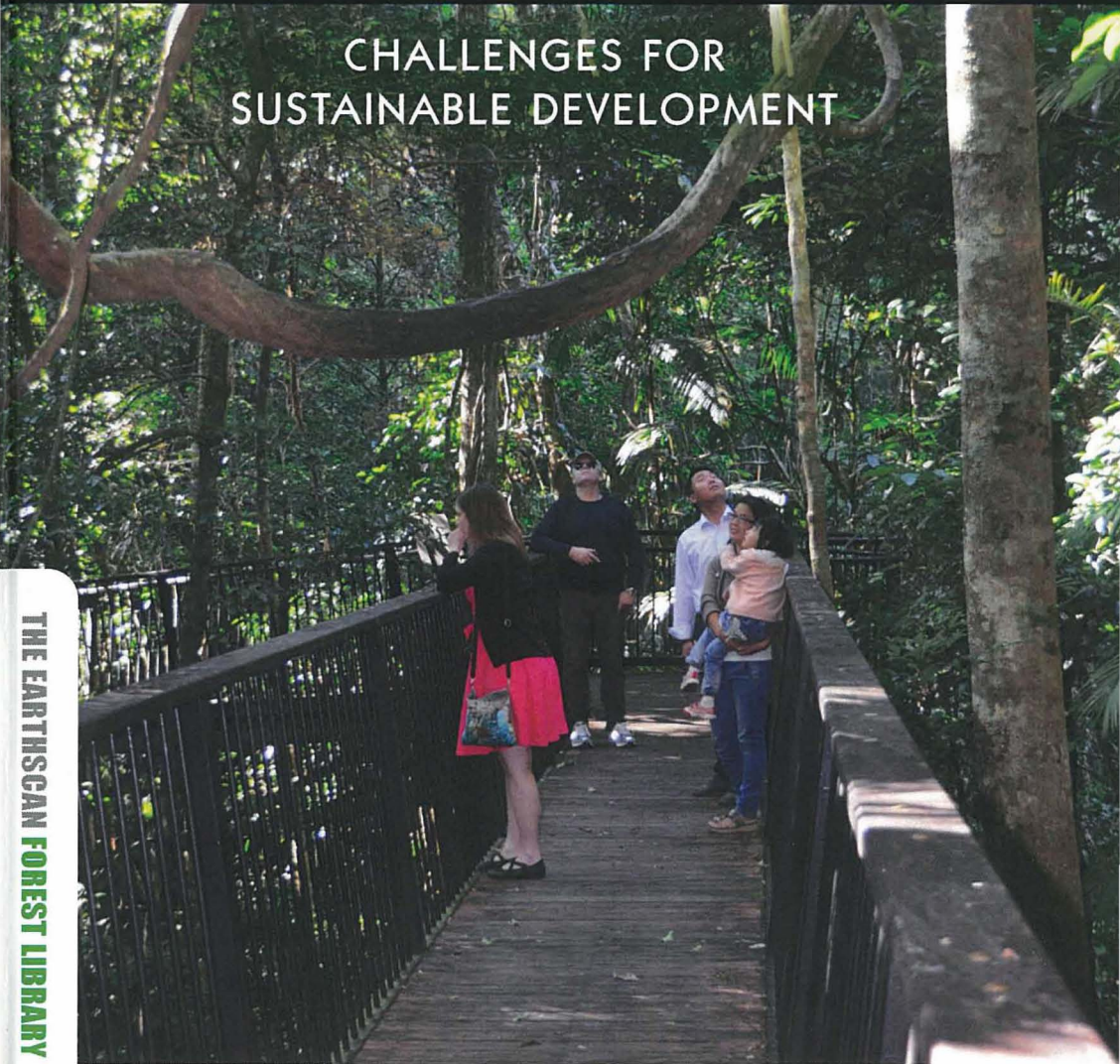




Rainforest Tourism, Conservation and Management

CHALLENGES FOR
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



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Rainforest Tourism, Conservation and Management

Globally rainforests are under threat on numerous fronts, including clearing for agriculture, harvesting for timber and urban expansion. Yet they have a crucial role in biodiversity conservation, climate change mitigation and providing other ecosystem services. Rainforests are also attractive tourist spaces and where they have been used as a tourism resource they have generated significant income for local communities.

However, not all use of rainforests as a tourism resource has been sustainable. This book argues that sustainability must be the foundation on which tourism use of this complex but ultimately fragile ecosystem is built. It provides a multi-disciplinary perspective, incorporating rainforest science, management and tourism issues. The book is organized into four sections, commencing with 'Tourism in rainforest regions', followed by 'Threats to rainforest tourism', 'The development and management of rainforest experiences', and finally 'Wildlife and rainforest tourism'.

Each major rainforest region is covered, including the Amazon, Central America, Africa, Australia and south-east Asia, in the context of a specific issue. For example, rainforests in Papua New Guinea are examined in the context of community-based ecotourism development, while the rainforests in Borneo are discussed in an examination of wildlife issues. Other issues covered in this manner include governance, empowerment issues for rainforest peoples and climate change.

Bruce Prideaux is Professor of Marketing and Tourism Management at James Cook University, Cairns, Australia.

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‘The significance of rainforests in many parts of the world suggests that this text is long overdue as it explores the challenges for the sustainable development, conservation and management of rainforests for the benefit of tourism. With a highly experienced international list of contributors, the editor has delivered a timely, engaging and challenging text that is both diverse in its coverage and critical in its investigation. With a plethora of international case examples and variety of global perspectives this is a highly recommended text for those with a passion for the world’s rainforests and the challenges and opportunities for the sustainable development of tourism.’

– Alan Fyall, University of Central Florida, USA

‘This book addresses a significant gap in our understanding of rainforests and the opportunities they offer as tourist attractions. Two particularly noteworthy features are a chapter that outlines the science behind rainforest management and the inclusion of researchers from many of the countries where rainforests are found including Brazil, Chile, Uganda, Jamaica and Sabah.’

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‘Despite their popularity as venues for tourism, rainforests are among the most fragile ecosystems on earth, acutely endangered by anthropogenic exploits, including tourism. This exceptional volume is chockfull of sagacious studies and essays that underscore the importance of rainforests as one of the most desired, albeit delicate, resources on the planet. *Rainforest Tourism, Conservation and Management* is an unequivocal must-read for every scholar who is interested in tourism and its consequences for our planet!’

– Dallen J. Timothy, Arizona State University, USA

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Challenges for sustainable
development

Edited by Bruce Prideaux

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Preface

Although rainforests cover vast regions of the Earth and are often promoted as iconic attractions in the countries where they occur, researchers have generally ignored rainforests as an area for tourism research. Where research has been undertaken, it has often been from the perspective of the rainforest as the backdrop, not the central focus of the investigation. Rainforests are under pressure from many forces, including urbanization, agriculture and climate change. Their value as a tourism resource has largely been ignored and neoliberal-leaning governments have tended to treat them as a resource rather than a landscape that has potential value to be utilized as a tourism resource as long as it is in a manner that is ecologically sustainable. All too often, it seems that the forest landscape has been seen as a voyeuristic experience, to be gazed at as it is passed through (Urry, 2002) instead of becoming the setting in which tourism experiences occur in a culturoscape of recreation and tourism facilities that give opportunity for added value.

For this reason, the purpose of this book is to begin to address gaps in our understanding of this important resource. As part of this process, the book has been designed to give voice to authors living in the countries where rainforests are located, thus avoiding a Western-centric view of rainforests as a tourism resource. To this end, the book seeks to explore a range of themes as well as forest systems. For example, in Chapter 15 Guaigu examines issues of remoteness and governance in Papua New Guinea, while in Chapter 19 Musinguzi and colleagues examine primate tourism and local communities in Uganda. Other forest systems discussed in the book include those in Madagascar, Guatemala, Peru, Chile, Brazil, Australia and Sabah.

A key philosophy behind the discussion in many of the chapters is the idea that effective management of forests requires at least a basic understanding of the science that underlies the ecological processes that shape forests. Chapter 2 provides a basic summary of key scientific issues that need to be understood if sustainable tourism use is to be achieved.

In an attempt to provide a new direction for focusing on the issues related to forest research, the book introduces the tourism in rainforest areas model, which uses a systems approach to describe forests from

multiple perspectives, including demand, supply, sustainability, threats, community, management and ownership.

The potential range of issues that deserve attention is enormous and well beyond the scope of this book. However, it does provide a starting point from which further research can progress. Importantly, the ability of researchers within the countries in which rainforests occur to comment on these issues is demonstrated, forcing the reader to move beyond the common ground of the past that has been dominated by researchers in the West or Western-orientated institutions. In this sense, the book is the beginning of a much larger conversation that needs to be engaged in if we are to maximize the potential of rainforests as a tourism resource, yet in a way that does not damage them.

Bruce Prideaux
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Reference

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