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Valuing Recreational Benefits of Coral Reefs: The Case of Mombasa Marine National Park and Reserve, Kenya



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Abstract

A contingent valuation study was conducted with adult Kenyan citizens and foreign tourists to estimate the value of recreational benefits arising from coral reefs at Mombasa Marine National Park and Reserve (MMNPR), and to assess the implications for local reef management. Citizen and foreign visitors to MMNPR were willing to pay an extra \$2.2 (median = \$1.6) and \$8 (median = \$6.7) per visit respectively, in addition to current park entrance fees, to support reef quality improvements. By aggregating visitors' willingness to pay bids over the number of visitors to MMNPR in 2006–2007 the value of benefits was estimated at \$346,733, which was more than twice the total annual operational expenditure of \$152,383 for MMNPR. The findings indicate that annual revenues from citizen and foreign visitors may be increased by 60% to \$261,932 through the implementation of

proposed higher park fees of \$3.10 for citizens and \$15 for foreign visitors. However, any fee increase would serve to intensify concerns among citizens that only relatively affluent Kenyans can afford to visit MMNPR. Park managers need to demonstrate that the extra revenue would be used to fund the proposed conservation activities. This valuation study demonstrates that visitors are prepared to pay higher user fees for access to the marine protected area revealing considerable untapped resource to finance reef quality improvements.

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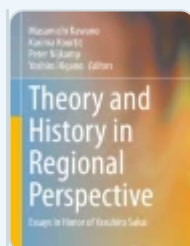
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