

An Entrance Fee Determination for Ko Chang National Park, Thailand

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Abstract

This paper provides an entrance fee determination for Ko Chang National Park in Thailand. It used a contingent valuation method to estimate tourists' willingness to pay an increased entrance fee to improve the park facilities. The study found that tourists were willing to pay for the improved facilities. It suggests a number of levies and charges that could help remove tourist pressure from the park.

1. Issues and Significance of the Problem

Powerful economic forces are driving the current destructive patterns of coral reef use, often rendering short-term economic profits, which can be very large, to selected individuals. Measures for coral reef protection are often presumed to conflict with economic development and are said to sacrifice economic growth.

Rapid economic development in Ko Chang is causing a different set of threats to reefs. The quality of coral reefs in Ko Chang is declining sharply. Even remote reefs in unpopulated areas are not free from man-induced deterioration. Anthropogenic (man-made) threats range from destructive fishery practices to pollution and from dredging to tourism-related damages. Sedimentation from domestic waste is the prime threat. The turbidity kills the corals by blocking sun-light, essential for photosynthesis of the symbiotic algae associated with reef building coral polyps.

2. Economic Valuation of Coral Reef

An economic valuation of the benefits of coral reefs can provide information for the design of coastal area management plans. The analysis of economic values of coral reefs can be carried out based on the reefs' many functions (Bakus, 1982 and Tomascik, 1993 cited in Cesar, 1996) including:

- Food and other resources (fish, mariculture, jewellery, aquarium items, etc.)
- Construction material (sand, rocks)
- Pharmaceuticals and other industrial chemicals
- Tourism and recreation (diving)
- Education and scientific interest
- Biological support (breeding and feeding for offshore fish)
- Coastal protection (to prevent sand erosion)
- Genetic resources.

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