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The Socially Aware Baby Boomer: Gaining a Lifestyle-Based Understanding of the New Wave of Ecotourists

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Abstract

As the Baby Boomers approach retirement, tourism, in general, is expected to increase among members of this generation. This increase in travel is expected to be accompanied by a surge of interest in ecotourism—resulting in a new wave of ecotourists, over the next quarter century. This four-nation analysis of the post-war Baby Boom generation in Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the United States (the CANZUS countries) argues that Baby Boomers should be segmented by their lifestyle characteristics, in order to isolate the best prospects for ecotourism. Data are presented to show that the prime-prospect ecotourist among Baby Boomers is in the Socially Aware lifestyle group, in Australia, and its counterparts in the other CANZUS populations—Autonomous Rebels in Canada, Educated Liberals in New Zealand, and Actualisers in the United States. Additional data on the travel motives and value priorities of Socially Aware Baby Boomers give a fuller picture of this group. Members of

the Baby Boom generation are currently experiencing middle age; the psychological implications of this life stage for ecotourism activity are also given. Strategy pointers are offered for the ecotourism manager, given the growing importance of the Socially Aware Baby Boomer as an ecotourist.

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