



Thesis Abstract

Carrying Capacity for Ecotourism of a Wildlife Sanctuary – Taganak, Turtle Islands, Philippines

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A modified methodology for determining ecotourism carrying capacity for a wildlife sanctuary was developed and applied to Taganak Island of the Turtle Islands. This modified methodology incorporates the economic, social, and physical requirements of both the host community and future visitors, as well as the island's existing marine turtle population.

Assessment of the island's existing resources and resource users, analysis of the resource allocation and linkages among resource users, mapping of potential ecotourism zones, and calculation of ecotourism zones' carrying capacities were conducted. The number of visitors that may be supported without affecting the environmental and social integrity of the area was likewise determined.

The effective carrying capacity for ecotourism of Taganak Island is approximately 72 visitors per day in its 130 ha area, or about one person per 1.8 ha. The low carrying capacity was due to the limited area for constructing accommodation facilities, freshwater availability and low nesting marine turtle population, a major tourist attraction of the island. As a precautionary measure, detailed assessment of freshwater supply is also recommended.

As long as pursued within sustainable limits, ecotourism will benefit the community through additional incomes for the people and increased municipal revenues. Marine turtle conservation is also expected to benefit from ecotourism.