
Development Perspectives of “Last Chance Tourism” as One of the Directions of Ecological Tourism

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Abstract

The relevance of researching the problems and prospects for the development of this tourism type as “Last Chance Tourism” as well as within the framework of ecological tourism, is explained by the importance of preserving tourist territories and objects of display in order to achieve the goals of an effective combination of ecological and economic components for the benefit of the general territory development. The purpose of this study is to determine the development prospects of the Last Chance Tourism, as one of the directions of ecological tourism. To implement this study, the authors of the article used the methods of data systematization, content analysis, expert assessments and other scientific approaches, which allow to comprehensively consider the problem under study. The authors propose a refined definition of “ecotourism” by referring to the results of the analysis of existing research. We give the characteristics of tourists, who are attracted by the objects of “Last Chance Tourism”. According to the results of the study, the necessity of creating a Russian analogue of the list of endangered objects that can be used for tourism purposes is justified - the atlas “Last Chance Tourism”. The article summarizes the experience and offers recommendations for the development of ecological tourism, including the example of the Republic of Tatarstan. The article will be useful for regional and federal authorities, universities, training students in the direction of “tourism”, as well as for all those interested in the development of ecological tourism.

Keywords: Last Chance Tourism, ecotourism, social responsibility, endangered species, natural areas

Bunakov OA, Zaitseva NA, Larionova AA, Zigern-Korn NV, Zhukova MA, Zhukov VA, Chudnovskiy AD (2018) Development Perspectives of “Last Chance Tourism” as One of the Directions of Ecological Tourism. *Ekoloji* 27(106): 441-447.

INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of tourism and hospitality in the twentieth century allowed people to learn and see with their own eyes the most beautiful monuments created by both human hands and nature itself. Year after year, the tourism industry beats new records in terms of income received from tourists, as well as the share in the gross domestic product of the regions and countries (Andrades and Dimanche 2017, Bolgova et al. 2016, Kabanova et al. 2016, Veretkhina et al. 2017).

According to the Federal Tourism Agency, in 2017 the volume of domestic tourism in the Russian Federation amounted to 56 million people, entry tourism - 24.4 million. The total contribution of the

industry to the country’s economy is 3.47% of GDP, or 3 trillion rubles.

However, along with indisputable positive factors from tourist activities, the issue of preserving the used tourist resources is becoming increasingly important (Vila et al. 2016). First of all, it concerns the natural and ecological components, which in most cases influence the choice of a particular tourist destination.

This question was first officially raised in 1987, when Gro Harlem Brattland’s report “Our Common Future” was heard and the term “sustainable development” was introduced, implying an effective combination of environmental and economic components for the benefit of common development (Bunakov 2016).

Table 1. The main scientific and theoretical approaches to the essence definition of the “ecological tourism” concept

No. p / p	Concept definition	Authors, source
1	Ecological tourism - travelling to relatively undistorted or unpolluted areas with unique natural objects. Ecotourism is a natural tourism, which includes the study of the natural environment and serves to improve the environment. Ecotourism is based on environmental concerns. The organization of a trip with a limited number of participants to natural areas with possible visits to places of cultural interest, with the aim of implementing various projects for the protection and rational use of natural resources, comes to the fore.	A.V. Babkin (2008)
2	Ecological tourism (ecotourism) - is a form of sustainable tourism, focusing on visits relatively intact natural areas anthropogenic influence.	A.B. Lukichev (2001)
3	Ecotourism is a visit to unique natural areas, which are little affected by economic activity, and have preserved the traditional way of life of the local population; this is an increase in the level of environmental culture of all participants in the tourism process and an increase in the living standards of the local population, compliance with environmental standards and technologies when carrying out environmental tours and programs.	N.I. Mironova (2009)
4	Natural environment, and sustainable development. Education and training.	The International Ecotourism Society (TIES) (2017), Arefyeva (2018)
5	It has been given that it has been able to ensure that it has been and is not affected by the natural environment of local populations.	International Union for Conservation of Nature (2017)

Bradtland’s work was a powerful impetus to the use of the term “sustainable development” in science. It should be noted that in 30 years many works have been written and researchers in this matter have advanced far enough, however, reducing environmental damage from tourism activities to zero or bring it to the level when nature can still recover (for example, during the off-season, and, accordingly, low tourist activity) fails.

As a result, area of destroyed territories and the level of their regression is increasing. The number of socio-cultural objects including national heritage is lowering. This is how the concept of “Last Chance Tourism”, that is, traveling to these disappearing objects while they have not yet completely disappeared from the face of the earth.

LITERATURE REVIEW

First of all, it is important to understand how the essence of eco-tourism is understood in the scientific community.

It should be noted that scientists involved in research in the field of eco-tourism, and has not come to a common definition of the concept of “eco-tourism”, so very often this kind of tourism is called “green meters”, “natural” or “soft” tourism.

Let us further consider the main scientific approaches to the essence definition of the “ecological tourism” concept (Table 1).

Ecotourism is currently defined as a responsible trip to natural areas that promotes nature conservation, supports the well-being of the local population and includes environmental education and awareness.

Education should cover not only tourists, but also personnel.

Ecotourism is travelling with responsibility for the environment in relation to the undisturbed natural areas to explore and enjoy nature and cultural attractions, which promotes the protection of nature, has a “soft” impact on the environment, provides an active socio-economic involvement of local people and getting them benefits from this activity.

The rational attitude to the environment, based on the conservation of natural resources, is supported by many socially responsible companies. For example, the company developed a TripAdvisor program in “ECOleader”, which marks a variety of eco-friendly hotels and mini-hotels, from budget to the most luxurious (Green Leaders 2018). All these hotels are committed to environmentally friendly activities, such as recycling waste, using natural products from local farms, installing stations for charging electric vehicles. Any user from TripAdvisor site before making a decision on the choice of destinations, can click on the logo on the page of the hotel with the logo of the participant of the program “ECOleader” and see what action the management of this facility take to protect the environment.

RESULTS

Features Tours in the Direction of “Last Chance Tourism” and its Target Audience

There are two polar points of view regarding this kind of travel. Some believe that tourism in such places contributes to an even greater anthropogenic load and, as a result, accelerates the process of extinction of the object. Others, on the contrary, note the need to attract

public attention to the problem by showing tourists. It is likely that both opinions have their own strengths, and the decision to close any places to be visited by tourists in each case should be made on the basis of a comprehensive analysis. It is impossible to deny the possibility of rational use of income from tourist activities for the benefit of restoring the natural balance.

Objects of “Last Chance Tourism” attract two main types of tourists:

A) Caring tourists who are ready not only to see the disappearing object, but also to do something to improve its present situation. This group includes environmental tourists, volunteers, etc;

B) Tourists who just want to see the object as long as it still exists, but is not ready for any action to save it (most often it is the tourists who arrived by chance on a trip).

In general, human nature is such that they like to know both new and disappearing, so tourists are always attracted by the chance to see something that almost never occurs or is on the verge of extinction. Accordingly, it is possible to attract the attention of potential visitors with such “posters”. Often the situation on them is drawn even worse than it actually is.

For example, the fact that Venice is gradually going under water has long been known and widely reported, and soon we may lose this one of the most beautiful cities in the world. In fact, in the 20th century, Venice has dropped by only 23 centimeters, and this process has characterized the city throughout its history. Undoubtedly, the status of a “drowning” city contributes to attracting additional attention and interest from tourists, who are afraid not to have time to see the city with their own eyes. This object in our opinion can be attributed to the objects “Last Chance Tourism” is only conditional, since the process of its disappearance is very slow.

In addition, excessive tourist activity in this case can only harm. In particular, according to studies, the greatest problems of Venice are caused by the waves created by numerous boats and yachts, as well as by huge cruise liners, which gradually wash away wooden piles - the foundation of the city. In this case, the problem can be solved by prohibiting large vessels from sailing close to the city, and part of the funds received from approximately 29 million tourists annually allow to strengthen the foundation of the city.

An interesting example is the Great Barrier Reef in Australia and the resorts of the Red Sea in Egypt. These places attract millions of tourists from all over the world due to the opportunity to see the beauty of the coral reef, but in the early 2000s, the authorities of the countries were faced with the fact that the corals almost stopped growing and, on the contrary, gradually die. Given that the coral reef is a huge ecosystem, including the corals themselves, as well as their inhabitants (in Australia there are more than 1,500 species of fish), ecologists sounded the alarm. In Egypt, the problem was decided to fight, having closed in some areas the access of tourists to the sea.

In Australia, there is no coral rescue program at all, although according to estimates by researchers at the University of Sydney, only Queensland receives 4.6 billion from tourism activities a year, which speaks of a truly national commons of corals for Australia. On the one hand, the authorities of the country are trying to draw attention to the issue of environmental pollution, but on the other hand, they are considering options for deepening Abbott Point Bay in order to allow large ships to ship Australian coal mined nearby. Such a dual approach, alas, has led to the fact that at the next session of UNESCO, the Great Barrier Reef may be included in the list of natural treasures that are under threat of extinction. And the Australian Great Barrier Reef and the coral reef of Egypt today definitely refer to objects “Last Chance Tourism” and require close attention from both environmentalists and local authorities.

Evaluation of the Russian Experience of Introducing the Model of Environmentally Sustainable Development and its Use for the Purposes of Tourism Development

The list of instructions of the President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin following the meeting of the State Council “On the environmental development of the Russian Federation in the interests of future generations”, held December 27, 2016:

- Russia’s transition to a model of environmentally sustainable development
- Development of mechanisms for environmentally sustainable development;
- Formation of a system of compensation (payments) for ecosystem services, based on an understanding of the role of Russia as an environmental donor.

Table 2. Comparative assessment of the most popular cities among tourists and their environmental ratings

Place in the ranking of cities most popular with tourists	Position in environmental rating
1 place - Moscow	16 position
2 place-St. Petersburg	26 position
3 place-Sochi	41 positions
4place-Kazan	2 item
5 place-Kaliningrad	Excluded from the ranking (position is greater than 70)
6 place - Nizhny Novgorod	Excluded from the ranking (position is greater than 70)
7 place-Krasnodar	30 position
8 place-Yaroslavl	12 position
9 place-Kislovodsk	No data
10 place-Vologda	5 position

In addition, by decree of the President of the Russian Federation, 2017 was declared the Year of Ecology in order to draw public attention to the environmental development of the Russian Federation, the preservation of biological diversity and environmental safety.

Pursuant to these instructions of the President of the Russian Federation, a system of indicators of sustainable development was developed. Mechanisms for achieving the goals and phased solving the tasks of environmentally sustainable development of the Russian regions territories for the period up to 2030 were defined. For the future until 2050, the target indicators of energy efficiency of the economy as a whole were established, and in its main sectors, indicators of the effectiveness of the impact of mechanisms ensuring environmentally sustainable development on the activities of business entities.

One of the activities in the field of public evaluate the implementation effectiveness of the sustainable development model in Russia, was the development and environmental rating and Russian cities, which is formed every year, starting from 2013. The aim of forming such a rating - to give public assessment of the effectiveness and adequacy and efforts of municipal authorities to provide a favorable environment and high quality of life for the local population. The publication of the rating and a broad discussion of its results contribute to the transparency and accountability of efforts to protect the nature of the municipal authorities of Russian cities. In drawing up the environmental rating of Russian cities are estimated seven key categories: air environment, transport, energy use, water use, waste management, biotic environment (flora and fauna), the impact of management on the environment. In the environmental rating for 2017 of the Russian cities of boules, data on the cities with a population of over 100 thousand people are presented and taken into account. Total of 103 cities were included in the rating. At the end of 2017, the cities of

Naberezhnye Chelny, Kazan, and Voronezh were among the top three leaders in the environmental rating (Published environmental rating of Russian cities 2018).

As can be seen from the data in **Table 2**, only Kazan and Yaroslavl have similar positions in these two ratings, an example of Kazan's position in the environmental rating is even higher than in the tourist one. For other cities, the most popular position among tourists in the environmental rating is worse by 15 or more points.

Based on this, we can conclude, and it is confirmed by many research results. (Tikhomirova 2005) that the ecological situation in the region is not an important factor, which is taken into account when Russians organize their holidays.

Development Atlas "Last Chance Tourism"

For the Russian Federation, the problem of endangered species of plants and animals is also quite acute, and attention is not paid to all even to objects that are interesting from the point of view of tourists. From positive examples, we can recall the history of Vladimir Putin's visit to the Far East in 2008 and the habitats of Amur tigers disappearing at that time. The trip covered by journalists contributed to drawing public attention. In addition, the President took several important steps:

- 1) criminalized the killing of rare animals;
- 2) creation of the fund "Center" Amur Tiger " , whose task is to preserve and increase the population of Amur tigers, as well as their study;
- 3) introduction of the International Day of the Tiger (to further attract public attention);
- 4) contribution to the creation of 4 About OPT with a total area of more than 17 thousand square kilometers (Bikin National Park, Sheremetyevskie Lakes Natural Park, Verkhneamursky Nature Reserve, etc.).

All these steps have allowed the tiger population to increase by 10-15% by 2016 and this is a great victory. Another effect was the attraction of additional tourists and volunteers to these territories and, as a result, the development of infrastructure, the emergence of new jobs, and the increase in employment of the local population.

However, in general, if we consider the world and Russian experience of using endangered species of animals and plants for tourism, we can conclude that the situation is probably not as happy as in the case of Amur tigers. It is necessary to attract the attention of different segments of the population to this kind of objects. Therefore, it is proposed to create a Russian analogue of the list of endangered objects that can be used for tourism purposes - the atlas “Last Chance Tourism”.

This atlas can be a constantly changing (objects can either be added or excluded) database. The atlas will include several sections:

- objects of flora and fauna;
- cultural and historical sites (monuments, buildings, etc.);
- cities and settlements.

In the atlas “Last Chance Tourism” you can not only acquaint people with the list of endangered species, but also create electronic platforms where you can learn about the possibility of visiting or getting acquainted with the object. This will be done in consultation with a group of environmentalists and other interested parties.

It is important to note that many people are really interested in helping to correct the situation and save one or another species. Here it is just necessary to give them a similar opportunity. In the beginning of the 90s, Kazan Zoo botanical garden faced a shortage of animal feed, and solved this problem by finding benefactors who agreed to sponsor the feeding of some animal for a certain period of time. You can also sponsor conservation activities aimed at restoring the animal population in its natural environment.

In addition to sponsorship, it is possible to offer various kinds of work, both for adults and children, in the form of games, quests, garbage collection, etc. Well, of course, tourist activity can be a very great help.

In today’s reality, when Russia is under the yoke of economic sanctions and is forced to develop its own production, the Government has practically no means

left to maintain endangered species of flora and fauna. And in this situation, “Last Chance Tourism” can become one of the options for salvation.

The Experience of the Republic of Tatarstan in the Russian Federation in the Preservation and Restoration of Endangered Tourist Areas

Republics as Tatarstan is located in the central part of the Russian Federation and has great tourist potential. In the period from 2005 to 2018, the number of arriving tourists increased from 400 thousand to about 3.5 million arrivals per year. Every year new tourist facilities and sightseeing tours in the country, held multiple events (Bunakov and Rubtzov 2016, Bunakov et al. 2015).

The Republic of Tatarstan has a “Renaissance” Foundation, which is headed by State Councilor RT M.SH. Shaimiev. The main task of the foundation is the complex revival of cultural and heritage monuments. The main emphasis was placed on two objects - Ostrovgrad Sviyazhsk and the Great Bolgar.

In the early 2000, the excursion to Sviyazhsk looked very exotic. It was possible to get to the island only by water (or on ice in winter), then it was necessary to climb a rather steep slope along an unpaved country road and independently (any navigation was simply absent) to find the remains of a monastery. The island left a dual impression: on the one hand, the spirit of ancient history was felt, but on the other hand, the presence of a psychiatric hospital and dilapidated environment created a certain impression. The island was not followed at all, and it accurately referred to the objects of “Last Chance Tourism”.

Over time, the revival of this object began, which continues to this day. In addition to the restoration of cultural and historical buildings and communications, much attention was paid to the environmental component. However, no cost and without errors. In particular, a dam was built on Ostrov-grad Sviyazhsk for greater tourist accessibility, which blocked the natural flow of one of the rivers. Given that this area is part of the Volga-Kama Reserve, such an “invasion” by a person is simply unacceptable. At the same time, the opening of the dam has accelerated the restoration of the island’s ancient appearance, has increased the number of arriving tourists. Up to 400 thousand per year. Much used Olsha the attention has been paid to the contents of the island clean and tidy, which was not previously.

In 2018, the Institute of Ecology and Subsoil Use of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Tatarstan

and the Sviyazhsky Museum-Reserve began to work together on the development of a network of ecological routes. The purpose of such routes is to show rare species of flora and fauna, to talk about the need to protect them, and to obtain additional funding for the implementation of environmental programs. The benchmark for the Republic of Tatarstan is the Yellowstone National Park in the USA, where the rational introduction of ecological paths does not in the least interfere with the migration and livelihoods of animals.

At present, it can be stated that Ostrov-grad Sviyazhsk should be excluded from the “Last Chance Tourism” objects.

In the capital of the Republic of Tatarstan, Kazan, there are many lakes, which are almost all in poor condition. In our opinion, it is urban lakes that can become one of the first objects of the ATGSG atlas. These reservoirs are subject to increased anthropogenic load, so the main purpose of making them in the atlas will not be tourist activities, but rather to attract public attention. The lakes can and should become the favorite places of rest for citizens and guests of the capital, and for this, it is necessary to make them attractive and “alive”, that is, with beautiful flora and fauna.

In the spring of 2017, a video clip on which a white swan diligently cleaned the area of Kaban Lake from garbage was very popular on youtube. The emergence of this story caused a great public outcry and forced to take urgent measures to clean up and improve the coast. The results were already visible in 2018, in the form of a much cleaner area. In addition, pedestrian zones were built; benches and litter bins were equipped. In just 1.5 years, the lake drastically changed the appearance of its shores and, as a result, changed itself. But there are dozens of such lakes only within the boundaries of Kazan, and how many there are in the Republic of Tatarstan and in Russia.

Each reservoir has its own peculiarities and highlights, which must be protected and shown to both local residents and guests. It is possible to introduce western experience, where special shields with rules of behavior, as well as indicating local inhabitants and plants, are often installed near water bodies. Sometimes even the animals are given names and specifies the information how and what to feed them with. These boards are not only informational, but also educational function for the younger generation, which is probably the most important.

DISCUSSION

Issues of eco-tourism development are widely studied all over the world. In particular, they are considered in the works (Doris and Ruschmann 1992, Hunter and Shaw 2007, Ioan 2013, Keenleyside et al. 2012, Patterson et al. 2008). However, in these works little attention is paid to the problems of Last Chance Tourism as one of the areas of eco-tourism.

This study is a continuation of the previous research conducted by the authors (Bunakov 2016, Bunakov et al. 2015, 2017). As part of this article, the task was to clarify the scientific concept of “Ecotourism”, assess the positive and negative consequences of the development of Last Chance Tourism in the regions.

In this article, in contrast to the previously existing research on the management and regulation of the tourism industry development in the Russian Federation we clarify not only the scientific and theoretical foundations of ecological tourist. Besides, we give an assessment of the prospects for the development of Last Chance Tourism, as one of the directions of ecological tourism, and suggest recommendations for the tourism industry development including the example of the republic of Tatarstan.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it should be noted that it is necessary to draw public attention to important and rare natural objects as much as possible. The tourism industry can in many cases act as one of the most powerful information channels. For these purposes, you can use the authors of the atlas “Last Chance Tourism”, where there will be all the necessary information and describe options for saving or improving its existing situation. The application of these recommendations will gradually provide an opportunity to exclude the object from the atlas and more actively use it for tourism purposes.

This study allows to formulate the following recommendations for the development of the industry: improving information support, quality of service and infrastructure, specialization and individualization of a regional tourist product, including taking into account the preservation of unique natural areas, focused on the development of ecological tourism.

One of the perspective directions for the territories development can become actively growing worldwide industry events and activities. For its development in relation to the atlas “Last Chance Tourism” in Russia, it

is necessary to form a special sectoral policy, development plans, standards system, training methodology, specializing in eco-tourism and other types of tourism, which in a particular region are based on endangered natural and recreational areas and tourist facilities.

The article will be useful for regional and federal authorities, higher educational institutions that train students in the direction of “tourism”, as well as for all those interested in the development of ecological tourism.

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