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David A. FENNELL (2026). *Ecotourism (Sixth Edition)*, Routledge, Abingdon and New York, 412 p., ISBN 9781003565635 (EBK)

As tourism growth raises issues regarding its effects on natural and cultural environments, ideas on tourism ethics and tourism activities friendly with the destinations become worth studying. Professor David A. Fennell is one of the authors which had long-date interests in tourism ethics and nature-based tourism; this book on ecotourism being at its 6th edition. This edition distinguishes itself from the previous ones by the integration of recent research and new case studies from underrepresented world regions, and also a deeper analysis of contemporary challenges such as climate change, policy reform, and the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Each chapter also includes learning objectives, which makes this book valuable for students and academics in the field of social sciences, for policymakers, and for professionals involved in sustainable tourism practices.

As expected from a book with such a topic, this volume is cross-disciplinary, the core idea of tourism sustainability being supported by perspectives from different disciplines, such as geography, economics, ethics, and environmental studies.

The book is organized into three parts, which include 12 chapters. The first two parts define ecotourism, while the third part discusses the impacts of ecotourism and issues related to development, governance, policy, and programme planning.

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Within the first part, *The essence of ecotourism* (chapters 1-2), Chapter 1 draws an overview of the tourism industry, by presenting mass tourism and alternative tourism (including ecotourism), with the scope to highlight their different features. The entire book is of interest for anyone and for any destination, but the chapter contains a case study particularly relevant for Romania, on the interactions between tourists and wildlife, specifically the bears: *Up close and personal with grizzly bears in Denali National Park, Alaska*. Chapter 2 focuses on ecotourists, after an overview of general tourist typologies. It demonstrates that ecotourists are not a homogeneous group based on several segmentation and typology studies. The author already introduces ethics, arguing that ethics has to be a core element of ecotourism.

The second part, *Core criteria used to define ecotourism* (chapters 3-7), deepens the definition of ecotourism by presenting the nature-based component of ecotourism (Chapter 3), and comparing ecotourism with other nature-based tourism types (such as hunting and fishing tourism) and emphasizing their relations with the natural environment. Chapter 4 introduces the concept of sustainability and discusses the necessity of local involvement and the local benefits, seen as key components of ecotourism. Chapter 5 continues the discussion on sustainability in relation to conservation and the management of natural areas and biodiversity, and this discussion continues in Chapter 6 with the presentation of some actors (operators and guides) who facilitate the knowledge on ecotourism through the learning experience. In a logical sequence, Chapter 7 refers to the ethical implications of ecotourism, its title being suggestive as it contains the word “imperative”, and highlights the responsibilities of both tourists and practitioners.

Within the third part, *Topics and issues important to ecotourism* (Chapters 8-12), Chapter 8 examines what may seem surprising, related to ecotourism, specifically the disturbances created in destinations. It also examines the concept of carrying capacity in tourism and its related weaknesses. Chapter 9 focuses on economic impacts and marketing of ecotourism, on issues related to the value of land, gaining revenues for parks and protected areas, marketing challenges in ecotourism, etc.

Chapter 10 contains discussions on development theory with links to the tourism industry, island environments, pro-poor tourism, Glasbergen’s five models of environmental governance, the use of ecotourism, and

newer forms of management such as collaborative management and adaptive co-management, governance, and equity.

The practical components needed for the development of ecotourism programmes are presented in Chapter 11. This approach is necessary, since the author considers that it has received scant attention in ecotourism and tourism more broadly, both in theory and practice.

The final chapter, *Conclusion*, contains personal reflections of the author concerning the future of ecotourism, in phrases wrote at the first person which denote his attachment to the field of ecotourism and to the idea exposed: "While some argue, as I do, for a stricter definition of ecotourism, some of my colleagues go so far as to suggest that ecotourism cannot survive devoid of a relationship with sustainable mass tourism. We will have to see. If ecotourism does partner mass tourism, has it not undergone a significant transformation? Is it not then mass sustainable tourism with a sprinkling of nature? I still believe there is a distinct market of ecotourists, contrary to what some scholars argue" (p. 330).

As already mentioned, this volume is of interest for academics and professionals in various fields, but it is also a good book for the general public, since it presents the general field of tourism, an activity which involves almost everyone, from mass tourism to niche tourism (ecotourism), with relevant examples and case study, and wrote in an accessible language perfected over previous editions and through dedicated work for several decades.

All links were verified by the author and found to be functioning before the publication of this text in 2026.

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