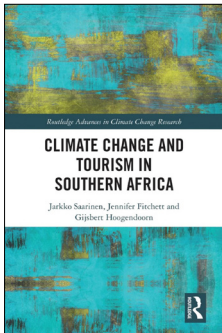




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BOOK TITLE:
Climate change and tourism in southern Africa



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ISBN:
9780367567507 (hardcover, 216 pp, GBP96.00)
9781003102618 (ebook, 216 pp, GBP29.59)

PUBLISHER:
Routledge, London, UK

PUBLISHED:
2022

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HOW TO CITE:
Van der Merwe CD. A fresh, holistic, new and desperate need to understand climate change and tourism in southern Africa. *S Afr J Sci.* 2022;118(9/10), Art. #14188. <https://doi.org/10.17159/sajs.2022/14188>

ARTICLE INCLUDES:
 Peer review
 Supplementary material

PUBLISHED:
29 September 2022

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A fresh, holistic, new and desperate need to understand climate change and tourism in southern Africa

Climate Change and Tourism in Southern Africa is a welcome addition to the literature on climate change and tourism studies, globally – but more so in the context of the Global South, where a dearth of research exists. The editors (and a wide range of 23 contributors) effectively explore the nature of climate change in southern Africa in an accessible and holistic way, which even a layperson will appreciate. Often climatology can be so technical (and statistical), but Fitchett has done a superb job in explaining the science of climate change in a southern African context, in an easy-to-understand manner. The climatic explanations throughout the book are scientifically sound and easily comprehensible, even to the untrained tourism geographer. This book will thus be of value to geography, education and tourism students and scholars alike.

Saarinen, Fitchett and Hoogendoorn critically examine the impacts of climate change on tourism, and the resilience, adaptation, as well as the governance needs in various southern African tourism operations and environments. The book is well written and effectively structured into 10 chapters that explore the complex relationship between tourism and climate change (as well as the effect each discourse has or will have on the other), in years to come. The climate of southern Africa is well contextualised in the second chapter, which sets the scene nicely to fully comprehend the impacts that climate change will have on a region that is heavily dependent on tourism for its economic well-being and success. The diagrams and maps are particularly effective and useful in creating a visual understanding of how climate and tourism are interchangeably related.

Each chapter is supplemented with up-to-date and highly relevant research in the 'boxes', written by various experts within their respective fields. For example, Chapter 2's Box 2.2: 'Tropical cyclone threats to southern Africa and the surrounding islands' will help teachers in southern Africa re-think and improve their pedagogical content knowledge in terms of how we more effectively and holistically teach on the subject of tropical cyclones in the Geography curriculum of many SADC places which may increasingly be impacted and negatively affected by these vicious storms. The need for and importance of mitigation and adaptation in both climate change and tourism development policies is aptly explored throughout the book. The three editors are each very well established and respected within their respective fields of expertise and have worked well as a team in putting together this very necessary book.

Chapter 3 meticulously explores and establishes various perspectives necessary for understanding and approaching climate resources and change in tourism in the context of sustainable and attainable ways. Much of the discourse on social and environmental justice needs to be aligned and critically explored in tourism and climate change research – Chapter 3 does this very succinctly, with hands-on examples of how this can be practically achieved through the Box on 'Community-based tourism and climate change in Botswana'. The editors have done a great job of bringing together and interrogating all the debates around climate resources and change in tourism in this book. Chapter 4, 'Methods for tourism and climate change research in southern Africa', is a key point of the book, which looks at how we have come to understand the complex relationship between climate change and tourism in an ever-changing world where the effects of a global pandemic like COVID-19 have swamped the attention and gaze of most research in the last three years.

Climate change risks to southern African tourism are effectively laid out and explored in Chapter 5. The focus of climate change risks for southern Africa is multifaceted and often contradictory – too much rain or not enough. Droughts and severe storm events are carefully examined in this chapter, which paints a picture of what governments in southern Africa need to focus on so as to benefit from tourism revenue in the context of an ever-changing and volatile climate. Wind, sea-level rise and extreme temperature events negatively challenge and threaten all types of tourism in southern Africa, and the three boxes in this chapter highlight these in the context of community-based, nature-based and heritage tourism in the region. Throughout the book, the complex relationship between climate change and tourism is expounded with concrete examples and recent research findings that help us to see the importance of mitigation, adaptation and resilience to these challenges – as the Global South.

Chapter 6 explores these destinations' resilience, vulnerabilities and climate change threats in a well-structured analysis of the Sustainable Development Goals. The emphasis on the need for adaptation to climate change by the southern African tourism sector is carefully unpacked and well explored in Chapter 7. This is done with specific reference to real and hands-on solutions (like rain harvesting), which many countries are already practising. Reconciling the needs of tourism in the face of climate change challenges is a catch-22 situation, and the authors aptly recognise this by arguing that 'the costs of adaptation, likewise, need to be weighed up against infrastructural development to meet the basic needs of the population' (p. 114). The role of tourism in contributing to climate change remains a contentious issue, which Chapter 8 diplomatically outlines, and the effect of COVID-19 on travel on a global scale has helped highlight these debates. This book suggests that 'a combination of social marketing, combined at times with differentiation of destinations and operations via grading schemes, voluntary offsets, emissions trading, and taxes, each applied to specific components of the (tourism) sector, and varying levels of influence' (p. 131) could be the way forward to solving this debate.

The book is brought together in Chapter 9 with a critical analysis of the governance and policy needs in tourism and climate change relations. Sustainable tourism has long been hailed as the main means of achieving socially and environmentally just policies that are innovative in growing the tourism industry, and this needs to be carefully planned and thought through in the context of how we deal with climate change in southern Africa. The book explores the relationship between climate change policies and tourism in southern African within the ambit of the impact and influence of the Paris Agreement. National policies in the region need to work together towards an integrated and collaborative approach to dealing with the problem of climate change for tourism. This book will be essential reading for tourism studies, geography and education scholars and students, as it integrates the issues explored by all these disciplines in a holistic and sustainable way.