

**IUCN/SSC PRIMATE SPECIALIST GROUP BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES FOR WILD GREAT APE TOURISM**

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This presentation summarises key findings from recently completed Best Practice Guidelines for Great Ape Tourism, a reference developed for use in planning, development, operation and review of all great ape field programmes utilizing tourism as a conservation tool. A review of lessons-learned from three decades of great ape tourism in Africa and Southeast Asia identified 20 key points on methodology and marketing issues that affect the potential viability of ape tourism sites. A cost-benefit analysis identified 11 potentially positive and 15 potentially negative impacts. Key positive impacts include the provision of sustainable conservation funding in some sites, and enhanced protection. Key negative impacts include behaviour change, disease transmission and vulnerability to poaching. These findings informed the development of guidelines for assessment, planning, development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation phases of any great ape tourism programme. The guidelines are based on the following guiding principles: a) tourism will not be viable in every potential site; b) tourism can enhance long-term support for conservation; c) conservation is the main goal in any great ape site; d) enhanced conservation investment is required in perpetuity; e) tourism management must be based on sound and objective science; f) benefits to communities should be maximised; g) profit to private sector partners should not be the driving force; and h) tourism impacts must be understood and optimised.

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