

Ecotourism or Ecotour-ish? Evaluation of Marine-Based Ecotourism in Marine Protected Areas of Baja California Sur.

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ECOTOURISM OR ECOTOUR-ISH?

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Introduction

“...there is little left of the natural world that has not been exploited or commoditized for tourist consumption.”

–Hill & Gale, 2009

With the “unstoppable” (UNWTO, 2014) growth of the tourism industry expanding further into remote, natural areas, efforts must be made to balance the needs of the environment, visitors, and local economy. Some areas with nature-based tourism activities have adopted ecotourism as a means to achieve this balance. While existing without a single operational definition (Fennel, 2001), ecotourism can be summarized as nature-focused tourism activities in natural areas, with a concentration on conservation, education, and generating socio-economic benefits for local communities (Donohoe & Needham, 2006). The absence of a substantial definition of ecotourism has allowed ecotour-ish operators to misuse the label of ecotourism for their own benefit (Carrier & Macleod, 2005). These ecotour-ish operators offer nature-focused activities without the intent to protect the environment or support the local community, but rather just to increase their profits. Despite the existence of some ecotour-ish operators, there are areas where ecotourism operations occur that benefit local stakeholders while having minimal environmental impact (Agardy, 1993; Kruger, 2003, Cisneros-Montemayor & Sumaila, 2010). The ecotour-ish operators highlight the grey areas of ecotourism where improvements can be made in planning, management, and evaluation of ecotourism operations. Planning and management of ecotourism operations by local communities, NGOs, marine protected area managers, and operators themselves, can provide the framework to protect natural resources and allow for sustainable tourism growth (Papageorgiou, 2016). Once ecotourism operations have been established they should be regularly evaluated with stakeholder involvement, and operations should be adjusted, if needed, in order to ensure minimal negative environmental impact and continued local stakeholder benefit.

Marine-based ecotourism is a sub-sector of the ecotourism industry; the primary distinction is that the marine-based ecotourism activities interact with the marine environment, it includes activities such as scuba diving, snorkeling, whale and other wildlife watching, kayaking, and nature tours. Marine ecotourism often occurs within marine protected areas, creating potential symbiotic relationships, where marine ecotourism can increase environmental awareness and generate revenue for the protected area, while the protected area preserves the natural resource that marine ecotourism activities rely on (Ceballos-Lascurain, 1996).

This study focuses on the small, but growing marine-based ecotourism industry in the Mexican state of Baja California Sur (Cisneros-Montemayor, *in press*). The current nature of this particular industry, small and expanding, creates an ideal opportunity to evaluate the existing marine ecotourism operations, then utilize the information to modify operations and set precedence for the future marine ecotourism industry in Baja California Sur. The aim of this evaluation is to provide a glimpse of the marine-based ecotourism industry in Baja California Sur by evaluating marine ecotourism operations in three locations, Laguna San Ignacio, La Paz, and Cabo Pulmo. Since prior evaluations are limited, and only focus on a single location (De los Monteros, 2002; Rossing, 2006),

this evaluation will cover multiple locations and serve as an overview of the current marine ecotourism industry, providing marine ecotourism operators, local communities, NGOs, and protected area managers an indication of where the marine ecotourism industry in Baja California Sur is succeeding, and where modifications can be made to further reduce negative environmental impacts and maximize socio-economic benefits for the local community.

Methods

Study Location

The Mexican state of Baja California Sur makes up the southern half of the Baja California Peninsula. It is bordered by the Pacific Ocean to the west, and the Gulf of California to the east, which is one of the most productive and biodiverse marine ecosystems in the world (Enríquez-Andrade et al., 2005). Baja California Sur has seven marine protected areas (MPAtlas, n.d.), for which the objective is to conserve biodiversity, while at the same time fostering the sustainable development and use of natural resources (CONANP, 2014).

Three sites were chosen for this study, Laguna San Ignacio, La Paz, and Cabo Pulmo; all are ecologically important and have marine protected areas adjacent or nearby (Figure 1). Two sites, Laguna San Ignacio and Cabo Pulmo, sit adjacent to marine protected areas and their respective marine-based tourism activities occur almost exclusively in the protected areas. In contrast, La Paz has marine protected areas nearby where some of the marine-based tourism activities occur.

Study Sites

Laguna San Ignacio is located on the north Pacific coast of Baja California Sur. The entire lagoon was established as a protected area in 1979 as a breeding and calving sanctuary for the Eastern Pacific population of the Grey Whale. It covers almost 143 thousand hectares and is part of the El Vizcaino Biosphere Reserve, the largest protected area in Mexico (UNESCO, n.d.b). Its ecological importance is evidenced by its designation as a Ramsar Site (Ramsar, 2004) and as part of a UNESCO World Heritage site. Marine-based tourism activities at the lagoon are reliant on the presence of the Grey Whale, which inhabits the lagoon annually between December and April. This site was chosen because it is an example of the implementation of seasonal marine ecotourism in a protected area, in which ecotourism is an economic alternative for local residents during the Grey Whale season.

La Paz is the state capitol, located on the southern Gulf of California coast. There are two protected areas near La Paz, the largest, Espiritu Santo Archipelago, is composed of 5 islands and covers just over 48.5 thousand hectares.(CONANP, 2016a) It is part of the Gulf of California Islands Protected Area, a UNESCO world heritage site. (UNESCO, n.d.a) The second protected area is the Balandra Wildlife Protection Area, a RAMSAR site, covering 2500 hectares (CONANP, 2016b). Marine-based tourism activities in La Paz occur both inside and outside of the marine protected areas. La Paz was included as a study site because it is dissimilar to the other two sites, in site size, number of

operators, and location of marine tourism activities. This contrast serves to make the study generalizable to other locations not covered in this study, and provide a comparison for the other location in this study.

The third study site is Cabo Pulmo, located at the south-eastern Gulf coast of Baja California Sur. The Cabo Pulmo National Park was established in 1995 through the efforts of the local community (Johnson et al., 2015). The park covers just over 7 thousand hectares and is a Ramsar Site and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. (Ramsar, 2008). Scuba diving and snorkeling are the most common marine-based tourism activities and are located predominantly within the protected area. Cabo Pulmo can be used as an example of the utilization of ecotourism as an economic alternative when the establishment of a protected area removes access to a natural resource, in this case fish.

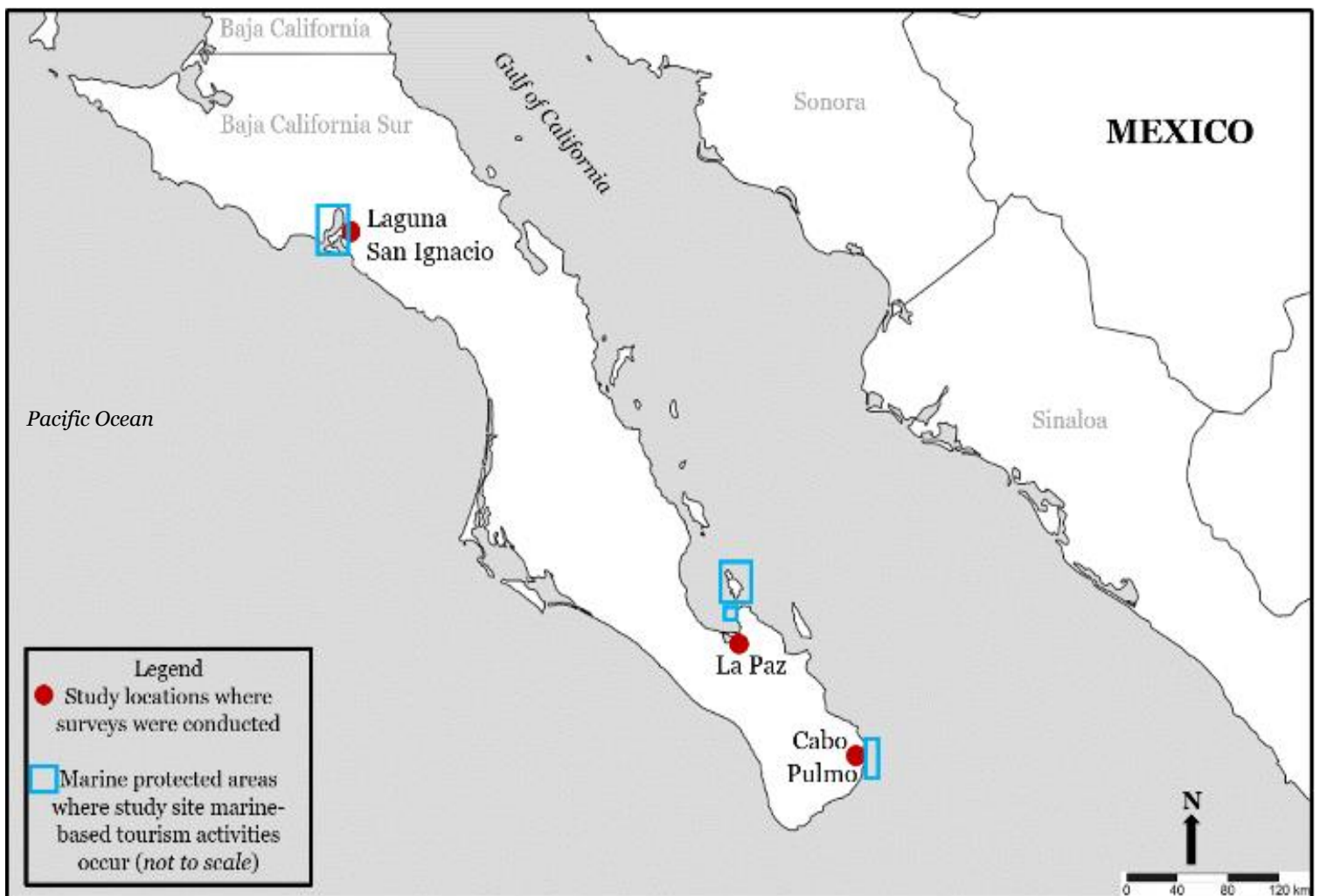


Figure 1: Map of Baja California Sur, Mexico and surrounding areas. The focus of this study was on three locations; Laguna San Ignacio, La Paz, and Cabo Pulmo. Also shown are the approximate outlines of the marine protected areas in which the marine-based tourism activities from these locations occur.

Establishment of Ecotourism Principles:

To date there is not a universal definition for ecotourism, and the lack of consensus among experts is due in part to ecotourism encompassing so many different locations and activities. It is difficult to create a definition that is specific enough to be useful and yet broad enough to cover the unique aspects of each potential type of ecotourism operation. While a 2001 study found 85 unique definitions for ecotourism (Fennell, 2001), it also found that there are some basic operational principles that occur across most definitions; ‘conservation’, ‘education’, ‘ethics’, ‘sustainability’, ‘impacts’, and ‘local benefits’. Instead of creating another inadequate definition for marine ecotourism, this study created site-specific operating principles (the use of “site” here refers to the state of Baja California Sur, since the cultural, social, ecological, and political atmosphere is similar across the three locations) since ecotourism is unique in each location due to the need to sustainably balance the location-specific needs of the environment, visitors, and local community.

To create the site-specific operating principles used in this study a literature review was undertaken (Appendix B). This review considered a broad representation of professional publications from, scientific journals, academic publications, and non-profit organization reports. Ideally the literature review would have contained more site-specific literature, however Baja California Sur marine-based ecotourism publications are limited. Each of the publications presented a set of unique ecotourism operational principles. The principles from each paper were categorized into common themes, such as conservation, education, reducing impacts, and local community benefits. The most common themes found in this literature review are consistent with larger scale ecotourism literature reviews, such as Fennel 2001 and Donohoe et.al. 2006. A total of 7 common themes occurring in all of the papers were adapted to create the ecotourism operational principles used in this study.

The ecotourism principles that were created for this study were used as a means to evaluate the marine-based tourism operations in Baja California Sur. These ecotourism principles were used as an indicator to identify ecotourism operators, and to then evaluate their operations.

1. **Displays eco-centric ideals in company/activities description:** Operators describe their company and/or activities as being eco, sustainable, or environmentally conscious. Operators advertise that they support conservation, the environment, or research, or offer activities that are research focused. Advertisement of the operator’s eco-centric ideals in name and/ or description can help visitor’s identify the operators that are focused on sustaining the local environment and local economy. Visitor’s need to be diligent, however, because ecotour-ish operators will utilize the same terms as ecotourism operators. The difference between them is how they operate, the actions of ecotourism operators substantiate their eco-centric advertisements.
2. **Some or all activities occur within a marine protected area:** “In short, tourists need protected areas, protected areas need the revenue tourism generates

and the exposure tourists bring; but both must be managed if serious adverse impacts are to be avoided.” (Ceballos-Lascurain,1996) Ecotourism and marine protected areas can have a mutually beneficial relationship; ecotourism can support management and conservation goals of the protected areas (Agardy, 1993, Kruger, 2005), and the protected areas can provide a regulated framework for the ecotourism activities to operate within.

3. **Activities are non-extractive:** Though the argument has been made for extractive tourism activities, such as sport fishing, to be classified as ecotourism (Ditton et al., 2002; Zwirn et al.,2005), sport-fishing companies were not included in this study. Extractive activities, like sport-fishing, have the potential to be ecologically unsustainable, and it is beyond the scope of this study to analyze the efficacy of sport-fishing management. Some sport-fishing operators promote catch-and-release tours, however survival of released fish is dependent on many factors, some beyond the control of operators, such as fish species, and location and depth of hooking. (See Arlinghaus et al., 2007, and Bartholomew et al., 2005, for in-depth analysis of catch-and-release mortality).
4. **Minimizes negative environmental impacts during operations:** Operators should be aware of potential negative environmental impacts in all aspects of their operations and should make efforts to reduce the occurrence and magnitude of their negative impacts. Negative environmental impacts can be minimized through a variety of practices, such as limiting tour group size, monitoring resource utilization, monitoring visitor activities, and providing education.
5. **Increases environmental awareness, knowledge, and respect:** Activities should have an educational component that provides visitors with an understanding of the area and animals in order to increase environmental awareness and respect (Tisdell & Wilson, 2005), and advises visitors how to conduct themselves to minimize negative impacts. Guides should also be educated about the area, and lead by example during tours, this can include actions such as picking up trash, minimizing water use, or following protected area, and animal regulations.
6. **Generates financial contributions for conservation:** Ecotourism should support conservation efforts to ensure that the natural resources they rely on are protected and maintained for their future use, and use by future generations. This study only looks at monetary measures, but other types of contributions such as time, equipment, and service discounts benefiting conservation could also be measured.
7. **Creates direct economic and other benefits for local people:** Ecotourism should be socially sustainable by generating local economic benefits, such as local jobs. Other benefits can include; infrastructure, social-welfare, increased environmental awareness, and stewardship of natural resources. (Ross & Wall, 1999; Sheyvens, 1999)

Operator Surveys

The purpose of adapting ecotourism principles from the literature review is to identify and evaluate marine ecotourism operators in Baja California Sur. In order to utilize the principles, an initial comprehensive list of marine-based tourism operators was compiled for the three study locations, Laguna San Ignacio, La Paz, and Cabo Pulmo. Data was collected through internet searches utilizing the search functions in the

following websites; www.google.com, www.maps.google.com, www.tripadvisor.com, and www.facebook.com. Location and key words were entered into the search bars, (e.g. “location + marine activity”) for all locations and relevant marine-based tourism activities (i.e. whale watching, scuba diving, snorkeling, sea lion tours, whale shark tours, nature tours, kayaking).

The list of marine-based tourism operators was then evaluated to determine their fulfillment of the first three ecotourism principles. If the operator fulfilled the first three principles, then they were classified as a marine ecotourism operator in this study. These marine ecotourism operators were then invited to participate in a survey. The survey (Appendix A) contained questions that were created specifically to evaluate the operator’s fulfillment of the remaining four principles.

Surveys were conducted in the field between March and April, 2016. Time constraints prevented the opportunity to visit all of the marine ecotourism operators in person, so some operators were invited to participate in the survey electronically through GoogleForms.

Survey data was analyzed collectively by location to determine the extent of fulfillment of the ecotourism principles covered by the survey. Results are presented at a study site level because the collective efforts of the operators in a given area will determine the level of environmental and community benefits that can be gained from ecotourism.

Results

Principles 1-3

Internet research revealed a total of 50 marine-based tourism companies in the three study locations, Laguna San Ignacio, La Paz, and Cabo Pulmo. Of those, 26 (52%) were classified as marine-based ecotourism operators based on their fulfillment of principles 1-3. In Laguna San Ignacio, 6 marine ecotourism operators were identified as fulfilling the first three principles, in La Paz, 13 marine ecotourism operators identified, and Cabo Pulmo, 6 operators were identified as marine ecotourism.

Operator Survey Responses

A total of 19 physical and digital surveys representing 14 marine-based ecotourism companies (54%) were returned completed. Four companies had more than one survey submission. Duplicate survey answers were average to create a single submission per company.

Among all operators surveyed, the average amount of time working in the ecotourism industry was 14.4 years with a range from 2 months, in Laguna San Ignacio to 45 years, in La Paz. Operators interviewed were mostly employees, but also some owners. The operators were mostly likely to classify themselves as ecotourism (46%), followed by marine tourism (32%).

The majority of operators offered more than one marine-based tourism activity, with an average across all locations of 3.7 activities per company. Only 3 operators (21%) did not

offer more than one type of tourism activity. The most common activity across the three sites was whale watching, offered by 75% of operators. The other common activities offered were, tours of protected areas, with the mode of the tour unspecified (68%), scuba diving/snorkeling (64%), and sea lion tours (57%).

In Cabo Pulmo an average of 3.4 marine-based tourism activities was offered by operators, with the most common activities being scuba diving/snorkeling, offered by 100% of operators. In La Paz, an average of 6 marine-based tourism activities were offered by operators, with whale shark and sea lion tours being the most common activities, both offered by 100% of operators. In Laguna San Ignacio an average of 1.8 marine-based tourism activities were offered, with whale watching the most common activity, offered by 100% of operators.

In all three locations, operators cited company operations as the most common way they minimize environmental impacts (42.5%), and also reported utilizing education (16.6%) and regulations (16.6% each). (Figures 2a & 2b). At a local level, La Paz operators also cited company regulations as their most common method to reduce environmental impacts (60%). Followed by education at 16%. Laguna San Ignacio operators similarly reported company operations as their most common method (35.7%), followed by regulations at 28.5%. In contrast, Cabo Pulmo operators utilize regulation (26.6%) and education (26.6%) in order to minimize environmental impacts.

All of the operators surveyed stated that ecotourism is beneficial to local communities. Operators across all three sites reported that local jobs were a benefit of ecotourism (31.4%). Other benefits cited by operators were conservation (20%) and economic opportunity (20%), environmental awareness (14.3%), and sustainable resource utilization (14.3%). (Figures 3a & 3b).

Cabo Pulmo operators' most commonly reported benefits was also local jobs (27%), followed by conservation (18%), sustainable resource utilization (18%), environmental awareness (18%), and economic opportunity (18%). La Paz operators' reported local jobs and economic opportunity, both with 33.3%, followed by sustainable resource utilization (25%). Laguna San Ignacio reported local jobs and conservation, each with 33%, followed by environmental awareness (25%).

Only 32% of operators across all three study sites thought that the government was doing enough to protect the environment, with 89.3% stating that there needs to be improvement to protected area regulations. The most common suggestions by operators for regulation improvement was through an increase in federal enforcement and monitoring. 78.5% of all operators thought that local communities were contributing enough to environmental protection, 82.1% thought that their companies were doing enough, and 85.7% of operators thought that they were doing enough to protect the environment and animals they work with. Multiple operators added side notes saying that "it is never enough".

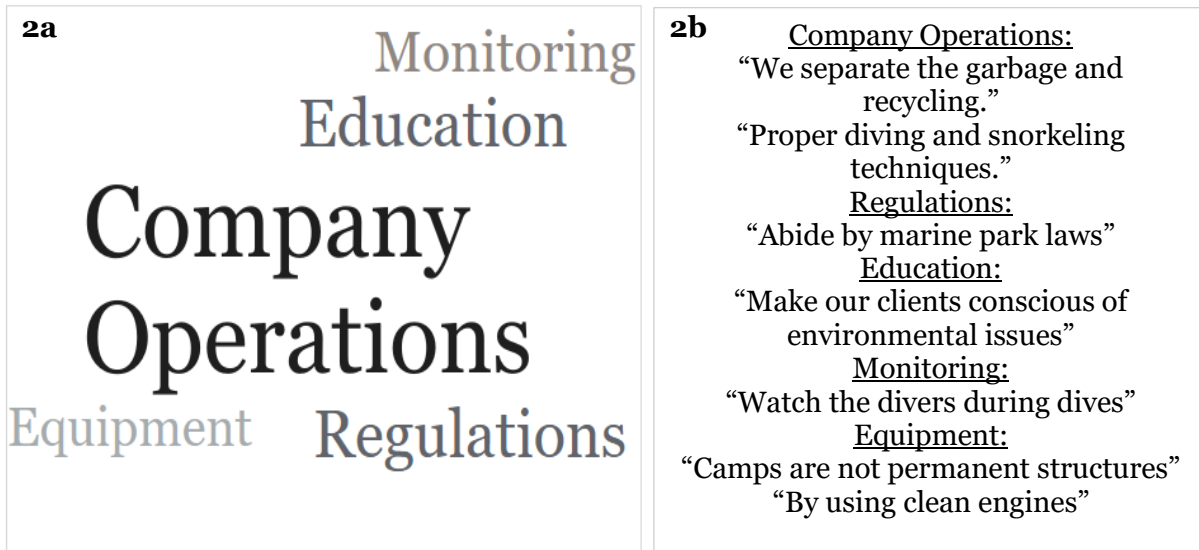


Figure 2a: Operators were asked an open-ended question about the ways they minimize environmental impacts during tours. The question was presented as open-ended to provide operators the opportunity to demonstrate the various ways that impacts can be reduced. The word cloud represents the frequency, with greater represented by larger words, of the 5 most common types of responses that were provided by operators.

Figure 2b: Example responses from operators.

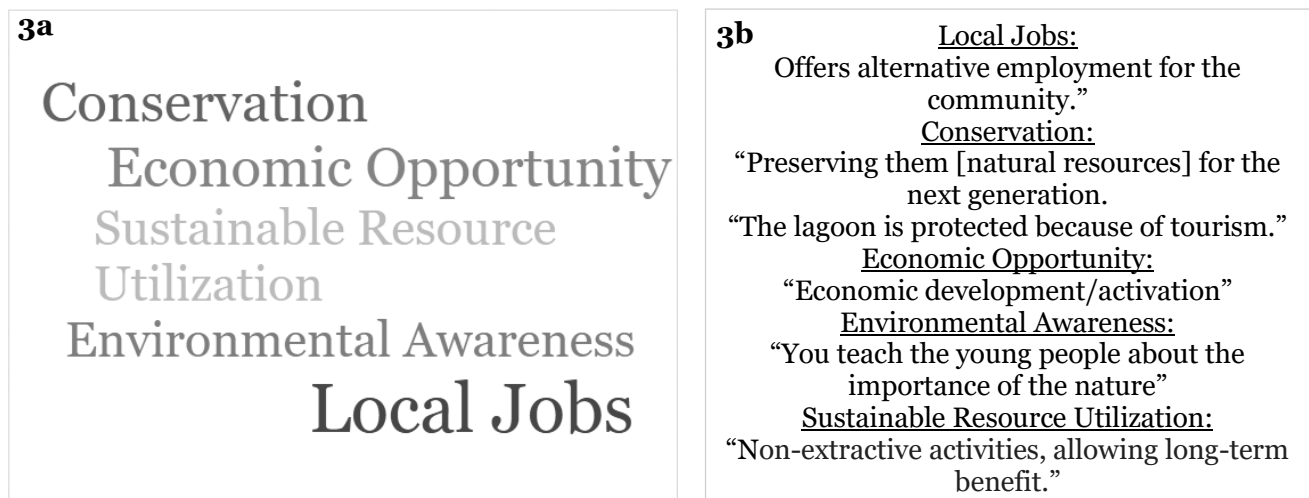


Figure 3a: Operators were asked an open-ended question about what kinds of benefits ecotourism provides to local communities. The question was presented as open-ended in order to obtain insight into the perceptions of people working in the marine ecotourism industry by providing operators the opportunity to report what they believe are the benefits of ecotourism. The word cloud represents the frequency, with greater represented by larger words, of the 5 most common types of responses that were provided by operators.

Figure 3b: Example responses from operators.

Across all three locations, operators report that 86.3% of their tourism activities occur within marine protected areas. During tours, the majority of operators (90.7%) provided information about the marine protected areas they operate in or near, and 90.5% of operators provided local information. A total of 76.6% of all operators had worked with researchers in some capacity, with the most in La Paz, with 100%. The most common role operators fulfilled during research was as guides and data collection. This question did not address a desire to participate in research.

Just over half (57.5%) of operators in Cabo Pulmo and La Paz of operators reported that their company made financial donations to support conservation and/or environmental groups and projects. This question did not cover donations of time, equipment, or discounted services.

Among all of the operators, an average of 79.6% of employees were from the local area, an average of 72% of companies were owned by a local resident. Laguna San Ignacio had the largest amount of local-owned companies, with 100%, followed by Cabo Pulmo with 80%, then La Paz with 36%.

Overall Fulfillment of Principles

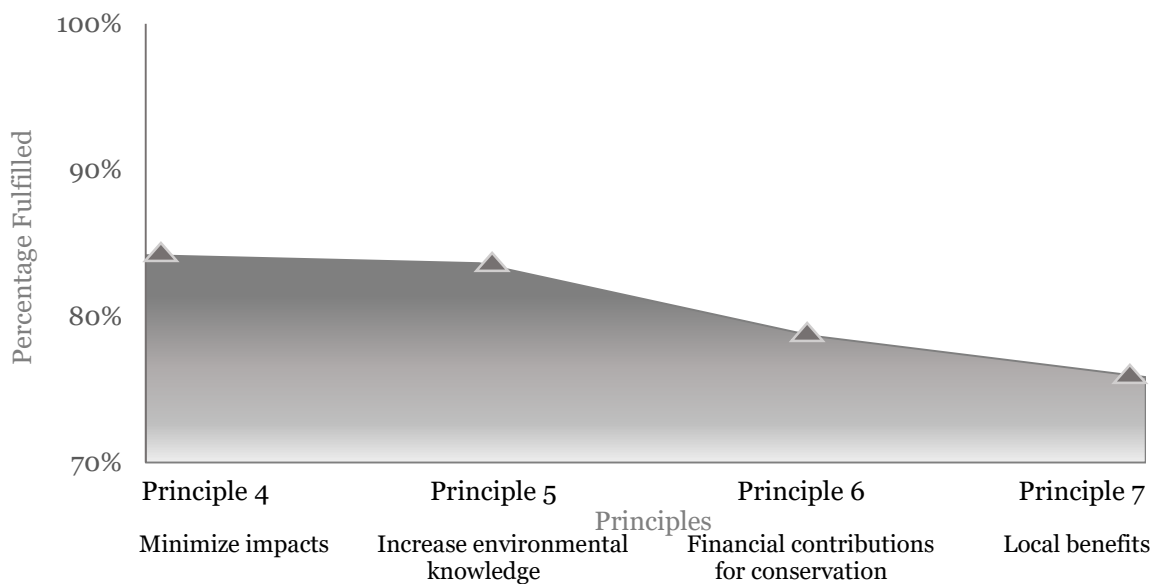


Figure 5: Total principle fulfillment by all operators based on survey responses. Marine ecotourism operators in Cabo Pulmo, La Paz, and Laguna San Ignacio fulfilled 84.2% of principle 4, 83.6% of principle 5, 78.7% of principle 6, and 75.8% of principle 7.

Discussion

Existing marine ecotourism operations set precedence for the future development of the marine ecotourism industry in Baja California Sur. Frequent evaluations of ecotourism operations are essential to ensure that ecotourism industry remains focused on conservation, education, and other core operational ecotourism principles. Since an evaluation of more than one location in Baja California Sur had not been undertaken

before, this study provides an important overview of the current state of the ecotourism industry. These results can be used as a starting point to continue evaluation of ecotourism operations at other study sites in Baja California Sur, and serve as a baseline comparison for future evaluations.

This evaluation of marine-based tourism in Baja California Sur revealed, at the state and local level, that the ecotourism industry overall meets a large percentage of the core ecotourism principles. This study shows that while overall the operations in Baja California Sur are more ecotourism than ecotour-ish, there is still a need for some operations to be adjusted to ensure environmental protection while maximizing benefits to local stakeholders.

Fulfillment of principles by operators was somewhat similar across locations, especially Cabo Pulmo and Laguna San Ignacio. These results are likely due to the similarity of both locations; semi-remote areas that utilize marine protected areas for tourism activities, with a small amount of operators and supportive communities. However, despite these enabling factors, neither location was able to completely fulfill all of the evaluated ecotourism principles. Overall, Cabo Pulmo fulfilled 84.4% and San Ignacio fulfilled 84.9% of evaluated principles. A prior marine ecotourism evaluation of Laguna San Ignacio (Rossing, 2006) found that there were ways for ecotourism operations to increase socio-economic benefits to local communities and the ecotourism operators. Though methods and measures between this study and Rossing's (2006) were different, the results from this study found that Laguna San Ignacio fulfilled 90.5% of principle 7, creating direct economic and other benefits to local communities. This could indicate that operators in Laguna San Ignacio have adjusted their operations in order to increase socio-economic benefits from ecotourism, addressing the deficiencies found by Rossing (2006).

The lower overall fulfillment in La Paz, 71.5% of evaluated principles, can be contrasted with the other locations, and the results may be due to multiple factors. One factor could be that some of La Paz's activities occur outside of marine protected areas, and are not as tightly regulated as the activities that occur within the protected areas. Also, La Paz is a larger city with more operators than the other locations, which could make it more difficult for operators to coordinate their efforts to protect the environment and increase socio-economic benefits. A prior evaluation of marine ecotourism operations was done in La Paz (De los Monteros, 2002), and while the methods of that study were slightly different, the results were similar. De los Monteros (2002) found that on average La Paz ecotourism operators fulfilled 71.4% of evaluated principles. Comparing the results, it appears that marine ecotourism operators in La Paz have been relatively stagnant in modifying operations to increase environmental protection and local socio-economic benefits. This stagnation could reveal a lack of communication, or miscommunication, between researchers and local communities, NGOs, protected area managers, and the operators themselves, as the results of these studies can be useful, but only if the information is conveyed to the people who can make a difference.

This evaluation of marine ecotourism operators in Baja California Sur has provided a snapshot of the current marine ecotourism industry. Though not exhaustive, this study can provide a starting point for marine ecotourism operators and other stakeholders to

determine which areas need to be further evaluated and adjusted to ensure sustainable and beneficial operations.

Limitations and Future Research

The time limitations of this study created the largest problems. The short time frame made it impossible to invite all of the operators to participate in person. All of the surveys that were not returned had been sent electronically, it is possible that more time in the field could have resulted in more surveys. Time constraints also prevented the inclusion of other sites in this study, which would have increased the number of participants in the survey and created a more comprehensive understanding of the ecotourism industry in Baja California Sur. Future research should include more study sites to increase the number of participants in the study and to be able to identify factors between locations that affect results, such as the percentage of activities occurring in marine protected areas, and community demographics. Another limitation of the study was the survey. Due to time constraints, Laguna San Ignacio served as a field test for the survey, and changes were made to before the survey was distributed in La Paz and Cabo Pulmo. In the end, this only affected the data for one question. The survey only covered two measure per principle, this was done to prevent survey fatigue, but also could have affected the fulfillment results. Future research could focus on principles in-depth to determine the full extent to which they are fulfilled. This may require a survey that is site specific, as the measurements of the principles would likely vary between locations. Future research should also focus on the actions of the operators during business operations and tours. This study has self-reporting bias, operators may say they do something to fulfill the principle, even if they do not actually do it. This bias could be minimized by a follow-up study that evaluates the actions of the operators, such as minimizing negative environmental impacts during tours, and comparing it with the survey responses by the operators.

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Center for Marine
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Survey for Tour Operators

A study of ecotourism in marine protected areas in Baja California Sur

Notice to participant: This survey should take approximately 10 minutes to complete. All information you provide is anonymous and confidential, and any information you provide to will not be linked to you or your business. Participation is voluntary and you may choose to stop taking the survey at any time. Your continuation is indicative of your consent to participate. Thank you!

Location _____

1. Do you consider yourself a(n) (choose one)

| | |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| a. Wildlife tourism operator | b. Nature tourism operator |
| c. Ecotourism operator | d. Marine tourism operator |
| e. Other _____ | |

2. How long have you been working in the ecotourism industry? _____ years
3. What kind of guides do you employ? (check all that apply)

| | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| a. Naturalists | b. Scientists |
| c. Company trained staff | d. Local volunteers |
| e. Tourism experts | f. Other (please specify) |

4. What percentage of your employees are from the local community? _____ %
5. Is the company owned by

| |
|--------------------------------------------|
| a. a local (from the local community)? Y/N |
| b. a non-local Mexican? Y/N |
| i. Individual or company |
| c. a foreigner? Y/N |
| i. Individual or company? |
| ii. Which country? |

6. What type of tours do you offer and how important is each (with 1 being most important)?

| | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| ___ whale watching | ___ sea lions |
| ___ scuba and/or snorkel | ___ nature tours |
| ___ kayak | ___ protected areas |
| ___ whale sharks | ___ other (please specify) |

7. What percentage of your activities are located within a marine protected area? _____ %

8. What are the most important species to your tours?

| | | |
|----|----|----|
| 1. | 2. | 3. |
|----|----|----|

9. How do you minimize your environmental impacts during tours?

10. What kind of information do you provide to guests? (Check all that apply)

- a. Information about of local flora and fauna
- b. History of the area
- c. Rules and regulations of the protected are
- d. History of the protected area
- e. Minimizing environmental impacts
- f. Information about local communities
- g. Tours don't involve structured information for guests
- h. Other (please specify)

11. Do you think the current state of the environment in which you work is good or bad?

- a. Good _____ [ocean and animals where I work are clean and healthy]
- b. Bad _____ [ocean and/or animals are unhealthy]

12. How successful do you think the protected area is in protecting and conserving important plants, animals, and ecosystems? (choose one)

Very successful Successful Somewhat Successful Not successful
 Unsure/Undecided

13. Do you think enough is being done to protect the ocean and animals that you work with, by:

- the government? Yes No
- your company? Yes No
- the local city and community? Yes No
- you personally? Yes No

14. Do you think protected area regulations could be improved? Y/N

- a. If yes, how?

15. Have you ever worked with researchers/scientists?

- a. If yes, in what capacity? (e.g. acted as a guide, collected data, etc.)

16. Does your business donate to environmental conservation organizations or environmental research efforts? Y/N

17. Does ecotourism provide benefits to the local community and to Mexico? Y/N

- a. If yes, how?

Any other comments?

Thank you for taking the time to share your thoughts!!



Center for Marine
Biodiversity &
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Encuesta para Operadores de Tours

Un estudio del ecoturismo en áreas marinas protegidas en Baja California Sur

Aviso al participante: esta encuesta debe tomar aproximadamente 10 minutos para completarse. Toda la información que usted proporcione es confidencial y anónima, y cualquier información que usted proporcione no será vinculada a usted o a su negocio. La participación es voluntaria y usted puede elegir dejar de tomar la encuesta en cualquier momento. Su continuación es indicativa de su consentimiento para participar. ¡Gracias!

Ubicación _____

10. Se considera un (elija uno)
- a. Operador de turismo de vida silvestre
 - b. Operador de turismo de naturaleza
 - d. Operador de ecoturismo
 - d. Operador de turismo marino
 - f. Otro _____

11. ¿Cuánto tiempo lleva trabajando en la industria del ecoturismo? _____ años

12. ¿Qué tipo de guías emplea? (Marque todas las que correspondan)
- b. Naturalistas
 - b. Científicos
 - d. Personal capacitado de la empresa
 - d. Voluntarios locales
 - f. Expertos en turismo
 - f. Otro (especifique)

13. ¿Qué porcentaje de sus empleados son de la comunidad local? _____ %

14. La compañía es propiedad de
- a. ¿Un local (de la comunidad local)? S/N
 - b. ¿Foráneo mexicano S/N?
 - i. ¿Persona o empresa?
 - c. ¿Un extranjero? S/N
 - i. ¿Persona o empresa?
 - ii. ¿Qué país?

15. ¿Qué tipo de tours ofrece y qué tan importante es cada uno (siendo 1 el más importante)?

- | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| ___ ballenas | ___ lobos de mar |
| ___ buceo y/o snorkel | ___ viaje a la naturaleza |
| ___ kayak | ___ zonas protegidas |
| ___ tiburones ballena | ___ otro (especifique) |

16. ¿Qué porcentaje de sus actividades se encuentra dentro de un área marina protegida? _____ %

17. ¿Cuáles son las especies más importantes para sus excursiones?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

18. ¿Cómo minimiza sus impactos ambientales durante las excursiones?
19. ¿Qué tipo de información proporciona a sus clientes? (Marque todas las que correspondan)
- b. Información acerca de la flora y fauna local.
 - d. Reglas y regulaciones del área protegida
 - f. Minimización de impactos ambientales
 - g. Información sobre las comunidades locales
 - i. Los tours no proveen información estructurada para los clientes
 - j. Otro (especifique)
 - b. Historia del área.
 - d. Historia del área protegida
20. ¿Cree usted que el estado actual del medio ambiente en el que trabaja es bueno o malo?
- c. Bueno ____ [océano y animales donde yo trabajo están limpios y sanos]
 - d. Mala ____ [océano y/o animales están insalubres]
21. ¿Qué tan exitosa cree que ha sido el área protegida en la protección y conservación de plantas, animales y los ecosistemas? (elija uno)
- Muy exitosa Exitosa Algo exitosa No exitosa Inseguro/indeciso
22. ¿Cree usted que se está haciendo lo suficiente para proteger a los océanos y a los animales con los que usted trabaja, por:
- El gobierno? Sí No
- La ciudad y comunidad local? Sí No
- Su empresa? Sí No
- Usted personalmente? Sí No
23. ¿Cree usted que los reglamentos relativos a áreas protegidas podrían mejorarse? S/N
- b. Si es así, ¿cómo?
24. ¿Alguna vez ha trabajado con investigadores/científicos?
- a. Si la respuesta es sí, ¿en calidad de qué? (p. ej., actuó como guía, colector de datos, etc.).
25. ¿Su negocio dona a organizaciones de conservación ambiental o a los esfuerzos de investigación ambiental? S/N
26. ¿Considera que el ecoturismo ofrece beneficios para la comunidad local y para México? S/N
- a. Si es así, ¿cómo?
- ¿Algú otro comentario?
- ¡Gracias por tomarse el tiempo para compartir sus pensamientos!**

| Source | Source Type | Principle | Principle | Principle | Principle | Principle | Principle | Principle | Principle | Principle | Principle | Principle |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| TIES Announces Ecotourism Principles Revision. The International Ecotourism Society, 2015 | Non-profit organization | Is non-consumptive/non-extractive | Creates an ecological conscience | Holds eco-centric values and ethics in relation to nature | Minimize physical, social, behavioral, and physiological impacts. | Build environmental and cultural awareness, and respect | Provide positive experiences for both visitors and hosts | Produce direct financial benefits for conservation | Generate financial benefits of both local people and private industry | Deliver memorable interpretative experiences to visitors that help raise sensitivity to host countries' political, environmental, and social climates | Design, construct, and operate low-impact facilities | Recognize the rights and spiritual beliefs of the Indigenous People in your community and work in partnership with them to create empowerment |
| Evaluating ecotourism in Mexico's biosphere reserves—whale watching activities in the World Heritage Site of Laguna San Ignacio, Baja California Sur, Mexico, 1994-2002. Rossing, 2006 | Academic Publication; University of British Columbia, Theses and Dissertations | Contribute to the conservation of biodiversity | Sustain the wellbeing of local people | Include an interpretation/ learning experience | Involve responsible action on the parts of tourists and the tourism industry | Be delivered primarily to small groups by small businesses | Require the lowest possible consumption of non-renewable resources | Stress local participation, ownership and business opportunities | | | | |
| Evaluating ecotourism in natural protected areas of La Paz Bay, Baja California Sur, Mexico: ecotourism or nature-based tourism? De Los Monteros, 2002 | Journal article; Biodiversity and Conservation | Involves travel to natural destinations | Minimize negative impacts in both the environment and the local communities | Build environmental awareness | Provide direct benefits for conservation | Provide financial benefits and empowerment for local people | Respect local culture | | | | | |
| Mohonk Agreement: Proposal for an International Certification Program for Sustainable Tourism and Ecotourism. Ecotourism Criteria. Rainforest Alliance, 2000 | Non-profit organization | Focus on personal experiences of nature to lead to greater understanding and appreciation | Interpretation and environmental awareness of nature, local society, and culture. | Positive and active contributions to conservation of natural areas or biodiversity | Economic, social, and cultural benefits for local communities | Fostering of community involvement, when appropriate | Locally appropriate scale and design for lodging, tours and attractions | Minimal impact on and presentation of local (Indigenous) culture | | | | |

| Source | Source Type | Principle | Principle | Principle | Principle | Principle | Principle | Principle | Principle | Principle | Principle | Principle |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| Treading lightly? Ecotourism's impact on the environment. Honey, 1999 | Journal article; Environment: Science and Policy for Sustainable Development | Travel to natural destinations, usually national parks or other protected areas | Minimizing impact through environmentally and culturally sensitive architecture and regulating the numbers and mode of behavior of tourists | Promoting environmental awareness for both tourists and local residents through well-trained and knowledgeable guides | Using some of the profits to provide direct financial benefits for environmental protection | Providing financial benefits for environmental protection, research, and education | Providing financial benefits and economic empowerment to the local people who live nearest to the ecotourism destination | Respecting local culture | Supporting human rights and democratic movements | | | |
| Modeling tour operators' voluntary compliance with ecotourism principles: A behavioral approach. Sirakaya & McLellan, 1998 | Journal article; Journal of Travel Research | Prepare travelers to minimize their negative impacts while visiting sensitive environments and cultures before departure. | Prepare travelers for each encounter with local cultures and the native animals and plants | Minimize visitor impacts on the environment by offering literature, briefings, leading by example, and taking corrective actions. | Minimize visitor impacts on cultures by offering literature, briefings, leading by example, and taking corrective actions. | Use adequate leadership and maintain small enough groups to ensure minimum group impact on destinations. Avoid areas that are undermanaged or overvisited. | Ensure managers, staff, and contact employees know and participate in all aspects of company policy to prevent impacts on the environment and local culture. | Give managers, staff, and contact employees access to programs that will upgrade their ability to communicate with and manage clients in sensitive natural and cultural settings. | Be a contributor to the conservation of the region being visited. | Provide competitive, local employment in all aspects of business operations | Offer site-sensitive accommodations that are not wasteful of local resources or destructive to the environment, which provide ample opportunity for learning about the environment and sensitive interchange with local communities | |
| Toward a Principled Evaluation of Ecotourism Ventures. Wallace, 1996 | Academic Publication; Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies | Occurs in conjunction with marine protected areas, and improves protected area management | Provides economic benefit to local people asked to forego resource utilization | Entails a type of use that minimizes negative impacts to the environment and to local people | Increases the awareness and understanding of an area's natural and cultural systems and the subsequent involvement of visitors in issues affecting those systems | Contributes to the conservation and management of legally protected and other natural areas | Maximizes the early and long term participation of local people in the decision making process that determines the kind and amount of tourism that should occur | Directs economic and other benefits to the local people that complement rather than overwhelm or replace traditional practices (farming, fishing, social systems, etc.) | Provides special opportunities for local people and nature tourism employees to visit natural areas and learn more about the wonder that other visitors come to see | | | |