



Living in harmony with nature

## Biodiversity and Tourism

Tourists are attracted by natural landscapes which harbour significant biodiversity. Tourists in coastal areas enjoy swimming in clean waters among the fish and coral reefs, and watching whales and seabirds. Others go on safaris to watch wildlife. All these activities require intact and healthy ecosystems. National parks rely on functioning ecosystems to provide visitors recreation, education, culture and fun.

Tourism is one of the fastest growing industries and can be a sustainable alternative to economic activities that would be damaging to biodiversity. It can be a sustainable alternative to more damaging industries. The money that tourists spend can serve nature, society and culture in the form of protected areas and other attractions. Sustainable tourism can also make communities proud of maintaining and sharing their traditions, knowledge and art, which contribute to the sustainable use of local biodiversity.

Tourism can have a variety of negative impacts on biodiversity, particularly when there is inadequate management. Irresponsible and unsustainable tourism can damage nature through habitat destruction, overexploitation of local resources, waste and pollution, invasive alien species, infrastructure development, and greenhouse gas emissions. Tourists expect a clean environment and they will not return to polluted or degraded destinations, which will cause economic losses.

Travellers, the tourism industry, governments and investors all have an interest in the conservation and sustainable use of resources. Biodiversity keeps tourism going, not to mention that it meets our most basic needs by supplying food, drinking water and medicines. Sustainable tourism is in everybody's interest.



Convention on  
Biological Diversity

[www.cbd.int/tourism](http://www.cbd.int/tourism)



## Fast Facts

- ▶ Tourism contributes about 8% of global GDP, and one in 12 jobs worldwide
- ▶ In 2009, global international tourist arrivals fell to 880 million, compared with 920 million in 2008. In spite of the economic crisis of 2008, there is no change in long-term growth projections of the UNWTO, the World Tourism Organization, however one thing is clear: we cannot go back to business as usual
- ▶ 46% of the workforce in tourism are women, as their percentages of employment in most countries are higher than in the workforce in general (34–40% are women, ILO data)
- ▶ Carbon dioxide emissions from tourism account for approximately 5% of total global emissions, a problem compounded by the unpredictable nature of emissions in the higher atmosphere
- ▶ The CBD Indigenous Tourism and Biodiversity Website Award (ITBW Award) is presented annually to two winners. To participate see: <http://planeta.wikispaces.com/itbw>
- ▶ The Workshop Series on Indigenous Communities, Tourism and Biodiversity aims to support the management of biodiversity-friendly tourism activities, the web-based capacity of ILC tourism operators, and the marketing of the culturally and biologically sustainable aspects of ILC tourism products

## Learn More

Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development

▶ [www.cbd.int/doc/publications/tou-gdl-en.pdf](http://www.cbd.int/doc/publications/tou-gdl-en.pdf)

Managing Tourism & Biodiversity: User's Manual on the CBD Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development ▶ [www.cbd.int/tourism/guidelines.shtml](http://www.cbd.int/tourism/guidelines.shtml)

The Workshop Series on Indigenous Communities, Tourism and Biodiversity

▶ [www.cbd.int/doc/?meeting=WSTOURIDG-02](http://www.cbd.int/doc/?meeting=WSTOURIDG-02)

The Indigenous Tourism and Biodiversity Website (ITBW) Award

▶ [www.cbd.int/tourism/Award.shtml](http://www.cbd.int/tourism/Award.shtml)

Biodiversity and Tourism Network ▶ <http://tourism.cbd.int>

International Ecotourism Society ▶ [www.ecotourism.org](http://www.ecotourism.org)

International Institute for Peace through Tourism ▶ [www.iipt.org](http://www.iipt.org)

The Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria ▶ [www.SustainableTourismCriteria.org](http://www.SustainableTourismCriteria.org)

United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) ▶ [www.unwto.org](http://www.unwto.org)

UNEP's Tourism and Environment Programme ▶ [www.unep.fr/scp/tourism](http://www.unep.fr/scp/tourism)

World Tourism Forum for Peace and Sustainable Development ▶ [www.desti-nations.net](http://www.desti-nations.net)

### Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity

413, Saint Jacques Street, suite 800  
Montreal, Quebec, H2Y 1N9  
Canada

Tel.: +1 514 288 2220  
Fax: +1 514 288 6588  
[UNBiodiversity@cbd.int](mailto:UNBiodiversity@cbd.int)

[www.cbd.int/tourism](http://www.cbd.int/tourism)