

The Role of Wildlife-viewing Activity at Tabin Wildlife Reserve

ABSTRACT

The Tabin Wildlife Reserve is the only gazetted wildlife reserve in Sabah. For it to remain sustainable, tourism is strategically taken as a socio-economy instrument with wildlife-viewing currently being the most important tourism activity. But tourism could also be used as a conservation instrument, and a scientific research was carried out to determine the role of wildlife-viewing in conservation at the Reserve. This research comprises a social media content analysis, on-site observations and interviews with the Reserve's tourists, and findings show that the Reserve has the basic facilities for tourists to view wildlife. Besides this, the findings also show that the Reserve's tourists were satisfied with their wildlife-viewing experiences. However, the findings also reveal that the tourists' viewing experiences and satisfactions did not influence their understanding of conservation. Instead, the experiences and satisfactions prompted them to revisit and promote the destination to other people. These findings suggest the wildlife-viewing as an activity enforces conservation interest rather than increases conservation interest, which brings the understanding that tourism is a selective conservation instrument.