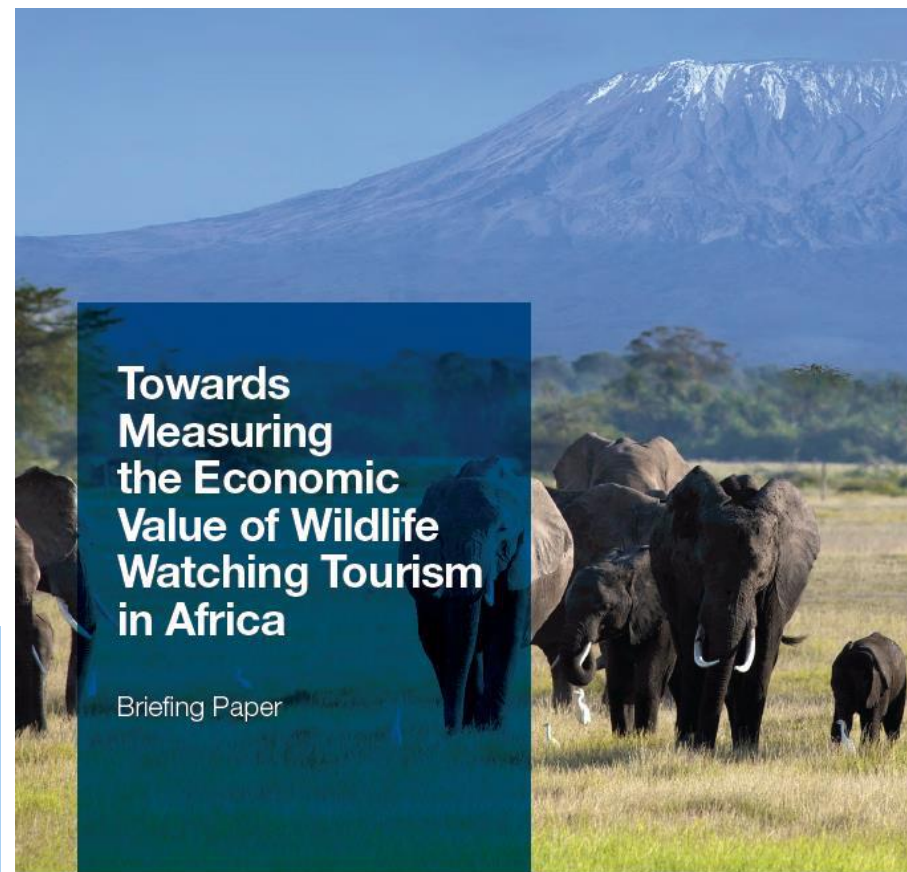
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# Conservation Finance through Ecotourism

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## Why pay for enjoying nature?

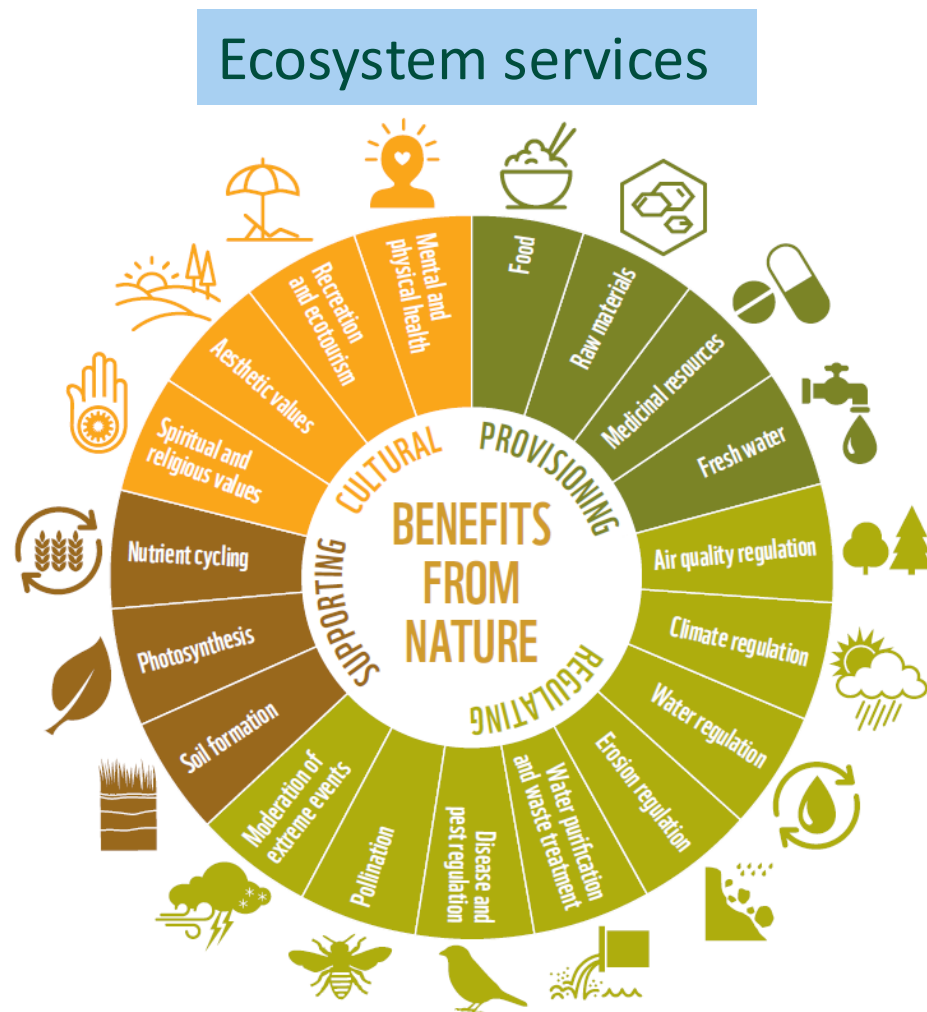
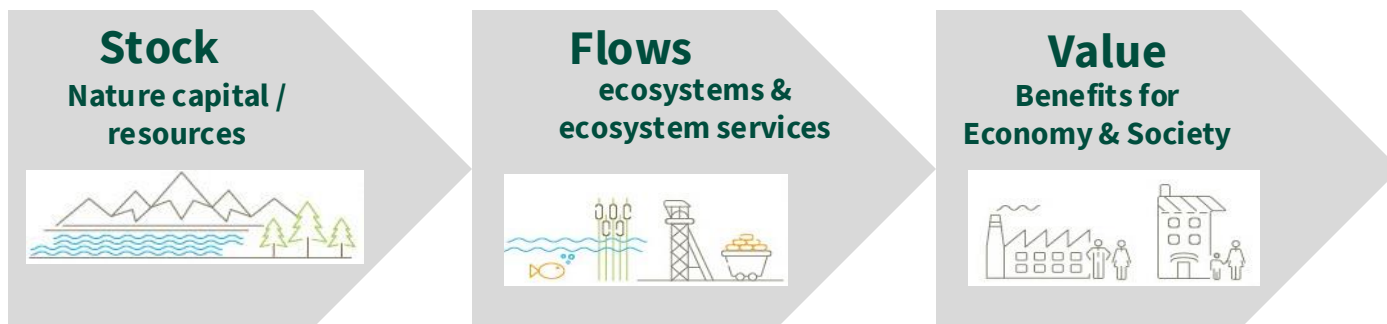
Average safari package price:  
**USD 433** per person/day  
(excl. int'l flights)





# Conservation Finance through Ecotourism

If biodiversity and ecosystems are so valuable, then why do they deteriorate so much on a global scale?



# Conservation Finance through Ecotourism

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## Problems of resource use

- Nature and the environment are perceived as **free common goods**.
  - "A product, service or resource that one individual can consume without reducing its availability to another individual and from which no one is excluded."
- **Private goods** "must be purchased in order to be consumed, and whose consumption by one individual prevents another individual from consuming it."

# Conservation Finance through Ecotourism

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## Problems of resource use

- **Tragedy of the commons** occurs when ...
  - There is unrestricted access to a limited shared (common) resource
  - Multiple individuals seek to maximise their own benefits
  - Individuals receive full benefit when exploiting the resource, whereas the cost of damage is shared
  - The resource is therefore overexploited and depleted, even though it is in no one's long-term interest
- **Externality** "... an activity whose effects are not completely reflected in prices and market transactions: Private cost lower than "social" cost

# Conservation Finance through Ecotourism

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## Possible solutions

### 1. Government regulation

- **strict use conditions or limitations**
  - ...does not solve the funding problem
- **charging prices for formerly free common goods**
  - Raise funds for conservation
  - Limit access to those willing to pay

#### Considerations:

- Possibility to exclude non-payers, which may pose a social problem
- with free public services non-users subsidise users through their taxes

# Conservation Finance through Ecotourism

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## Possible solutions

### 2. **Privatisation** of public goods

- Creates immediate (long-term?) **self-interest** in maintaining resource quality and control non-compliers
- Usually higher **efficiency** and no/less public subsidies
- but: Exclusion of non-payers as a **social problem**
- but: Hit and run investors
  - need for **contractual guidelines** to protect **public interests**
- but: Managing public goods or assuming public tasks may **not be profitable**



# Funding sources for PA-management

1. External flows	2. Market-based mechanisms	3. Cost-saving mechanisms
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Government budgets</li> <li>Donor bi/multilateral grants</li> <li>Environmental trust funds</li> <li>Biodiversity enterprise or challenge funds</li> <li>Taxes and subsidies earmarked for the environment</li> <li>Environmental fines</li> <li>Fiscal transfers between sectors</li> <li>Tax deductions for donations</li> <li>Individual donations</li> <li>Corporate donations</li> <li>Debt-for-nature swaps</li> </ul>	2a. Tourism revenues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Co-management with private sector, non-governmental organisations or communities</li> <li>Public-private partnerships</li> <li>Activity-based collaboration</li> <li>Volunteers and interns</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Entry fees</li> <li>Concessions fees</li> <li>Activity fees</li> <li>Tourism taxes</li> <li>Bed (lodging) levy</li> <li>Mooring and landing fees</li> </ul>	
	2b. Resource extraction user	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Forestry and timber products</li> <li>Bioprospecting</li> <li>Fishing</li> <li>Biosecurity</li> <li>Hunting fees</li> <li>Agriculture</li> </ul>	
	2c. Ecosystem services	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carbon</li> <li>Water quality</li> <li>Water flow regulation</li> </ul>	
	2d. Biodiversity offsets	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mariculture</li> <li>Petroleum/gas</li> <li>Infrastructure</li> </ul>	

# Funding sources for PA-management

Kakum canopy walkway, Ghana





# Funding sources for PA-management

## Baumkronenpfad Nationalpark Hainich



### Kombiticket Baumkronenpfad inkl. Erlebniswelten


<b>Erwachsene</b> (ab 18 Jahre)	12,00 €
<b>Ermäßigt/ Menschen mit Behinderung *1</b> bei Vorlage Ausweis	10,00 €
<b>Azubis / Schüler / Studenten</b> ab 13 Jahre	6,00 €
<b>Kinder</b> 6 – 12 Jahre, Kinder bis 5 Jahre frei	4,00 €
<b>Familien</b> 2 Erwachsene, Kinder unter 13 Jahren	30,00 €
<b>Gruppen</b> ab 15 Personen, Preis pro Person	10,00 €
<b>Schulklassen</b> mind. 15 Schüler bis 7. Klasse, Preis pro Person	4,00 €
<b>Schulklassen</b> mind. 15 Schüler ab 8. Klasse, Preis pro Person	6,00 €
<b>Erwachsene Begleitpersonen</b> pro Person	10,00 €

# Objectives when setting fees

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- **Cost recovery** for tourism management, infrastructure and services (must include cost of collecting money)
- **Generating extra income** for conservation & local communities (potential dependent on attractiveness of area, services provided and willingness to pay = market potential)
- **Generation of local business opportunities** (keep fees low to increase overall competitiveness)
- Provide maximum **opportunities for interpretation/environmental education** (keep fees low to encourage visitation)
- Use fees as an **instrument for visitor management** (differentiation according to season and site)

# Differentiation of fees



SCAN HERE

## KWS Conservation Fees 2022-2023



Park Fees	Citizens/Residents		Non-Residents		Other Charges
	Adult KSHS	Child/Student KSHS	Adult (US\$)	Child/Student (US\$)	
<b>PREMIUM PARKS</b>					
Amboseli/Nakuru	860	215	60	35	
<b>WILDERNESS PARKS (A)</b>					
Tsavo East & Tsavo West	515	215	52	35	
<b>WILDERNESS PARKS (B)</b>					
Meru/Kora	300	215	52	35	
Aberdare	300	215	52	26	
Mt. Kenya - Kihari gate	300	215	43	26	
<b>URBAN SAFARI</b>					
Nairobi	430	215	43	22	
<b>SANCTUARIES</b>					
Nairobi Animal Orphanage/Kisumu					
Impala/Nairobi Safari Walk, L. Elementaita	215	125	22	13	
<b>MOUNTAIN CLIMBING</b>					
Mt. Kenya (Day Trip)	430	215	52	26	
Mt. Kenya (3 Day Package)	1,290	645	156	78	
Mt. Kenya (4 Day Package)	1,720	860	208	104	
Mt. Kenya (5 Day Package)	2,150	1,075	260	130	
Mt. Kenya (6 Day Package)	2,580	1,290	312	156	
<b>SCENIC / SPECIAL INTEREST (A)</b>					
Hells Gate/Elgon/OI-Donyo Sabuk					
Mt. Longonot	300	215	26	17	
<b>SCENIC / SPECIAL INTEREST (B)</b>					
All Other Parks*	300	125	22	13	
<b>MARINE PARKS</b>					
Kisite Mpunguti	215	125	17	13	
Malindi/Watamu/Mombasa/Kiunga	130	125	17	13	
					<b>VEHICLE FEES PER DAY</b> KSHS
					• Less than 6 seats 300
					• 6 - 12 seats 1,030
					• 13 - 24 seats 2,585
					• 25 - 44 seats 4,050
					• 45 seats and above 5,000
					<b>AIRCRAFTS (Single landing Fees)</b> KSHS
					• Aircrafts with less than 3 seats 300
					• 3 - 6 seats 500
					• 7 - 14 seats 1,000
					• 15 - 20 seats 2,155
					• 21 seats and above 3,015
					• Helicopter Landing - Mt. Kenya National Park (US\$) 260
					<b>TRUCKS AND DELIVERY VEHICLES PER DAY</b> KSHS
					• 1 - 3 Tonnes 515
					• 4 - 7 Tonnes 2,155
					• > 7 Tonnes 3,015
					<b>BOATS</b> KSHS
					• Fees per day 300
					• Annual passes for private non - commercial boats 5,170
					• Annual passes for commercial tourist vessels stationed or operating in the park (<13 seats) 15,080
					<b>VEHICLES STATIONED IN THE PARK PER YEAR</b> KSHS
					• PSV's < 6 Seats & Commercial vehicle < 2 tons 10,000

**\$1 = 120 KSHS**



# Local income generation

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**Maasai Market,**  
Maasai Mara Reserve

# Financing of PA through fees – Challenges (I)

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- **Low tourism potential** of some PAs
- Entrance/use fees **too low or too high**
- **Bureaucratic**, unflexible procedures
- **Fees charged erratically**
- Lack of, or costs for, **access control too high**
- **No visible services** in return (no maps, decay of the tourism infrastructure etc.)
- **Lack of communication** on purpose of fees
- Lack of tourism offers (opportunities for tourists to spend money)



# Financing of PA through fees – Challenges (II)

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- Income from fees not available for (local) conservation purposes
- Private sector opposes fees:
  - “Nature as a free common good”
  - “Impaired competitiveness”
  - “Bureaucracy, irregularities, lack of transparency”
- Tourism sector is inexperienced and disorganised (incapable of organising common long-term interests)
- PA administration lacks professional tourism know-how
- Lack of communication between conservation agencies and private sector





# Financing of PA through fees – Recommendations

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## Organisation & management

- Creation of an (semi-) **autonomous organisation**, e.g. a “decentralised” PA agency; or concession to private or non-profit operator (NGO)
- Community participation; Advisory board
- Communication(of purpose of fees), participation (when setting fees),transparency (regarding use of fees)
- Tourism management to be based on a business plan

## Use of revenues

- Investment into and maintenance of the tourism infrastructure; paying for tourism services & visitor management
- Use for(local) conservation purposes
- Avoiding budget cuts

# „Travellers‘ Philanthropy“

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- **Direct donations:** personalized, on-site and afterwards; or voluntary charges for sites, events (varying amounts)
- **Opt-in or opt-out supplements** when paying operator or hotel bills (small amounts, but sizeable with mass operations)
- **Merchandizing** with a mark-up (small amounts)
- **Sponsorship** by companies, former or regular visitors; (high amounts, but excellent PR necessary)
- **Direct participation** (volunteer work)
- **Membership in a conservation club** (Friends of ...) (varying amounts; long-term follow-up necessary)



# Example Lake District Foundation UK

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- National Park and Tourism select conservation projects
- Participating hotels promote/promote information about a project
- Guests pay 1 pound more at checkout and receive information about the project's development
- Companies pay the same amount per guest
- Over 2.8 million pounds already donated and over 80 local projects supported!



<https://www.lakedistrictfoundation.org/impact>