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Director’s Cut: Hunting Tourism Revisited

In a past editorial, I had expressed surprise at a report that seemed to imply that a colleague at The International Ecotourism Society had told a newspaper that TIES had no position on Hunting Tourism so as not to provoke a backlash. TIES has now written to us to set the record straight:

“I’m writing on behalf of TIES regarding the “Director’s Cut” on hunting and ecotourism in the recent issue of ECOCLUB, in which TIES is quoted. Although the Canada.com article quotes a TIES Representative, we feel that this article and what’s quoted in the ECOCLUB newsletter does not provide an accurate explanation on why TIES has not issued any official statement on whether hunting should be considered ecotourism.

TIES is a multi-stakeholder international association, and one of our primary goals is to educate tourists and tourism professionals about the principles of ecotourism--responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people. While we do recognize the importance of the issues around hunting and fishing, and that many in ecotourism community are looking for an answer to the question “can hunting be ecotourism,” we believe that the appropriate role for TIES to play in this debate is to provide credible information, resources and platforms for discussion in a fair and inclusive manner. And that’s what we have been actively seeing to do. Sustainable management of hunting practices, particularly in the context of Indigenous ecotourism, was one of the topics highlighted at the Global Ecotourism Conference in Oslo in May (workshop summaries available here: http://www.ecotourismglobalconference.org/?page_id=302), and as you can see in the Canada.com and other articles, in Madison we also had productive discussions about the topic.

Historically, TIES has taken a stance not to call for blanket statements about issues such as certification and carbon offsetting, as well as hunting, and has focused instead on highlighting local and regional realities, recognizing the need to be sensitive of differences in various social, cultural and economic factors in different communities. Of course, nobody is advocating for unsustainable killing as part of ecotourism, but TIES is conscious of the roles of Indigenous communities, for whom hunting and fishing are integral part of sustainable lifestyles, as environmental stewards, as well as credible academic and professional opinions about sustainable practices in hunting and fishing and their interface with ecotourism. By writing this message, we wanted to inform you of our active engagement in the discussions around ecotourism and hunting, and to explain our intention behind not making a public statement about whether hunting can be part of ecotourism. TIES will continue striving to serve the ecotourism community worldwide as an unbiased source of knowledge and advocacy.

Ayako Ezaki - Director of Communications, The International Ecotourism Society, Washington D.C. “

The clarification as to why there is currently no official TIES statement or position on Hunting Tourism is noted and most appreciated. However, a non-position is also a position, and neutrality, especially if permanent, can also constitute a bias. Taking the [Global Greens Charter of 2001](#) view of Hunting as a base, which states “Support the right of indigenous peoples to self-determination, land rights, and access to **traditional** hunting and fishing rights **for their own subsistence**, using humane and ecologically sustainable techniques”, our publication believes that **Opposition to Hunting Tourism can be a defining, ideological issue for Ecotourism** (Ecological Tourism). Ecotourists & Ecotourism practitioners worldwide can easily understand the difference between a **recreational** hunting tour (affluent foreigners killing rare species for pleasure) and **subsistence** hunting by indigenous communities using traditional weapons. It is hard to imagine how any Ecotourism proponent could ever encourage the few indigenous communities still managing to survive on subsistence hunting, to associate themselves with foreign hunting interests, conduct hunting tours and expedite the demise of their life-style (or worse, their life!). Hunting Tourism **may still** be legal in many - but not all - destinations, and a part of Nature Tourism, Rural Tourism, Adventure Tourism, Community Tourism or Responsible Tourism, but it **may never** be a part of Ecotourism - Ecological Tourism.

Unless the Ecotourism Movement, and constituent organisations and individuals are ready to stand up for basic, straight-forward green principles, there is a danger that the movement will gradually dissolve, and the peculiar alliance who dismiss Ecotourism as glorified Nature Tourism will have won. In the end, can a tiny pro-hunting minority, whom we democratically tolerate among our ranks, delay progress for ever?

They can certainly not harm the unity of the Ecotourism movement, for which we have always stood for: I was recently invited to write an article for the TIES [Ecocurrents](#) quarterly and was also [interviewed](#) by Planeta.com.

In this issue, please also find read a special report from Estonia which I visited in September 2007, and two Interviews with leading Estonian Ecotourism practitioners, end year reports from our Members around the world and a very interesting paper on the likely effects of climate change on Mediterranean Tourism.

Antonis B. Petropoulos

▷ [More Director's Cut](#)

Annual Reports from Ecolodge Members

Amazonat Annual Report, Manaus (Web: www.amazonat.org)



2007 has been a busy year for Amazonat! Our biggest project has been the construction of Amazonat River Lodge scheduled to open in January 2008. Floating on the banks of the Urubu River, a tributary of the Amazon, it will offer upscale accommodation for those who want to “rough it” in style. It will offer both deluxe rooms and honeymoon suites for 20 guests on a double occupancy basis. It is situated in an exclusive location within an Indian reserve – the only lodge in region with such a privilege.

Amazonat Jungle Lodge has also experienced many improvements to its facilities and grounds. We have added a pool deck and upgraded our reception building. One of our cabins has been upgraded to provide two deluxe rooms beautifully decorated with reclaimed tropical woods. We have also put into use a new water treatment system. Wastewater is purified with four reactors that can treat 10m³/day. Resulting water quality is examined and approved by the federal government for release into the environment. Our jungle survival camp, Jane's Place, has also undergone a facelift and the addition of another level. We have revamped our marketing and sales efforts with the complete redesign of our website in line with our new logo and image and we have formed Amazonat Ecotours a travel agency with exclusive representation of our ecolodges.

This year we also formed a partnership with Piatam, a research and conservation organization sponsored by Petrobras. Amazonat will be one of their centres for scientific and educational programs. Piatam brings together scientists and technicians from the major learning and research institutions in the Amazon like UFAM and INPA, as well as researchers from Petrobras Research and Development Centre (CENPES), COOPE/Rio de Janeiro, Universidade de São Paulo and several North American universities.

Yaklom Hill Lodge, Ratanakiri, Cambodia (Web: www.yaklom.com/yaklom_hill_lodge.htm)



Income generation for hill tribe villagers through home stay: Throughout 2007, Yaklom Hill Lodge (YHL) has operated and improved its village trekking and home stay programmes. YHL has entered into dialogue with host families in four participating villages (Phume La En Kraen and Phume La En Chong of the Tamopuan ethnic group and Phume La Ak and Phume Krala of the Kreung ethnic group) in O' chum district of Ratanakiri province. Agreement has been reached and YHL will pay the lodging fee to the individual host family at which the guests make overnight stay. The fee (5000 riels per person per night – around US\$1.25) may seem a little amount, but this is a good extra income for the family, especially in the rainy season when most of the family members are busy at the farm and have no time to go to the market in

Ban Lung –the provincial capital- to sell their farm produce. This fee will be upgraded when the family is able to provide sleeping gears and meals. In the near future, the lodge will hold discussions with the village committee and interested families in respective village on the proposed idea of creating “a home stay group” in the village in which interested and willing families can join. In this case, home stay visitors can be dispatched to more families on a rotation basis and this extra, off-farm income can be distributed to more families in the communities.

To further the idea of improving a home stay and income for the host families, in the third quarter of 2007, YHL piloted a home stay in villages in La Bang I commune of the Lomphat district, which includes trekking on foot, elephant trekking, and overnight at the elephant keeping families. In this case, the host family (which also owns an elephant) will receive fees from lodging, provision of meals and sleeping gears, and, more importantly, hiring the elephant at US\$30 per day. This type of home stay will also support and encourage the families to keep elephants at their home areas in Ratanakiri where habitat and food is abundant and still quite intact. (Unfortunately many elephants in Ratanakiri have been sold and taken to Siem Reap – the province of the famous Angkor temples- where they are held in captivity and used purely to serve tourists on a daily basis).

Eco Hotel Uxlabil Atitlan, Guatemala (Web: www.uxlabil.com)



During 2007 we performed the following improvements:

- **Restaurant Expansion:** We created an outdoor area for guests to enjoy their food and the scenery at the same time.
- **Lake Cleaning:** We continued to maintain a very clean lake shore, in conjunction with three groups of the association and the community of San Juan.
- **Medicinal Garden:** We initiated the establishment of a garden of

medicinal plants; currently it has a variety of 20 different plants and we are in the process of developing medical recipes.

- **Support to Craftsmen:** We continue to support weavers, painters, tour guides and local stores, without receiving any commission.
- **Certification:** We received a certification of Good Practice by Green Deal. It was obtained with high marks for our performance.
- **Travel Fairs:** We participated for the first time in a global tourism fair, the World Travel Market.



Reserva El Nagual, Brazil (Web: www.artnagual.com.br)

This Year we made good progress. January, February and March were really unusual this year. Climate change was to be seen everywhere. Normally in summer it rains heavily every evening and the rivers rise. This year however, we just had 4 instances of rain in three months, only one of which resulted in rising river levels. We got our biosystem completed by the end of March and are now treating all our dirty water, gaining 2 hours of biogas every day plus biofertilizer that we use in our Fruit and Vegetable garden!

Our 100% Recycling project attracts more friends every day and so our surrounding waterfalls look much cleaner every year. We started a project with a Math teacher: training other teachers to take their students to field studies and applications of terms like Trigonometry in our Private Heritage Reserve .We show them how good practices are easy for everybody to do ,- to save water, energy, to recycle and avoid waste.

Other highlights of our work with our surrounding community was an event we organised together with the Serra dos Orgaos National Parc at a local school. There was a puppet theatre play about water pollution, as well as a documentaries and a debate about the environment. The state water company CEDAE participated with the display of a mini water treatment system, the energy company AMPLA showed good practices with energy, while the Health department of Mage informed about DST-AIDS-and Diabetis. El Nagual presented recycling, sustainable artwork, private conservation and invited people interested in making hikes and reforestation around the river and springs to come and visit us.

Mariana held mosaic workshops with broken floor tiles found at constructions or at the banks of the river, using the wall of the School. The workshops were free and attended by about 20 people.

El Nagual also represented APN (Association of Owners of Private Heritage Reserves of Rio) in the Council of the Central Atlantic Rainforest of the Rio State. We proposed to our municipal government the creation of a municipal Protected Area based on our Management Plan, covering an area of 141 square kilometres. We are also launching another project to educate other private heritage owners about good practices, environmental education, alternative energy, ecotourism, with the assistance of NGOs and Universities.

Black Sheep Inn, Ecuador (Web: www.blacksheepinn.com)



January February and March broke all our business records for busiest months, so we promptly closed in April. Seriously, we closed from April through June 15th in order to add 4 private bathrooms, purchase orthopaedic mattresses, build new furniture and doors, add purified water dispensers, paint walls, refinish floors and countertops, install 2 gray-water systems and rebuild the kitchen sink (literally). During this time, we also travelled to Belize, became scuba certified and attended Andy's mothers 70th birthday party in the USA.

Michelle organized, tested and gave away 3 scholarships for continuing education in May. This was supported by generous

donations from our guests. Somehow we managed to do over 8 months work in only 2.5 months.

Upon reopening in June the Inn has been thriving even with substantial price increases. Guests love the new spacious private bathrooms which all have composting toilets, hot water and beautiful bottle walls (see photo). The hot tub is a great addition to the sauna and heats off of the same woodstove via a thermal siphon, in other words no pumps or gadgets. The waterslide has become a popular way to go from HOT to COLD and get the guests adrenaline up! Playing the nine basket Frisbee golf course is a great way to share views and upper fields with the llamas. The garbage transport Tuk-Tuk has been repaired and a local youth is now on the Municipal payroll to sweep, separate and transport waste to the BSI/ECOCLUB Recycling Centre. On November 14th, World Responsible Tourism Day, we painted the Tuk-Tuk to look like a Chuk-Chuk and added important public messages about recycling.



Currently, the Yoga room (which still awaits its finishing touches) has been inaugurated with an Andean Folk dance performance and we are making over 500 bags of candy to give away in the schools for holiday celebrations. Anybody want to work with us managing all this at the BSI?!

El Momo, Saba (Web: www.elmomo.com)

In 2007 El Momo went fully vegetarian: being vegetarians ourselves we got more and more into personal, moral trouble preparing dead animals for our guests meals. We felt guilty supporting the disgusting meat-, poultry- and fish- industries by making profit from it. We do not want to have bloody fingers and just refuse. No more ham for breakfast or sandwiches and no more shrimp, fish, chicken or meat for any meals. We still keep offering our homemade natural yoghurt, local eggs and a nice selection of cheese. Angelika prepares awesome organic veggie dinners, sandwiches, wraps and salads. Her Italian roots combined with the passion for Indian/Caribbean Currys results in a unique mixture of flavours which makes even bloody steak lovers enjoy the El Momo veg food!

In addition we are proud that Saba started a great organic garden project which is very successful. El Momo always tried to buy as much as possible the vegetables and fruits locally, but now there are even more choices for organic veggies.

Our Wireless Zone got improved: We added a super-strong outdoor antenna and installed a megabooster, too. The zone range increased a lot now. Surf with your laptop while relaxing in your El Momo hammock, bed, sunchair or the dining room while slurping a fresh organic island fruit smoothie and enjoying the sunset. Of course this great service is still free of charge for all El Momo guests.

El Momo also became the first 100% smoke-free hotel on Saba. El Momo is dedicated to provide a clean, comfortable and relaxing environment for its guests. The hotel's new policy is a result from guests expressing a clear demand for a healthy, smoke-free hotel experience. Introducing a smoke-free policy is a natural evolution for the hotel which also follows an eco-friendly philosophy. Our goal is to provide a place where guests can relax and restore their mind, body and spirit in a healthy way. At El Momo we strive that our guests walk out feeling better than they did when they arrived. Industry research, as well as our own experience, confirmed a clear consumer demand for a clean, smoke free hotel environment. El Momo's staff will benefit enormously from this effort to improve the quality of life rather than being required to enter smoke-filled rooms, experiencing holey sheets, burned mattresses, stinky ashtrays, smelly rooms, curtains and walls. No employees should be required to risk their good health for the sake of their jobs. Second hand smoke toxins and residue can stay in fabrics anywhere from a couple of hours to a couple of months after initial exposure, even after they have been washed. Like the airlines, we hope it will one day be possible for all hotels to be smoke-free. We felt it was not enough to simply limit the number of smoking rooms, or designate smoking areas. We believe the best experience for our guests is a hotel that is completely smoke-free.

El Momo upgraded all bathrooms and equipped them with electric instant showers. In order to keep water and power consumption low each bathroom has it's own small heater. Installation close to the point of use avoids the otherwise inevitable loss of heat from the hot water pipes of a centralized facility. Electricity is only used while showering (which is always short and fast on Saba due of limited water supply). The new showers are high quality made-in-Germany products and equiped with easy-to-use electronic stepless rotary temperature selector, safety device and build in ELCB protector (Earth Leakage Circuit Breaker). Of course our popular solar showers are still available, but in case of less sunshine now we have an additional choice and hot water is 100% guaranteed. The moon was never working to full satisfaction, so now also early morning showers can be hot.

Community acitivities: Oliver organised a Saba Day Island Run from the Airport to The Bottom sports field. He participated himself and made second in only 49 min. First winner was Kermit Rust, a medical student of the Saba Medical University. He finished in only 45 minutes. Oliver also organised a local girls soccer tournament for the Saba Day weekend. Girls aged 7 to 12 gave their best performance and everybody had tons of fun. Olli with his german roots is a great soccer expert and also co-coach of the local girls team. He volunteered as referee for all 5 matches. Parents held a bbq and supported the young athletes.

Gramam Homestay, Kerala, India (Web: www.keralagramam.com)



2007 was really a good year for us at Gramam Homestay. The village Kumbalangi, located 10kms south of Fort Cochin itself was declared as the one of the 15 selected rural tourism destinations in India. The selection was made by the state portal, IncredibleIndia.org. At Gramam homestay a new cottage is opening in January 2008. This old coconut farm house was renovated and converted to a large bedroom with a kitchenette facility.

Ecolodge Rendez-Vous, Saba (Web: www.ecolodge-saba.com)

Natural swimming pool:

Ecolodge Rendez-Vous, Saba now also features a swimming pool. The pool is located in the centre of the property and has a wooden deck with a sea view. The bottom of the tiled pool is decorated by Heleen Cornet with a wonderful glass tile mosaic depicting turtles, starfish and waves.

Improved solar shower system:

Almost all cottages at the ecolodge now have a warm water system consisting of a series of PVC pipes attached to the roof. The pipes are painted black to absorb the solar heat. They replace the solar bags that were used up till now. Advantages are that the water has more pressure and there is more warm water available. And the fixed showerhead allows you to wash your hair without having to stoop down. The water has cooled down by morning but in the afternoon it can be pretty hot.

Renovation Cabins.

Two cottages have a new name: The Klomp is called now Mt. Scenery Cottage and the Floral Cottage became the Bird of Paradise. Both cottages have been renovated and in the enlarged decks have a private hot tub.



THE ECOCLUB INTERVIEW

AIVAR RUUKEL

“Travelling to your neighbours, meeting these people, talking to them makes you understand them better and minimizes your fear that they can be dangerous”



Aivar Ruukel is the owner-operator of SOOMAA.COM / Karuskose Ltd (Web: www.soomaa.com), an ecotour operator in Soomaa National Park since 1994, and the Chairman of the Estonian Ecotourism Society (ESTECAS). Aivar also acts as a nature tourism trainer and public speaker. Aivar is a winner of the Best Promoter of Tourism in 1997 by the Estonian Association of Travel Agents, and recently recognised by the Estonian Hotel and Restaurant Association as "Best in 2007".

Aivar is a founding member of various associations including the Estonian Ecotourism Association, the Estonian Rural Tourism Association and the Friends of Soomaa. He is also a Supporting member of Estonian Fund for Nature and a Member of the Estonian Greens.

His hobbies include building traditional dugout canoes, picking up wild mushrooms, Estonian and Fino-Ugric culture & history, and participating in social networking sites online, but he also finds time to study Nature Tourism at the Estonian University of Life Sciences.

The Interview follows:

ECOCLUB.com: What are the main challenges for Ecotourism in Estonia today, both in terms of domestic tourism legislation?

Aivar Ruukel: The idea of sustainable use of resources in the Travel & Tourism industry is not new in Estonia. Already in 1938 the Institute of Nature Preservation and Tourism was established, under the Ministry of Social affairs, in order to address these issues. Since regaining independence in 1991, Estonia has been developing rapidly. An integral part of our country's transition to a market economy has been the harmonisation of Estonia's legislation with the requirements of EU legislation. We do have good laws! But the challenge is in implementation... I do share the idea of Ecotourism being a tool for sustainable development. Estonia was one of the first countries in the world to adopt a Sustainable Development Act in 1995. Unfortunately, we can not report a huge success, in putting sustainability into real life. Not yet!

ECOCLUB.com: Tourism being an international phenomenon, what role is there for national associations such as the Estonian Ecotourism Association (ESTECAS)? And what if anything, should differentiate Ecotourism Associations from ordinary Tourism Associations, in terms of procedures and operational mode?

Aivar Ruukel: Estonian Ecotourism Association (ESTECAS) was established in 1994, as a non-governmental and non-profit membership organisation. Every association should benefit its members. Difference with normal tourism associations is that their members are normally tourism businesses, with their own business interests, thereby the common aim is a joint marketing, product co-ordination, lobbying and similar. Ecotourism associations should unite different stakeholders across sectors - businesses, as well as conservationists, academics, journalists, politicians, teachers, travellers etc. And the aim of Ecotourism associations should be searching for a balanced use of resources for a locally beneficial development. I think that different countries can have different models for Ecotourism Associations. ESTECAS is a network of like-minded people, quite like a club. It has no office, no paid staff, but we do have a website, we do run meetings, seminars and we do partner in projects with many other organisations.


ECOCLUB.com: Along with your political role, you have been actively conducting tours in Soomaa National Park since 1994. What is special about Soomaa and how has tourism impacted on the park in these 13 years?

Aivar Ruukel: Soomaa translates as Land of Marshes, it is a largest wilderness area in Estonia. Soomaa National Park was established in 1993 to protect a vast complex of raised bogs, wet alluvial forests, with fens, transition mires, and unregulated rivers with flood-plain and wooded meadows. Soomaa is home for lesser spotted eagles, golden eagles, black storks, corn crakes, brown bears, wolves and lynx. Soomaa was included in the important nature protection areas of Europe in 1997

becoming a CORINE biotope area. Since 1997 it is also in the Ramsar list of wetlands and in 1998 it was suggested that the Soomaa National Park should be included in the list of World Heritage Sites maintained by UNESCO.

I have been growing up in the area, and explored the peat-bogs and rivers of Soomaa when being a schoolboy. There was no kind of tourism here in the soviet times, only very limited local recreation. When the national park was created I saw it as a great opportunity, bought five canoes and started offering guided canoe-trips. Today we are four people in our small private company, paddling on the rivers is still our main activity, but we also do bog-walking, bog-shoeing, cross-country skiing, kick-sledding and other activities.


It has been highly interesting experience of following the tourism development from the very beginning. Every year there has been a slow growth in numbers. Every season we have been analysing our results, discussing these with park management and making changes in our operations. For Many years we were the only private operator in Soomaa National Park, but since the area became more and more popular, new operators started. I see it as a great advantage of running a nature based tourism business in the protected area, not only because of the marketing point of view, but even more because of you have a clear partner responsible for conservation, and clear rules.

 **ECOCLUB.com: Traditional log boats in particular are one of your fortes. Some believe that there are ethical problems in reviving traditions for tourism. Would you agree? And what would you advise to other national parks in other countries wishing to successfully revive traditions for tourism?**

Aivar Ruukel: Yes, I do agree. Restoring a lost natural habitats is a hard task, but one can see here and there people trying it. If we would leave nature alone, it will also regenerate itself. But restoring a lost culture is impossible. Culture is a very sensitive issue, it is something that people first and foremost do for themselves, not for others. It is normally not a problem, that you share your culture with others such as tourists, allowing them to experience it. But the question is how far can you go?

Life in Soomaa depends more on climate than anywhere else in Estonia, the waters here are extraordinary – the numerous rivers meet in a rather small area between fens and swamp forests. Water from the nearby uplands can during the spring time melting or rain season unleash such an avalanche of water that rivers break out of their banks. This almost Biblical flood happens every year. Flood is called the fifth season by local people. Very often the dugout canoe was the only means to get out of the house and that is why it has been preserved in families living in the vicinity of the national park. More about building and use of dugout canoes made of aspen log you can find at <http://haabjas.blogspot.com/>

‘Local logic’ is my term for the responsible use of cultural heritage for tourism business. It means that people who carry tradition are the only ones to decide whether to do it or not, and how to do it, according to how they feel about it. No outside expertise counts!

 **ECOCLUB.com: You also act as an ecotourism educator and trainer. What the most important lesson you offer to your students? And what about your tourists, do you teach them too?**

Aivar Ruukel: I do seldom lecture for students, maybe few times every winter. More often I do act in workshops and seminars for practitioners. Things, that I tell, I try to be based on my own practical experience. One of the training programmes, where I currently take part is Ecotourism Quality Labelling scheme. Another interesting issue is internet-marketing. Educating tourists is an every day task of mine, as well as of other guides, that our company cooperates with. We tell simple and basic things about nature, ecology, landscapes and species that they experience during our trips. It is important! People know less and less about nature. How can you respect and love something that you do not know?

 **ECOCLUB.com: Do you feel there is an urgent need for Ecotourism certification with reference to Estonia? Who is eligible to join ESTECAS, does a company need to be certified in order to be accepted?**

Aivar Ruukel: ESTECAS has created a Quality Labelling Scheme in 2000, since then we run it as jointly managed program together with Estonian Tourist Board, Rural Tourism Association, Village Movement and Estonian Fund for Nature. The Label is called "Estonia - the Natural Way", in order to carry it, the criteria both for company and product should be fulfilled. Membership in ESTECAS is not obligatory for receiving a label.

 **ECOCLUB.com: From your experience, does Tourism really contribute to peacemaking & cultural understanding between neighbouring countries, or does it lead to more competition?**

Aivar Ruukel: Yes it does help to understand each other! Estonia has had complicated relations with our big neighbour. Travelling to your neighbours, meeting these people, talking to them makes you understand them better and minimizes your fear that they can be dangerous. For me personally Russia is a favourite country to travel.

ECOCLUB.com: You are a great fan of the Internet, and maintain various websites and blogs. How has the Internet changed Tourism in your view?

Aivar Ruukel: It has changed it a lot, indeed. But I do believe that it will change a lot more. Direct connection between consumer and local service provider has not been possible before. The Internet is a great tool for communication: e-mail, messenger, skype, chatrooms, forums, podcasts, blogs, all different social features...Marketing online is not free, but it costs less than traditional ways. The big difference is that also micro-businesses, like mine, can reach a global audience.

I really do enjoy following the development of virtual world and invest my time for that. However, it is hard to predict what future brings. Just one example: two weeks ago Estonia opened an embassy in the internet-based virtual world Second Life, only the third country to do so!

ECOCLUB.com: You recently spoke at the Global Ecotourism Conference in Oslo. What is your evaluation of this event and what can be done to make it better, from the point of view of national ecotourism associations?

Aivar Ruukel: I very much enjoyed this event in Norway. Good that it took place so close by, almost next door. Like on every seminar or conference the best part was meeting people. Some old friends and many new. Meeting face to face with people that you knew only through the Internet. I do appreciate sharing my own experience with colleagues from other countries, our realities have differences but much more we have in common. Contacts with people from other national ecotourism associations, that was created in Oslo, have been already developed further, and discussions, started in Oslo, continue online.

ECOCLUB.com: Finally, what would you like to see in the global Ecotourism movement in the next 5 years?

Aivar Ruukel: I would like to see much more people everywhere in the world to understand the meaning of Ecotourism. I would like them to change focus from content to the form - it does not matter where to go, or what to experience, it does matter HOW to do it.

ECOCLUB.com: Thank you very much!





THE ECOCLUB INTERVIEW

MART REIMANN

“The main challenge for Tourism in Estonia is marketing and making our country a better known tourism destination internationally”



Mart Reimann is an Estonian Ecotourism educator and entrepreneur. He is a board member of the Estonian Ecotourism Association and has worked as nature conservation expert in the Estonian Ministry of Environment and planned recreational areas for state forests. He has been training other Estonian nature and adventure tourism entrepreneurs, and has acted as a visiting lecturer of Ecotourism in universities in Finland, Norway, Holland and the United States.

Mart founded his company Reimann Retked (Web: www.retked.ee) five years ago which organises active natural and cultural tours to Estonian islands with sea-kayaks, to Estonian wetlands with bog shoes, to rivers with rafts, to forests with walking tours and skies and kicksledges in winter. His company is also working in ecotourism consulting. Mart Reimann is head of the Department of Leisure Sciences at Tallinn University, where he also

teaches several ecotourism and outdoor recreation courses. His department focuses on outdoor recreation research and education. Mart’s research interests lie in the fields of landscape recreational values, tourism impact on local communities and visitor behaviour.

Mart Reimann holds an A.A degree in adventure sports from Garrett College, Maryland, USA, a BSc in Geocology from Tallinn University, and an MSc in Physical Geography from University of Tartu. He has been working on his PhD at the Norwegian University of Life Sciences and the University of Tartu. His studies and travels have taken him to over 30 countries around the world but his favourites are cold climate regions like Siberia, Greenland and British Columbia, and the traditional farm where his family has been living hundreds of years.

The Interview follows:

ECOCLUB.com: Please tell us a few things about yourself, what attracted you to this lifestyle, and what keeps you motivated

Mart Reimann: I have had this lifestyle as long as I remember. I grew up in forests and in rural setting where roots and traditions are important. I liked to have long walks in Estonian nature and long talks with locals already when I was very young. I have always been impressed by my ancestors’ wisdom who lived in great harmony and respect to nature. They knew very well how to live in a sustainable way. After travelling and being abroad I just became to value much more this lifestyle I learned from my parents and friends in Estonia and I got to know that this was called ecotourism.


ECOCLUB.com: What are the main challenges for Tourism in Estonia today?

Mart Reimann: The main challenge is marketing and making our country a better known tourism destination internationally. Despite that we are historically, culturally and economically very much connected to other Northern European countries, a shadow of Soviet occupation is still following us and many people in the world associate us more with former Soviet Union countries and Eastern Europe. Another big challenge is how to keep our authentic and traditional attractions while European Union regulations are implemented by our eager officials. Provision of traditional food and accommodation in traditional Estonian log houses gets more and more complicated

ECOCLUB.com: Estonia is incredibly & densely forested, with a dramatically beautiful coastline, however the Soviet era has left lingering environmental problems. From your personal experience as a tour operator, do these environmental problems affect nature tourism / adventure tourism? Can/does the private Tourism sector take any initiatives to repair the environmental damage in the areas it operates, and protect from future degradation, or is it purely a matter for the government?

Mart Reimann: I see negative and positive aspects of the influence of Soviet regime to our environment. Soviet military reckless behaviour with our nature left polluted areas; our government’s first priority after independence was to clean up those places. Soviet army closed large areas from public to military trainings, pollution covered relatively small areas, most of the areas remained untouched and turned to the wilderness. At the moment many our most remarkable nature conservation areas are former Soviet military training areas. Some military buildings in the deep nature give some extra flavour to the nature tour. Soviet industry left also many empty buildings, but thanks to our rapidly growing economy and real estate boom most of them have found owners and also new usage. Thanks to Soviet border guard we could call our coastline a virgin coastline, because

majority of our coastline was closed to public and in order to visit friends or relatives who lived in border zones people needed a visa. Now the real estate development is active in coastal zone, but new laws are protective and without soviet border guard our coastline doesn't look as wild now. In order to remind this to Estonians we paddled all Estonian coastline in summer four years ago and introduced it through our media.

 **ECOCLUB.com: Historic events have created certain divides in Estonia, do you see Tourism playing a positive role in intercultural dialogue & integration of Estonian ethnic minorities?**


Mart Reimann: Integration is one of the hottest issues in Estonia at the moment...I think that tourism is playing quite good and positive role in integration process because in many cases temperamental and open Slavic people are better to serve international tourists than slow and reserved Estonians and in tourism sector it is possible to see many Estonians and Russian-speaking people working successfully together.

 **ECOCLUB.com: Is Tourism a meaningful way to combat unemployment among youth in Estonia? Are there any special training / internship initiatives?**


Mart Reimann: Due to our enormous economical growth, unemployment among youth is close to zero at the moment. Many young and active people find attractive and challenging jobs in tourism and there are several schools and courses who provide tourism training for young people.

 **ECOCLUB.com: In terms of E.U. funding for Tourism & the Environment in Estonia, is it so far a good thing, or "too much of a good thing"?**


Mart Reimann: It is true that if you want people with little knowledge to mess everything up just give them money. It is not too easy to get EU funding and good thing is that applicant backgrounds are well checked. Good projects are funded and EU money has helped many tourism attractions in Estonia. Most of my favourite ecotourism sites have got some EU support which helped them a lot.

 **ECOCLUB.com: As a Tourism Educator, do you see an increased interest for Ecotourism & environmental issues in Tourism from your students? How satisfied are you with the level & content & facilities for Tourism Education in Estonia, and are tourism university graduates easily employed, compared to other disciplines?**

Mart Reimann: Interest for Ecotourism is rising in Estonia and among Estonian students. In university level curricula and programs are well planned. But in professional school education the level varies a lot. There are many good vocational schools in Estonia. But during the Soviet time we had many agricultural vocational schools in countryside which nowadays teach tourism but often the people are the same and the quality level is suspicious. In case of employment in tourism sector the key factor is that personality is very important, some people can study for years but if charisma is not suitable for tourism service then it is quite hard to find a job, but who really wants finds jobs quite easily. Many of my former students have created also their own companies.

 **ECOCLUB.com: Your family also owns a wonderful, ancient farm, producing milk the traditional way. Have you considered entering farm tourism? Or do you perhaps prefer to keep life at the farm authentic - i.e. no tourists?**

Mart Reimann: It is difficult to say that we produce milk in a traditional way. For Estonians traditional farm means 10-20 cows, sheep and other animals, some forest and agricultural land not more than 100 hectares. Also our farm looked 10 years ago like that. Then we had to take a hard decision: to stop or to extend, because Estonian agriculture has been based on free market economy with very little support. At the moment we have 120 cows and we cultivate more than 300 hectares and this is the smallest size to survive. As part of the land we cultivate includes Estonian oldest fields where Estonians have been working for 3000 years I have been using it for agriculture history tours. We start from oldest agriculture settings, look at buildings in my farm where the oldest building dates from 16- hundreds and end up in modern farm according to all modern standards. I have not promoted that package actively because at the moment our main tours are nature exploration tours but I see quite high potential to expose also our farm because in growing urbanization process people are often more excited to see a living cow than wilderness.

 **ECOCLUB.com: Some try to justify Hunting Tours in terms of income generation for impoverished communities and a profitable way to control wildlife overpopulation. What is your view, with reference to the Estonian experience and practice?**

Mart Reimann: As I have gone through large amount of biology in my university studies and worked with nature conservation some time I can say that hunting is necessary for wildlife regulations. 10 years ago we had serious wolf overpopulation in Estonia, we had 700 hundred wolves, but an optimum for Estonian size country is 100-200 wolves. I'm sure that this population

could be normalized without hunting but they had serious influence on elk, roe-deer, wild bore population and killed many dogs and sheep. In that case hunting helped to stabilize our wildlife population. Our government worked also hard to get permission from EU to hunt wolf, bear, lynx etc. But in case of ecotourism I think that we do not have to make only right decisions, but also decisions that look right internationally for people from different cultural and natural environments. I remember a conference in Sweden than many ecotourism related persons seemed unpleased when they heard that Swedish Natures Best ecolabel system has included also hunting tours. I think that this is not a good idea when we will consider hunting as a ecotourism in Estonia.

ECOCLUB.com: Tallinn is a wonderfully-preserved medieval city, rightly recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. However it is also developing as a city-break for stag nights, with young tourists arriving from places as far as the UK, with bars and other associated establishments proliferating. Do you see this as a problem, and what is needed in your view to attract those tourists who would better appreciate Estonia's vibrant nature & cultural traditions?

Mart Reimann: This is a problem that Tallinn has had reputation as a good party place with cheap alcohol and beautiful girls. A good thing is that alcohol and also tourism services are getting more expensive here, so our tourism sector has to rely on other attractions than cheap prices. I think that this is just a question of time when the image of a small cosy country with rich natural and cultural heritage will get stronger than a nice party place. We do not have gorgeous natural attractions as Victoria Falls or Grand Canyon that sells even without marketing efforts. Most interesting is how Estonian cultural and natural heritage are harmoniously combined. We have big amount of predators, but it is not possible to find fear, anger and conflicts among local communities towards them. Our most diverse natural habitats are actually semi-natural wooded meadows. People have lived for centuries between nature and adjust their life well with natural forces. Some places are prepared that natural floods bring water to their house every spring and they can paddle with boats in the room and put their bed to higher places in order not to have wet nights

ECOCLUB.com: Finally, at what time of the year should our readers visit Estonia, which top eco spots they should not miss, and what type of eco activities could they pursue there?

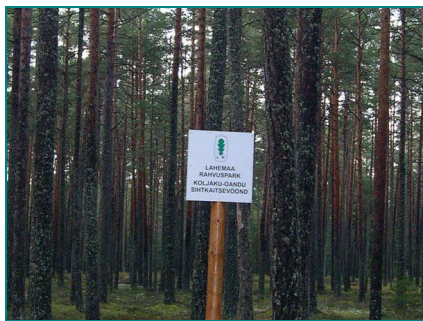
Mart Reimann: I usually invite my friends in August when the biggest tourist crowds are gone, weather is usually still nice and our Baltic sea has warmed up. I think that our biggest treasures are our 1500 islands where nature is well preserved and traditional lifestyle has been preserved to a large extent. As most of islands are uninhabited it is good to take a trip with a fishermen boat or a sea kayak. As 22% of Estonia is covered with wetlands, Estonians have used bog-shoes for centuries those are similar for snow-shoes which are widely used in snow regions around a world. Thus bog-shoeing is definitely a must to do ecotourism activity, this protects soft and fragile bog ground and avoids people to sink. In southern Estonia old traditions are kept also very well. It is worth to visit farm networks where good local guides will show and explain how traditionally bees are kept, honey made, bread baked, etc. Estonian limestone cliff is in UNESCO natural heritage list, together with waterfalls this is a pearl of our Northern Estonian sites. In Soomaa (bogland) National Park one can still experience making of a traditional one aspen log-boat and paddle with those on the rivers.

ECOCLUB: Thank you very much.



ECO JOURNEYS

The secret beauty of Estonian Nature



Dense Boreal forest in Lahemaa N.P.

Estonia is one of Europe's best kept secrets: green, flat and relatively empty of people, although it was settled as far back as 7,500 BCE. With an area (45,215 km²), as large as the Netherlands plus Denmark, it only has 1.5 million inhabitants. This lack of population pressure bodes well for nature, with dense forests, half of which are privately owned, covering as much as half of its area, and home to some 800 lynx, over 500 bears and 150 wolves (the hunting of which is unfortunately still legal), numerous white-backed woodpeckers and even a few Siberian flying squirrels. Estonia lies at the border line between Nordic Boreal Forests, and Central European broad-leaved forests, thus hosts fauna from both types. Bogs and mires offer suitable habitats for eagles, eagle owls and northern shrikes. There are over 1,500 lakes of various sizes, mostly of glacial origin, covering around 5% of the total territory, including the 5th largest lake in Europe, lake Peipsi. Estonia is rich in wooded meadows, a result of grazing and mowing, as well as flooded meadows and coastal meadows which provide nesting sites for many threatened bird species. The cold war prevented coastal areas (3,800 km coastline) and 1,500 islands (only 9 of which are permanently inhabited) from being developed as they were fenced off, and today host around 7,500 seals. A varied climate with distinct seasons, moderated by the gulf stream adds to the pleasure of visitors, with temperature going from 30 Celsius in July to 0 in dark winter months, when you can still hear wolves howl at nights.

Estonia is chosen by some 50 million arctic waterfowl for their May and October migrations, with the Ramsar site and National Park of Matsalu Bay being the best place to be to observe these.



One of the 35 waterfalls over a limestone cliff, part of the Baltic Klint

North Estonia is characterised by impressive limestone formations, which contain diverse fossils ranging from trilobites and snails to corals on Vormsi and Saaremaa Islands. The Baltic Klint, a 1,200 km coastal cliff stretching from Oland in Sweden to Lake Ladoga in Russia, passes through here, reaching 56 metres at its highest at Ontika. The Baltic Klint gives birth to 35 waterfalls, the highest of which is Valaste with a height of 26 metres. Numerous large boulders with a diameter of 25 metres or more, were brought here across from Finland during the ice age fascinate.

Lahemaa park, founded in 1971, is the largest national park in this area and the oldest in Estonia. It has high landscape diversity, including beaches, peninsulas, boulders, coastal cliffs, forest, villages and manors, forest-meadows and waterfalls.



Fishermen's houses in Lahemaa park

North Western Estonia is famous for bird migration in the 500km² Matsalu National Park (271 bird species recorded), and 10km long sandy beaches. The shallow Vainameri sea lies between the coast and the four biggest islands, dotted with numerous islets full of bird nests and seals. On Saaremaa island, along with numerous national parks, one can visit the unique Kaali meteorite crater, a result of the impact of a huge meteorite strike 6,500 years ago, which had a profound influence on Nordic mythology.

Western Estonian wooded meadows are among the most biodiverse plant communities in the world, with up to 76 higher plant species per square metre.



Well-maintained boardwalks in Lahemaa



Large boulder from Finland across the bay



Not the Savanna, but the unique Bogs of Soomaa, a sort of vast, wet sponge!

Central Estonia is the land of bogs, where moose, wild boar, wolf and bear still survive, along with eagles, black storks, black grouse and many other species. Soomaa Park (371 km²), founded in 1993 and a Ramsar area in 1997, contains four large bogs (Soomaa meaning ‘bogland’), separated by forests and rivers. There are many well-prepared hiking trails and board walks which do however get slippery. Berries, high in vitamins, grow all along the hiking trails, and even the official Park handout guide encourages visitors to pick them, as for mushrooms, with the exception of breeding time of rare birds. The area is famous for its 5th season, when all areas are flooded from the melting snow. It was such an expected and regular occasion, that locals waking up in a flooded bedroom would just say “we have a guest in the room”. Flooding was an opportunity to take time off from work and meet the relatives. The biggest flood occurred in 1999, when the water rose over 4 metres. This has preserved an archaic lifestyle and ancient watercraft called haabjas – canoes dugout canoes made from a single aspen trunk. First the log is cut, hollowed and expanded, then warped bows of pine roots are placed inside to stabilise it, and finally the boat is tarred (Watch video at). Log boats are traditionally rowed while standing, and the biggest could carry 13 passengers. Thanks to the creation of the park, a new generation of boat-makers has emerged and log boats are a frequent sight in Soomaa rivers. The flood-plains and bogs of Soomaa are a habitat for species such as, common crane, black stork, golden eagle, and less spotted eagle, eagle owl, great spotted woodpecker, black woodpecker, while vast undisturbed forest areas help preserve brown bears, wolf, lynx, otter, roe deer and elk. Overall, in Soomaa 524 species of vascular plants can be found, 172 bird species, and 46 mammals species.

In South Estonia, beavers frequently alter the Estonia-Latvia border, as they dam up the streams that demarcate the border line!

The Piusa Sandstone Caves in south-eastern Estonia, are man-made caves to mine sand for the glass industry, are now closed, but are popular with some 3,000 bats of 5 bat species, the biggest colony in northern-europe, and tourists.



Soomaa Bikers' Paradise: Flat, Green



Know your mushrooms

Not all is rosy. There are serious ecological problems such as air pollution from oil-shale burning power plants in northeast Estonia, contamination of soil and groundwater with petroleum products, lingering chemicals at former Soviet military bases; coastal sea water pollution. coastal pollution, lake eutrophication and weed overgrowth from organic waste. Hunting Tourism is also encouraged, with 24 bears, 30 wolves and 81 lynxes killed in 2002 according to official figures. On the other hand, environmentalism is making inroads, with the Estonian Green Party and entered the parliament for the first time in 2007 with 7% of the vote. Inter-ethnic tensions which grew in the Spring of 2007 over the decision to relocate a soviet-era monument and made rare world headlines from this otherwise very peaceful, cool and e-trendy country, better known as the birthplace of Skype, have now thankfully subsided.



Entrance to old Tallinn

When in Estonia, a visit to the old town of Tallinn (pop. 434,000), one of the two Unesco World Heritage sites, is also a must. Famous sites include the Town Hall, one of the oldest preserved Gothic secular buildings in the world, dating to the 15th century, and a chemist shop in continuous operation since 1422, and a whole street with perfectly preserved 600 year old Mansions belonging to Hanseatic League Merchants. The other World Heritage site is the Struve Geodetic Arc, a chain of survey triangulations stretching from Norway to the Black Sea, but there are also candidates like the Baltic Klint, Kuressaare Fortress on Saaremaa Island, Soomaa National Park.



Rich in history: Ancient Tombs

The ecotourist will find many activities in Estonia, including archeological and prehistory tours, bicycle riding, bird watching, bog-walking, canoeing, sea kayaking, culinary lessons, folkloric and singing events, hiking, homestays, horse riding, kick-sledding, botanic tours, forest-hiking, seabird ornithology, organic farm stays, photography tours, rafting, sauna culture, to the famous Tartu Maraton, a cross-county skiing, running and mountain biking

event. Tourism is growing rapidly and already contributes around 8% of GDP, 11% of Exports, and 13% of Employment, and it is hoped that through the actions of groups such as the Estonian Ecotourism Society, its development will continue to be sustainable.



ECO PAPER

Will predicted climate change compromise the sustainability of Mediterranean tourism?

by Dr. Allen Perry, Senior Lecturer, Department of Geography, University of Wales Swansea, UK

Abstract: Projected Greenhouse Gas induced climate change may alter the frequency and intensity of events like heatwaves, drought and fires which affect tourists in the Mediterranean. The summer of 2003 is used as an example of the impact of climate on tourists to the area. Tourists reactions and the possible adaptive responses that the tourist industry might adopt are considered. The sustainability of tourism in the future is also investigated.



Deserted Beaches or Desert Beaches?
(ECOCLUB photo from southern Crete)

The Mediterranean is currently the world's most popular and successful tourist destination with over 120 million visitors every year.

The climate of the Mediterranean is perceived, by many tourists as idyllic, benign and delightful. It is the usually fine summer weather and clarity of light, rather than the heat-waves, droughts, storms and floods that can plague the region at times, that have made the area attractive to north Europeans for many centuries. Climate constitutes an important part of the environmental context in which all recreation and tourism takes place and because tourism is a voluntary and discretionary activity, participation will depend on perceived favourable conditions. The main impacts on sustainability will include excessive summer heat, protracted drought and other hydrological stresses, including pollution problems. Increases of sea level will erode tourist beaches whilst diseases, including malaria may well become a significant problem. These threats will be considered in this paper.

Whilst in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries it was the winter that was "the season" with the aristocracy of northern Europe fleeing the cold and dark conditions, today it is mass "sun-lust" package tourism which leads to a seasonal peak in high summer. A UK survey suggested that for over 80% of overseas holiday-makers better weather than can normally be found in the UK in summer was the primary reason for choosing an overseas holiday. Concern about skin cancer and worries about UV-B radiation has so far tended merely to modify behaviour (e.g. the use of more effective sunscreen treatments), rather than cause a change in destination preference. It is still the case that for many the acquisition of a sun tan and the purchase of a holiday is as important as buying consumer durables for the home. The beach has become a fun place.

An interesting study of the amenity value of climate has been carried out by Maddisson (2001) who finds that British tourists are attracted by climates which deviate little from an average daytime maximum of 29 degrees C.

The Future Climate: The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change 3rd Assessment (2001) has shown that a rise in maximum temperatures and an increase in the frequency of heatwaves and hot days is likely during the 21st century. The Mediterranean will probably become less attractive for health reasons in the summer. Apart from the dangers increasingly associated with skin cancer, many Mediterranean beach resorts may simply be too hot to be comfortable in the peak season, with a much higher frequency of severe heat waves (Perry, 1987). Carter (1991) has used an approximate index of climatic favourability to investigate changes of seasonal climate in Europe under possible future climate change. Results suggested that a climate warming of 4 degrees C would lead to a shift in the optimum summertime climate from the traditional southern coastal resorts northwards to currently less fashionable regions. This result holds true regardless of whether the warming is associated with moderate decreases or increases of precipitation. Mieczkowski (1985) proposed a tourism climate index (TCI) as a means of evaluating world climates for tourism. Whilst he used 5 climate variables in the TCI formulae thermal comfort was considered the most important and given a 50% weighting. Using the ACACIA A2 High scenario (Parry et al 2000) the index was calculated for the recent good summer of 1995 and an average summer in 1999, together with the expected index value in 2020, 2050 and 2080 for the UK resort of Bournemouth. By the middle of the 21st century most summers are likely to have a preponderance of very good, excellent or ideal days for the holiday-maker in the UK. However the attractiveness of the Mediterranean coastal zone in spring and autumn would be enhanced relative to the present. It is in the months of October-November that the lingering warmth and sunshine of the Mediterranean provides the biggest contrast with the weather in northern Europe. At this season maximum temperatures at present are 8-10 degrees C higher than in London whilst in April this difference is only 5-7 degrees C. (Rotmans, et al 1994) suggest that the area suitable for sun-related tourism will decline in much of Italy and Greece as higher summer temperatures make beach tourism too uncomfortable. It is single-product beach destinations that are likely to be most vulnerable.

Key sensitivities to weather and climate: Major holiday decisions within many of the "tourist exporting" countries of Northern Europe are subject to a push and pull effect. The higher temperatures and settled weather of the Mediterranean summer exerts a big attraction, but better summers at home will reduce overseas holiday bookings. Giles and Perry (1998) have shown that the exceptional summer of 1995 in the UK led to a drop in outbound tourism and a big reduction in demand in the peak summer season for Mediterranean package holidays. In hot years there is a suggestion that Dutch tourists too prefer domestic to foreign beach holidays (WISE 1999). Large numbers of people indulge in short-term opportunistic decision-making and switch their normal holiday preferences to take account of the unusually favourable conditions at home. Such limited evidence does suggest that climate warming might alter the competitive balance of holiday destinations with adverse effects on high season tourism in the Mediterranean. A limited survey of UK travel agents revealed that their customers most of all wanted guaranteed fine warm weather. Press reports about adverse health conditions, terrorism threats and devastating forest fires were more likely to concern customers than reports of very high temperatures.

Drought: The Spanish drought of the early 1990s showed how island resorts like Majorca could become dependent on water being transported from the mainland with attendant political tensions (Wheeler 1995). In the last three decades there is evidence of the wet season ending earlier and the dry season onset also occurring earlier. High natural variability of rainfall helps to mask overall trends but endemic water scarcity is a very likely future scenario, especially south of 40 degrees north.

Small islands, for example in the Aegean, could be particularly affected if tourism is allowed to continue to grow and it might be necessary to severely restrict tourist growth in such environments. Nicholls and Hoozemans (1996) have shown that in the Mediterranean there are 162 islands exceeding 10 square km in size; most have a low resource base but significant tourist development. Decline in rainfall and water supply availability, together with beach erosion could undermine their tourist industries and hence their local economies. It has been suggested (Karas 1997) that Crete could experience serious water shortages in 5 years out of 6 by 2010. There is likely to be an increase in friction, with a conflict of interest between local people and tourist authorities on the use of scarce water. It has been calculated that a luxury hotel consumes around 600 litres of fresh water per guest per night. Water-hungry land uses like golf courses and water parks will be seen as water-stealers by local people. Projected decreases in runoff will exacerbate the problem of saline infiltration of water resources. Increased degradation of the environment and spreading desertification is likely to make some areas less scenically attractive to tourists. Comprehensive adaptation strategies, including re-use of waste water and high technology solutions such as desalination plants or water grids are likely to be needed and would lead to greater intervention by government in tourism planning.

Heatwaves: Two major factors have interacted to impede the development of a definition of what a heatwave is, namely, the absence of a simple meteorological measure representing the complex interaction between the human body and the thermal environment, and the lack of suitable homogeneous time series of the meteorological variables likely to be involved (Robinson 2001). Should we use exceedance of fixed absolute values, or deviation from the normal local climate as the basis for a definition? There are clearly several dimensions to very hot weather that need to be considered. Extended heat waves, defined as 10 days or more, appear to be becoming more frequent in the Mediterranean. In the 15 years to 1994 Italy endured 8 such heatwaves. In addition short-duration heat waves of 3-5 days with temperatures 7 degrees C or more above normal have occurred on 33 occasions in the central Mediterranean between 1950-95. Individual heat wave days have increased from 52 days in the decade 1950-1959 to 230 in the decade 1980-1989 (Conte, Soarani and Piervitali 1999). Heatwaves cause increases in the death rate, especially in urban areas; for example in one episode from 13 July -2nd August 1983 in Rome, 450 deaths above the normal average occurred. In 1987 more than 1100 residents died in Greece between 20-31st July (Katsouyanni et al

1988) with a combination of temperatures above 40 degrees C and poor air quality. In 1998 in Cyprus 45 deaths attributable to heat were noted when the maximum temperature exceeded 40 degrees C on 8 successive days. In Athens the National Weather Service of Greece forecasts heat wave emergencies and warnings which are disseminated to the public. Extreme heatwaves and the deaths involved are frequently reported in the media of foreign countries and give a negative image to potential holiday-makers. Emotive phrases like "killer heatwave" have been used. Even reports by reputable organizations can use hyperbole to get their message across. The World Wild Fund For Nature reported that some tourist destinations could be turned into "holiday horror stories". It has to be remembered that holiday-makers from northern Europe will be unused to temperatures as high as 40 degrees C and may be more at risk than local people, who are used to long hot summers.

Gawith, et al (1999) have shown that at Thessaloniki in northern Greece the temperature-humidity index (THI) which assesses the impact of high temperatures and humidity will rise above a value of 84 (when nearly everyone feels uncomfortable) for more than twice as long as at present by 2050. In addition there will be significant increases in the shoulder warm periods suggesting a lengthening of the summer season. Forest fires, such as were very widespread in August 1994 in Tuscany, Corsica, Sardinia and France can lead to evacuation from tourist facilities such as camp sites. Pinol, Terradas and Lloret (1998) found that in coastal eastern Spain there has been increased fire activity and the number of days of very high fire risk is likely to increase further since there is a correlation between summer heat and fire occurrence. In Italy a strong association has been found between the number of forest fires and both higher summer temperatures and lower summer precipitation. Measures such as the closure of forest and parkland in summer may become increasingly necessary.

The tourist industry is very vulnerable to natural disasters. The publicity given to heatwave deaths in Greece in summer 1998, if repeated regularly, could act as a deterrent to tourism. In that year there were stories in the UK press of holidaymakers staying in their hotel rooms to try to escape the intense heat on the beaches. Queues of Britons were reported at hospitals and pharmacies suffering from heatstroke and burns while others cut short their holidays and returned home early. Rising mean summer temperatures will inevitably be accompanied by more occasions of extreme maximum temperatures. Extreme weather episodes are likely to have a stronger impact than average weather changes. Heat wave conditions are also implicated in the development and proliferation of algal blooms which can lead to closure of beaches, disfiguration of the coastal environment, and the death of fish as has happened in the Adriatic.

Drought and Heat combined—the example of summer 2003 - The most vulnerable tourists seem to have been campers and caravaners. Forest fires threatened camp sites and actually destroyed some and there were a number of injuries and fatalities. At several sites emergency evacuations were required. The worst fires were in southern France, Portugal, SW Spain and southern Italy. These low-cost holidaymakers are also especially vulnerable to heatwaves since there is no obvious access to air conditioning. There were many reports of holidaymakers abandoning their holidays and returning home early to escape the great heat. Excess heatwave deaths reached 15,000 in France, 6,000 in Spain and 4,000 in Italy and the European total probably reached or exceeded 40,000. Although it is not known how many of these deaths involved tourists, the heatwave can be classed as a major public health incident.

Local people, especially those living in cities such as Rome and Milan tended to abandon their cities whenever possible and retreat to the coasts, lakes and countryside, joining the normal tourist influx and increasing congestion on roads and beaches. Infrastructure problems including power cuts in Spain and Italy as a result of excessive demand for air conditioning and train cancellations because of buckled rails also affected tourists.

British tourists travelling to the Mediterranean received very little advice or warning before their departures. It was often left to tour reps, themselves with very little medical knowledge, to warn of the dangers, especially from dehydration from excessive alcohol consumption. The extreme conditions of the summer 2003 provided a further opportunity to monitor the demand for Mediterranean holidays in the light of the evolving conditions. In the UK there was a double heatwave with peaks of temperature in mid-July and again in early August. Between these peaks the weather in late July, at the beginning of the traditional holiday period coinciding with the school holidays, was more unsettled, although still warm. The return of settled and hot weather in the first few days of August was well-forecast by the UK Met. Office but it was clear

DISEASE - Higher temperatures could lead to some Mediterranean holiday areas becoming a suitable habitat for malaria-bearing mosquitos. Spain, for example, is currently seen as a safe, easily accessible, no-risk destination not requiring immunisation or courses of treatment against exotic diseases for intending visitors. It is anticipated that by the 2020s suitable habitats for malaria will have spread northward from North Africa into Spain. Increases in the incidence of food poisoning and food related diseases associated with enhanced microbiological activity, for example, salmonella and e coli are likely to increase as temperatures rise. There will be a higher risk of epidemics of cholera and typhoid as well as other infectious diseases. Adverse publicity would follow such public health scares and frighten tourists away, as happened at Salou, Spain a few years ago. Extra costs will be involved in maintaining and strengthening public health defenses and in health and hygiene education programmes.

TOURISTS' REACTIONS TO THE CHANGING CLIMATE AND ADAPTIVE RESPONSES - Considerably more research has been done on the likely changes that Mediterranean climates may experience than on the possible impact of those changes on tourists in the future. It is not always easy to tease out the impact of climate from the many other factors influencing holiday choice (Perry 2000).

Tourism is a continuously adapting industry, responding to changing demographic and economic conditions as well as to new demands and technologies. Climate change will present new challenges but also lead to opportunities for tourist investment to capitalise on the new environmental conditions. Work has only just begun on “translating” the suggested future climate scenarios into their impacts on tourism but already some interesting adaptations are emerging. There follows a mixture of observed adaptations and speculative predictions:-

1 Higher air and sea temperatures are likely to encourage a longer tourist season. If the summer becomes widely perceived as too hot the season could become “doughnut shaped”, with peaks in spring and autumn months and a hole in high summer. Such a pattern might resemble the current profile of visitor demand for a resort like Dubai. Recently Maddison (2001) has indicated that a lengthening and flattening of the tourist season is likely in Greece although with overall tourist numbers almost unchanged. With this in mind, resorts need to discourage a “closing down” attitude at the end of summer. Higher temperatures will allow a prolongation of the season and if possible added cultural and sporting attractions such as arts festivals, regattas, food or drink events and local fiestas can help this process. Breaking the traditional seasonal pattern has as much to do with changing consumer attitudes as with developing new attractions and more targeted advertising could help in this respect. A longer tourist season would allow quicker returns on investment with more intensive utilization of facilities over a longer period. What in the UK is called the short-haul beach package has almost certainly peaked, but beach holidays will still be popular. They will be price-sensitive and probably booked later and we are likely to see greater segregation between resorts which continue to cater for this market and those which choose to chase other markets and become more diversified. Some parts particularly of the Spanish coasts, have an inheritance of many 30 year old hotels, devoid of modern amenities and catering for a declining number of holiday-makers, many of whom will be low-spending, low-yielding Eastern European tourists. The demand will be for more individual “bespoke packages” offering a little more excitement than the “identikit” traditional IT (Middleton 1991).

2 The increasing proportion of older people in the population will still wish to escape the dark, dreary winters of northern Europe. More are likely to consider moving permanently to, or buying second homes in Mediterranean areas. King, Warnes and Williams (1998) have shown that in several retirement destinations including the Costa del Sol and Malta the most important reason given for moving to the chosen destination was climate. Thus the climate of the receiving region for these migrants has been considered to be the most important pull factor. There are considerable planning implications if the growth of new apartments, villas and bungalows is not to cause environmental blight in some of these coastal areas. Along with this development will come increased demand for leisure pursuits e.g. golf courses, marinas.

Tourists will increasingly expect holiday accommodation to be air conditioned. Such accommodation will attract a premium price, whilst poorer quality self-catering apartments and rooms without air conditioning will be much less attractive in the summer. At present only a fifth of rooms in hotels in Mediterranean countries are in the 4 and 5 star categories. Increased demands will be made on electricity supplies from the demand for additional cooling systems

CONCLUSIONS - Tourism in the Mediterranean may become less sustainable as a result of climate change. Issues that are coming to the foreground include what are the safe and tolerable limits of the Mediterranean climate to sustain tourism? What is the likelihood that these limits will be breached and at what time? Predicting climate change is complex but even more complex is predicting how people will respond to that change. Socio-economic scenario analysis is now being used to study possible future pathways of tourism and their regional implications (Amelung, et al 2003). Significant climate change could occur within the lifetime of many current tourist investment projects like large- scale marinas. Advice on how to construct tourist facilities in harmony with the local climate and to provide the least stress to users is needed. At present we can see the following hierarchy of flexibility to climate change; namely tourists are most flexible, tour operators have a degree of short-term flexibility e.g. altering flight destinations, and local tourist managers are the least flexible with committed capital installed and not always transportable. It may be that changes in the frequency and intensity of events like heatwaves, droughts and fires will be more important in changing the perception of the climate than the general increases in projected temperatures.

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ECOCLUB HEADLINES - News from our Members around the world

Brazil: Amazonat (Web: www.amazonat.org) was been nominated for the Brazil Awards 2007, organised by the Embassy of Brazil in the Hague. The winning ceremony will take place at the International Tourism Fair of Utrecht (Vakantiebeurs 2008) on January 8, 2008. Meanwhile, the Dutch Government in cooperation with the Piatam Institute are planning to build a research centre and canopy walk system at Amazonat, under the guidance of Prof. R.A.A. Oldeman, inventor of Canopy Farming.

Canada: Global TV, the Calgary Herald and the YWCA recently bestowed Carol Patterson of Kalahari Management (Web: www.kalahari-online.com) with a Woman of Vision award. These awards recognise the accomplishments of women who have "implemented their passion and whose personal dedication and actions inspire us all". Carol says, "When I started my tourism practice, there were times I felt like a woman of insanity, not vision. Ecotourism was not a well-known concept, so to win this award is very satisfying." The announcement of the award and a short documentary on Carols' career and life was shown December 3rd on the 6 p.m. news of Calgary's Global Channel 2 and 7. A feature article also appeared in the Calgary Herald Tuesday, December 4th and an awards banquet (open to the public) will be held March 6, 2008.

Mexico: Planeta (Web: www.planeta.com) announced that Food, Health and Building Communities will be one of their spotlight topics for 2008, highlighting local food, slow food, food miles and wild food. "Come hungry," says Planeta.com founder Ron Mader. "Foodies play a critical role in promoting responsible travel and ecotourism. Choosing what we eat and where we eat goes a long way in building communities and improving the health of travelers and locals alike. The dialogue begins with the 2008 Rural Tourism Fair in Oaxaca City, which will be held January 21-30. A small festival among friends, the 2008 Rural Tourism Fair will be the eighth annual tourism fair created by Planeta.com and friends. In 2008 the fair changes from a one-day event at Amigos del Sol to a nine-day event held at various locations in and around Oaxaca City. The schedule will be developed using the methodology of Open Space Technology and shared on the Oaxaca Wikispace. In town look for information at Amigos del Sol, Pino Suárez #802. Mexico has one of the premiere cuisines in the world, noted for its diversity and innovative culinary and medicinal

traditions. Planeta.com will be updating a number of features that provide background for visitors to the country's traditional markets and those interested in the growing slow food movement. Planeta.com will also pay close attention to other world events, including the International Year of the Potato 2008. As consumers around the world become aware of the carbon footprint of the purchases and travels they make, a new term is causing global debate. Introducing food miles. Labels on food items show the distance that food travels from the time of its production until it reaches the consumer and its accompanying contribution to environmental pollution. An ongoing e-conference, Food, Health and Building Communities will take place on the Web as well as feature traditional and innovative events on the ground. Photographers are invited to share pictures of World Food. More details at <http://www.planeta.com/food.html>

Thailand: Lamai Homestay and Guesthouse (Web: www.thailandhomestay.com) in north-east Thailand has recently won a Highly Commended award in the 2007 Virgin Responsible Travel Awards, Small Hotels section. Jimmy and his wife Lamai have spent seven years developing relations with the local community encouraging them to become involved in sustainable tourism. Projects have included digging a canal around the rice fields to assist irrigation and to cultivate an organic garden; offering the traditional skills of the local people to tourists, e.g. food-foraging, silk-making, basket-weaving; and pioneering the recycling of waste, e.g. making plastic bottles into fish-traps. In addition, they have created a beautiful garden around the house, full of fruit trees, shrubs and flowers. This has encouraged the return of butterflies, birds, reptiles and insects which had left the mainly rice-growing area. The couple also offer tours to the local Khmer temples of Phimai and Phanom Rung and thereby educate tourists on the cultural background of the Khorat Plateau. Guests are also welcome to help Lamai with the cooking, learning how to prepare traditional Isan recipes. The Awards attract entries from all over the world and nominations are sent by happy customers. Following an initial short-listing, fifteen judges met in London and decided on the winners in the fifteen separate categories. The certificate was presented at the World Travel Market in the Excel Centre, Canary Wharf, London on 14th November, 2007.

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