Ideas for Social Researches − Chapter 6 − Wildlife Management, Ecotourism, Zoology, and Agriculture

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1 − Underestimated touristic potential of coastal hiking

Developing hiking paths in coastal areas in different parts of the world may lead to significant increase of touristic flow. Such paths are more accessible than mountain hiking paths for families

with kids, for elder people, and disabled people; at the same time, they give the same or maybe even higher feeling of being "connected to nature" than mountain hiking paths.

2 − Introducing the concepts of "friluftsliv" and "allmansrätten" into other cultures

Nordic countries have concepts of "friluftsliv" and "allmansrätten" which are tightly connected to the protection of wildlife. (See details on these concepts in the following article, for example: http://www.bbc.com/capital/story/20171211-friluftsliv-the-nordic-concept-of-getting-outdoors.) It would be interesting to test an idea of introducing these concepts into other cultures with creating terms for the concepts in local languages (including languages of indigenous populations). Obviously, the concepts should be introduced through local cultural elites; the representatives of cultural elites should provide the concepts for the mass audiences as a local invention. The final result of the introduction of concepts should probably consist of strengthened attitude to wildlife protection in local populations.

3 − Survival of large wading birds and large birds of prey in the polluted cities of tropical Africa and Southern India

I had opportunities to observe large wading birds and large birds of prey on the roofs of buildings in the polluted centers of tropical African and South Indian cities. At the same time, I remember the sad story of North American large birds of prey that suffered from lead poisoning (from hunters' bullets) making their eggs shell too fragile for nesting. In context of this information, it would be interesting to determine what are the critical levels of pollution in the cities putting these wading birds and birds of prey out of any opportunity to survive. (You should understand that gasoline used by local cars and motorbikes is probably of the very low quality; and all vehicles on the streets are rather old; I suppose, it makes concentration of lead in the environment completely unacceptable.)

Dates: 2018, 2019. Locations: Kampala, Uganda; Thiruvananthapuram, India; Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

4 − Artificial constructions for nesting birds in tropical countries

In many Eastern European countries, there is an ancient tradition to place wheels on roofs of village houses to assist large birds in finding places for nesting. Also, there is a more recent tradition to build nesting boxes for smaller birds and place them in urban parks. It looks reasonable to introduce these environmentalist ideas in regular life of local population in tropical countries. It will give two effects probably: increasing population of local birds and making life attitudes in local population more friendly towards natural environment.

Dates: 2018, 2019. Locations: India, Uganda.

5 − Snakes consuming mushrooms in Rwenzori Mountains national park

In the trip across Rwenzori mountains, the local guide has informed me about interesting behavior of one snake that consumes mushrooms. I have never read earlier about such behavior in snakes; that's why this observation may have scientific value. Description of snake: green color, about 30cm in length. Description of mushrooms: white, small (up to 5-7cm), growing on the ground,

very abundant in the forest. Such observation may be made very rarely, not more often than once per year of regular trips to the park.

Dates: 2019. Locations: Rwenzori Mountains national park, Uganda.

6 − Flexible pricing strategies for visiting African national parks

It is well known that visiting African national parks may be rather costly. At the same time, I have been informed by local guides that hot seasons take just several months per year; some parks may be almost empty in other months of the year. Also, I have met a couple of Israeli females travelling around the world after army service who could not afford visiting some parks due to very high prices. All this gives an idea that more flexible pricing strategies towards different social groups of tourists coming in different parts of the year may increase income from tourism significantly. Discounts for youth, discounts for tourists coming from countries of the 2nd and 3rd worlds, and discounts for low seasons would be very beneficial.

Dates: 2019. Locations: Uganda.

7 − Reintroduction of wild animals to national parks in Africa

This idea may be naive, but after visiting Queen Elizabeth and Rwenzori Mountains national parks in Uganda, I came to the thought that reintroduction of wild animals in some parts of Africa may be not given enough attention. For a non-professional biologist, visiting some parks may be very disappointing due to low number of visible animals.

Dates: 2019. Locations: Uganda.

8 − Mosses and lichens growing on surface of tree fungi in Rwenzori Mountains national park

Some white fungi growing in the form of semi-circles on tree bark are covered by mosses and lichens with a beautiful gradient of colors, from fungi external border to basement on tree bark. It is supposed, these gradients are caused probably by the same species of mosses and lichens growing under different feeding conditions. But if I'm not correct, and the gradients are created by different species growing in every part of fungi surface, then it would very interesting to understand the reasons of such deep specialization.

Dates: 2019. Locations: Rwenzori Mountains national park, Uganda.

9 − Non-sustainable consumption of tree bark for medical use by local population in Rwenzori Mountains national park

In the trip across Rwenzori mountains, it has been noticed that some large trees have burned patches on the bark. The local guide informed me that they are created by local population who is allowed to collect bark for medical use through burning limited amount of patches on live trees. Even without questioning the real effect from consumption of burned bark, it would be interesting to understand, why these people cannot collect bark without burning it on live tree, and instead of this burn it at home? It is supposed that similar problems may exist in other tropical forests of the

planet. (Exactly outside of the park, it is possible to see trees where all bark was removed by burning of the lowest 2-3 meters of the trunk.)

Dates: 2019. Locations: Rwenzori Mountains national park, Uganda.

10 − Reasons pushing hippopotamuses to make long-distance trips far from large bodies of water

It has been observed that some solitary hippopotamuses (probably, only males) make long-distance trips to savanna far from large bodies of water (up to several kilometers). And moreover, some of them stay there and graze for the whole day. What are the reasons of such behavior? The most probable guess is that males walking for further distance had evolutionary preference in distributing their genes geographically, but other reasons pushing them to move may be also present (for example, consuming some sorts of vegetation required for healthy diet). It would be interesting to map the routes of their trips through attached GPS transmitters, if such research has not been performed yet. (I guess, attaching GPS to hippopotamuses may be rather complex or impossible; and if it is really true, then marking them by paint and further tracking marked animals from drones would be a working solution.)

Dates: 2019. Locations: North-Eastern part of Queen Elizabeth national park, Uganda.

11 − Reasons for peaceful behavior in buffaloes and hippopotamuses

It has been observed that in the middle of the day the buffaloes and hippopotamuses can peacefully share the same puddle located in dry savanna far from large bodies of water. The puddle had size just several meters length, and less than one meter depth; the animals rested there very close to each other (in the distance less than one meter from each other). Both these species have reputation of very aggressive animals, and considering that I have never read about such peaceful behavior in relations between these species, it may be rather rare. How it could be developed?

Dates: 2019. Locations: North-Eastern part of Queen Elizabeth national park, Uganda.

12 − Wild animals on the territories of lodges in national parks

When I left Mweya lodge in Queen Elizabeth national park at night (30-45 minutes before sunrise) a herd of 5-10 female waterbucks has been observed resting in the open space near trees between rows of lodges. Did they really just rest, or they were hiding there from predators? (Voices of several hyenas were heard in the radius of 1-2 kilometers.) If they really were hiding, then what are the reasons preventing predators to enter the territory of lodge? (Elephants and hippopotamuses do it rather freely and rather frequently.) Also, if they were really hiding, how and when did they determine that the territory of lodge is safe enough? Is this behavior specific for female waterbucks only, or males visit the territory of the lodge at night too?

Dates: 2019. Locations: Western part of Queen Elizabeth national park, Uganda.

13 − Online service to collect wildlife observations from rangers working in protected areas

In conjunction with some ideas listed earlier, it would be very useful to create online service for gathering wildlife observations from rangers working in protected areas (especially, areas located in remote parts of developing countries). It is supposed that these people may collect a lot of useful knowledge due to the nature of their work, but currently, this knowledge may be hardly available to scientific community. It is important to make all collected information (including exact descriptions and coordinates of locations) accessible for scientific community only, because it is also may be useful for poachers and inexperienced wildlife amateurs whose activities may destroy the protected areas.

Dates: 2019. Locations: Uganda.

14 − Increasing touristic flow to developing tropical countries through tax incentives (or other economic benefits) for owners of airlines or for countries where airlines' headquarters are hosted

Cost of airplane tickets for travelling from temperate regions of the planet to tropical ones and for travelling between different tropical countries is one of the largest barriers for touristic flow that may boost economies of these countries. It is supposed that if developing tropical countries will provide tax incentives (or other economic benefits) for owners of airlines or for countries where airlines' headquarters are hosted, then touristic flow to these countries may increase significantly. As a side effect of these economic measures, more attention will be given to protecting natural environment in these countries, because it is one of the main attraction for tourists. Basing on my personal travel experience, Russian citizenship, and my earnings, I would say that reasonable price would be around 300 USD per return ticket for travelling from temperate regions of the planet to tropical ones (around 600 USD for trans-Atlantic flight to tropical South America with return back to Russia), and around 100 USD for travelling between tropical countries located on the same continent. (All costs are given for economy class adult ticket including standard amount of baggage, about 20 kg.)

15 − Risks of fire caused by gatherers of wild honey in protected areas

In my trek through Mantadia protected area in Central Madagascar, the guide showed for me burned part of primary forest (several hundreds square meters) where fire was caused by inaccurate activities of gatherers of wild honey. It would be reasonable to perform global research of this practice to understand whether it is just a random accident or regular issue.

Dates: 2019. Locations: Mantadia protected area, Madagascar.

16 − Underestimated potential of mountain hiking, rock climbing, and family ecotourism in Madagascar

In my travel through Madagascar, almost all observed foreign tourists belonged to the age group of 35-65 years old. And almost all of them came there just for watching wildlife and spending time in sea resorts. However, Madagascar has great mountain treks (I tried the only one, in Mantadia protected area, and I was there single hiker, in spite of proximity of area to one of the main roads),

multiple rocks that offer difficult climbing routes (I have seen some just from the main road connecting Antananarivo and Tamatave), and no dangerous animals (except crocodiles and boas in low-land areas), which makes mountain areas ideal even for family ecotourism. However, it looks that currently Madagascar has reputation as a destination for adventure tourism, wildlife watching tourism, and sex tourism only. The cost of air travel may look high; but you should note that currently the majority of foreign tourists in Madagascar are citizens of US, UK, France, and Germany; so, for them travel expenses should not be a significant issue. In other words, there is a large space for work in advertising touristic opportunities of Madagascar.

Dates: 2019. Locations: Madagascar.

17 − Insufficient coverage of land mines problem of Moroccan Southern Provinces in mass informational guides for tourists

I have travelled to Morocco two times, and in both cases there were plans to hike at ocean coast around Dakhla town in Moroccan Southern Provinces. Fortunately, something always prevented me to do it (in the first trip, I even purchased the bus ticket but then canceled it); and, as it has been discovered recently, it is possible to get into uncleared unmarked land mine field even in this area of Morocco, see "Stay Safe" section at https://en.wikivoyage.org/wiki/Western_Sahara. The topic of uncleared land mine fields in different natural areas of the world has been explored by me in 2012th year, when I performed global review of touristic destinations. But due to some reason, detailed information about uncleared unmarked land mine fields in Dakhla region has not been found by me at those times. It is supposed that more detailed information on this topic should be provided to tourists travelling to Morocco; coordination with Moroccan government is desired for placing new landmarks everywhere in this region, because in the next 5-10 years amount of travellers coming to Africa may only increase, as I guess.

Dates: 2010's. Locations: Morocco.

18 − Insufficient coverage of climate change effect on history of developing countries in popular science news

Upon regular reading of popular science news it has been noticed that almost all research news covering effect of climate changes on history of civilizations turn around Western Europe history and history of pre-Columbian Americas. If it is really true, then extension of geography of research is needed because it will improve public awareness on climate change issues.

Dates: 2010's.

19 − Reintroduction of herbivores to protected or unused natural areas of temperate and subtropical countries

In my hiking, car, and bus trips over multiple countries (mainly, in temperate and subtropical areas of the world) I had a chance to see hundreds of square kilometers of territories covered with rather rich vegetation, but not having any herbivore animal (even in national parks), although it is supposed that every such landscape may support herds of hundreds of animals per each several kilometers visible from trek/road. Obviously, I'm not a professional biologist and I don't know

exact details of productivity of each visited ecosystem; also, I could miss animals hiding in bushes just in several meters from me. But if my observation of underutilized natural resources is correct, then it may be very beneficial to develop reintroduction programs in much more areas of the world than it is done now. You should understand that both farm for raising reintroduced young animals and wild animals roaming in pastures may attract a lot of tourists.

Dates: 2010 − 2019.

20 − Particularities of yak breeding in Pamir highlands

In informal communication, it was found that Kyrghyz breeders of yaks living in Pamir highlands of Tajikistan do not like to sell their cattle and prefer to collect as much cattle as possible (up to 2000-3000 animals). Why? As you can guess, it may lead to very high pressure to Pamir ecosystems and pandemics affecting domestic and wild animals.

Dates: 2019. Locations: Murghob, Tajikistan.

21 − Perspectives of cultivation of common hazel (Corylus avellana) in Uganda

Hazelnuts are a rich source of almost all nutrients, but currently they are considered as exotic food in Uganda (in contrast to cashew nuts introduced by South Asians much time ago); hazelnuts are hard to find in shops, and they are too expensive for the most part of population. The climate of significant part of Uganda looks suitable for cultivation of common hazel. And significant part of the country is used already for agriculture of alien species of fruits and vegetables. That's why problems in introducing common hazel into local agricultural practices look like more organizational than natural; however, the ecological consequences of introduction should be obviously considered too.

Dates: 2019. Locations: Uganda.