



# Asia-Pacific Regional Ecotourism Council

VOLUME 9

"...marching forward in strengthening of ecotourism fraternity of Asia-Pacific Region..."

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## Sustainable Tourism – Eliminating Poverty (ST-EP)

Poverty alleviation has become an essential condition for peace, environmental conservation and sustainable development, besides being an ethical obligation in an affluent world, where the divide between poor and rich nations seems to have increased in recent years. According to the UNDP reports 2.5 billion people live on less than US\$ 2 a day. Despite a growing world economy many people in developing countries are not reaping the potential benefits of globalization. The potential for tourism to play a significant role in the alleviation of poverty is increasingly recognized by international bodies and national governments. Its geographical expansion and labour intensive nature support a spread of employment and can be particularly relevant in remote and rural areas where many of the poor live.

## Nobel Prize winners - 2019; Eradication of Poverty



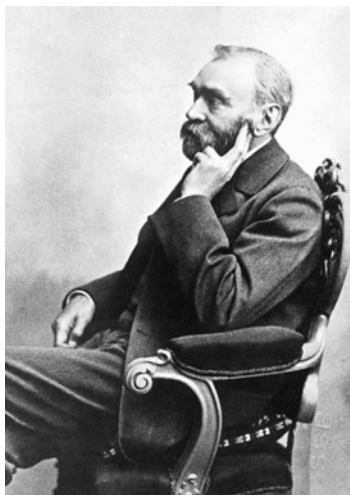
### Ecotourism has immense potential to help the global fight against poverty



We, as Ecotourism activists are so pleased to note that the two researchers from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and a third from Harvard University won the 2019 Nobel Prize in economics for groundbreaking research into what works and what doesn't in the fight to reduce global poverty. The award went to MIT's Abhijit Banerjee and Esther Duflo, and Harvard's Michael Kremer. The 46-year-old Duflo is the youngest person ever to win the prize and only the second woman, after Elinor Ostrom in 2009.

Tourism is one of the strongest drivers of world trade and prosperity. Poverty alleviation is one of the greatest global challenges. Tourism should mainly accessible to the poor, because, tourism is a relatively labour intensive sector and is traditionally made up of small and micro enterprises. Many activities in tourism are particularly suited to women, young people and disadvantaged groups such as ethnic minority populations. Many tourism jobs are potentially quite accessible to the poor as they require relatively few skills and little investment. Some may also be part time and used to supplement income from other activities.

### Alfred Nobel



The 2019 Nobel prizes have been awarded, and this year's recipients in the four academic fields recognized by the award - Physics, Economic Sciences, Chemistry, and Physiology/Medicine - once again reflect the prominence of U.S. universities.

In his 1895 will, Alfred Nobel, the Swiss polymath and inventor of dynamite, bequeathed the majority of his estate to create five prizes (the four cited above plus one in literature), recognizing "those, who during the preceding year, have conferred the greatest benefit to humankind." The first awards were conferred in 1901. A sixth award, not

technically a Nobel, was established in 1968; it's officially designated as the Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel.

Between 1901 and 2019, 596 awards have been awarded to more than 900 individuals. The awards are international, so there has been interest in the academic affiliations of the Nobelists because those associations shed light on which academic institutions have helped cultivate these groundbreaking discoveries.

## Editor's Note

### Nobel Price Laureates 2019 and Tourism in Bhutan

In APREC News Letter, October, 2019, we have highlighted two very important news items.

Firstly, about the Nobel Price Laureates in 2019 of three scientists in economics, doing for groundbreaking and extensive researches in to what works and what doesn't in the fight to reduce global poverty. Hats off to them! Ecotourism is one of the major tools in eradication of poverty amongst the world's poor, especially in the developing third world and mid-developed countries. We, as Ecotourism activists are so pleased on their achievements, because, Tourism is one of the strongest drivers of world trade and prosperity. Poverty alleviation is one of the greatest global challenges. We earnestly hope, their efforts would not go in vain in eradication of global poverty in the years ahead.

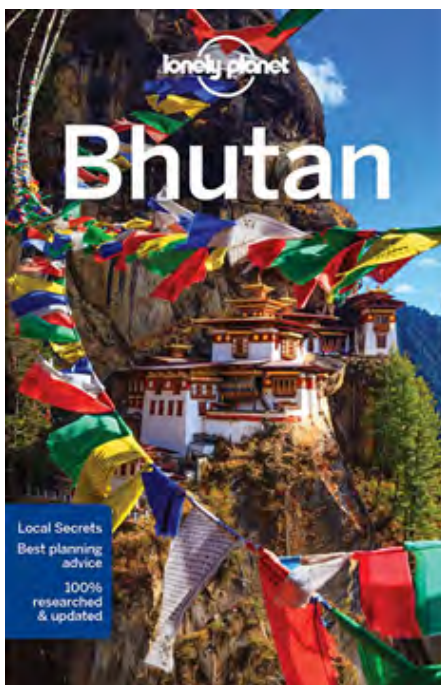
Secondly, our congratulations to Bhutan, a neighboring country of Sri Lanka, and a country located in the South Asian Region, which has been chosen by the 'Lonely Planet' as 'Number one Spot and the 'Best Travel Destination to visit in 2020'

During the British Period in 1880s Sri Lanka (Then Ceylon) had 80% of forest cover whereas currently Sri Lanka's forest cover is about 14% in total. Currently, Bhutan plans to become a fully organic nation. The Kingdom is already carbon neutral and plans to be the first fully-organic nation by 2020, in the South Asian Region. Bhutan is a small country of 38,394 SQ. KMS in extent and the population is around 8 (Eight) million. The topographical features of Bhutan permitted a great biodiversity with approximately 80% of forest cover ranging from subtropical forests to alpine zones. The Bhutanese people have always revered Mother Nature. Bhutan, as a country where river, tree, rocks, stones, lakes, ponds and the nature as a whole believed to be the abode of godly spirits. Bhutanese are always conserving the nature because, the forest cover of their land still well over 80% and Bhutan is the only country in the world that has declared to be carbon neutral for all times.

The Tourism Tagline in Bhutan is 'Happiness is a Place!' In 1972 Bhutan coined the term 'Gross National Happiness' (GNH) instead of Gross National Product (GNP). Bhutanese believe Gross National Happiness (GNH), which has been founded on Buddhist Principles, a unique development philosophy, which is trending among leaders, economists and academics all over the world. While many countries in the Asia-Pacific Region, including Sri Lanka, are going after 'Numbers' and 'Volume' in tourism development, Bhutan is focusing on 'Low Volume; High Value Tourism'; and not going after the numbers! This way, the country could avoid 'Over Tourism' and 'Over Visitation' and preserve its cultural heritage, environment, biodiversity and wildlife resources. Bhutan is keen in developing its tourism industry in a way that is socially, economically and environmentally sustainable.

It is very important to understand the Tourism Policy of Bhutan as Sri Lankans, could also learn a lot on how high end tourism could develop and generate higher income without damaging the environment and the culture. Bhutan is also a very good example to its neighboring countries in the Asia-Pacific Region. Bhutan is in a very fortunate position in terms of tourism. While tourism resources are being destroyed elsewhere, Bhutan's assets in the form of its natural environment and culture are well preserved

## Bhutan; 'Happiness is a Place'



Means simply assures that happiness can be found in simple things and these simple things can be found anywhere and in anything in Bhutan.

Bhutan has been chosen by the Lonely Planet as No.01 spot and the best Travel Destination to visit in 2020" due to its majestic beauty and plans to become a fully organic nation. The Kingdom is already carbon neutral but also plans to be the first fully-organic nation by 2020, is the treasure house of the Buddhist art. Bhutan is the magic of monasteries, the trek of lifetime. Bhutan is no ordinary place. It is the last great Himalayan kingdom, shrouded in mystery and magic, where a traditional Buddhist culture carefully embraces global developments.

**Bhutan; the country that I have seen! Palitha Gurusinghe, President, Sri Lanka Ecotourism Foundation**

It was a sunny morning when the Druk Air, the National Carrier of Bhutan commenced descending at the Paro International Airport, Thimpu, Bhutan. I was flying from Kathmandu, Nepal, to take part at the Ecotourism Workshop organized by the South Asia Women's Network (SWAN) in Thimpu, Bhutan. The airport is located 6 km (3.7 Miles) from Paro in a deep valley on the bank of the river Paro Chhu at an elevation of 2,200 m (7,200 ft), with surrounding peaks as high as 5,500 Met. (18,000 ft) The Paro Airport is considered to be one of the world's most challenging airports. Boeing has said that Paro airport is one of the world's most difficult for takeoffs and landings. The plane has to negotiate steep mountain tops and it is no wonder that only very skilled eight pilots in the world are certified to land at this airport. The flights are only allowed during the daytime and under visual meteorological conditions, strict light allowances in which the pilot must make his judgments by eye rather than rely on instruments as is the case in nighttime flights. I was lucky to have a window seat and despite the perilous conditions during the steep descent, I enjoyed the magnificent, breathtaking panoramic views over the clear blue waters of Paro River and the lush green mountains of the Himalayas. While landing and takeoff, I could see how I was amazingly close the surrounding mountain tops of Himalayas. Once landed, I was able to breath fresh air from Himalayas!



### Kingdom of Bhutan; an overview

Kingdom of Bhutan is a landlocked country in South Asia located at the eastern slopes of the Himalayas. It is bordered to the north by China and to the south, east and west by India.



### Tourism Department of Bhutan branded the country as 'Happiness is a Place!'

The forth king of Bhutan, Jigme Singye Wangchuck in 1972 coined the term Gross National Happiness (GNH) instead of Gross National Product (GNP) Bhutanese believes Gross National Happiness (GNH), which has been founded on Buddhist Principles, a unique development philosophy, which is trending among leaders, economists and academics all over the world.

### Tourism/Ecotourism in Bhutan;

It is very important to understand the Tourism Policy of Bhutan as we, Sri Lankans, could learn a lot on how the high end tourism could generate higher income without damaging the environment and the culture

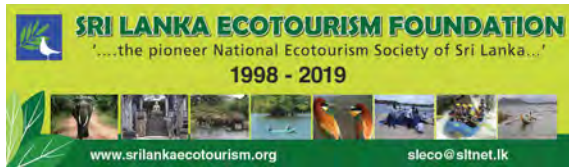
### Essence of Bhutan Tourism; 'Low Volume; High Value'; not going after the numbers!

Bhutan is keen to develop its tourism industry in a way that is socially, economically and environmentally sustainable. All tourists arriving Bhutan should pay all inclusive rate of US\$250/= a daily minimum package to cover hotel accommodation, all meals, transports, guide fees etc. (except air fare)

Bhutan is in a very fortunate position in terms of tourism. While tourism resources are being destroyed elsewhere, Bhutan's assets in the form of its natural environment and culture are well preserved. The international community has lauded the country's policy of giving the highest priority to environmental and cultural preservation. This has further increased the profile of Bhutan as a prime tourist destination. The tourism industry has created a wide range of opportunities for Bhutanese who have begun to grasp economic opportunities offered by the industry. Tourism has also been a self-financing mechanism for promoting the country's environment and facilitating an awareness and understanding of the uniqueness of this country. The sustainable development of tourism will require partnership and cooperation within the tourism industry, and between the industry, government, tourists and people. The royal government has always been aware that an unrestricted flow of tourists can have negative impacts on Bhutan's pristine environment and its rich and unique culture. The government, therefore, adopted a policy of 'high value-low volume' tourism, controlling the type and quantity of tourism right from the start.

*continued to page 3*

## Sri Lanka Ecotourism Foundation (SLEF) 21st Anniversary Celebration in October, 2019!



### Felicitations Message from TIES to Sri Lanka Ecotourism Foundation on its 21st Anniversary



The International Ecotourism Society (TIES) wishes to recognize and congratulate the Sri Lanka Ecotourism Foundation (SLEF) and founder Dr. Palitha Gurusinge for twenty years of service to ecotourism, sustainable tourism, sustainable development, and global communities. Founded in 1998, and a member of TIES since 1998, SLEF has been a key driver of excellence in ecotourism both through work in Sri Lanka and sharing knowledge and best practices internationally.

As a pioneer of Community Based Ecotourism, SLEF has led the way to a global model of sustainable tourism that uplifts communities and people, while conserving precious natural resources and culture. SLEF continues to lead ecotourism efforts in Sri Lanka and in the Asia-Pacific Region.

Dr. Palitha Gurusinge has been a tireless advocate for ecotourism, shaping the global narrative with expert real-world knowledge and peerless academic achievement. His written and spoken presentations continue to set the standard, and he is a frequent guest at international conferences on sustainable tourism. His contribution to TIES cannot be overstated, both as a Coordinator of the Asia-Pacific Region representing TIES and a key member of TIES Advisory Council.

It is therefore our honor to recognize his work, and that of Sri Lanka Ecotourism Foundation, on this 21st anniversary of its founding.

**Jon Bruno, Executive Director**

25th October, 2019

The International Ecotourism Society  
e-info@ecotourism.org



*Jon Bruno, and Palitha Gurusinge at the Ecotourism and Sustainable Tourism Conference (ESTC) in Ansan, Korea*

*continued from page 2*

### Essence of Bhutan Tourism; 'Low Volume; High Value'; not going after the numbers!

When promoting tourism in Bhutan the Royal Government is ensuring conservation of culture, tradition, environment and protection against ravages of pollution and exposure from tourism activities; and developing new opportunities for generating growth and foreign exchange through protective tourism, and to undertake research and development in such areas. So far the royal government's overall objective of maximizing foreign exchange earnings while minimizing adverse cultural and environmental impacts of tourism seems to have paid off.

A few countries including Bhutan have demonstrated that tourism is not a social evil. Bhutan is perhaps the best example where controlled tourism has been effective in ensuring the sustainability of the industry in the long run.

With careful planning and management of the industry and the appropriate inputs, the tourism industry in Bhutan could well surpass its economic expectations without eroding the culture, environment and the biodiversity of the country.

The royal government has realized that it is now time to think strategically about the need for and the impact of future development of tourism in Bhutan. There is a need to monitor and review the impacts of current policies and to develop further guidelines to ensure that the industry grows in a sustainable manner.

Numerous policy documents of the royal government such as 'The Middle Path - Bhutan's National Environmental Strategy' have recognized the need to promote Ecotourism as a way to achieve sustainable tourism development in the country. There is an immense scope for ecotourism in Bhutan as it offers significant support and contribution for development of the country while enhancing and preserving of the cultural integrity of local people. The country's rich biological resources that includes over 165 species of animals and more than 770 species of birds offer vast potential to develop ecotourism.

Also within Bhutan's borders there are over 60% of the endemic species presented in the eastern Himalayan region. Bhutan's rich floral wealth also includes more than 50 species of rhododendrons and over 300 species of medicinal plants that are used in traditional indigenous medical practices. Bhutan has been positioned as a prime destination for ecotourism in South Asia thanks to the rich natural resources presented coupled with conservation policy of the royal government. Ecotourism is considered the fastest growing market in the tourism industry in Bhutan today because of her enviable resources.

### The Role of the Government

The role of the government is important to ensure that the low-impact scale of ecotourism is not exceeded and that proper planning is undertaken before ecotourism initiatives are implemented. Strong government controls are also necessary to ensure that tourism practices by the private sector are environmentally and culturally sustainable. In most countries, ecotourism has either failed or not lived up to its expectations as it has been promoted without an overall strategy, effective protected areas management plans, and without consultation or inclusion of local communities. In this sense, the royal government has adopted a National Ecotourism Strategy to improve the environmental and cultural success of ecotourism in Bhutan.

(Source of information; SUSTAINABILITY OF TOURISM IN BHUTAN; Tandi Dorji, Tourism expert in Bhutan)



*Palitha Gurusinge at the Paro International Airport, Bhutan*



*Palitha Gurusinge, President, Sri Lanka Ecotourism Foundation with Minister for Agriculture and Forests, Bhutan*

## NEWS ROUNDUP

TIES Represents the voices of stakeholders from all corners of the world, TIES' global network supports and is supported by members from over 190 countries, who are leading the vital efforts to make travel and tourism more sustainable.

Founded in 1990, The International Ecotourism Society has been on the forefront of the development of Ecotourism, providing guidelines and standards, training, technical assistance, and educational resources.

### Conservation

Offering market-linked long-term solutions, ecotourism provides effective economic incentives for conserving and enhancing bio-cultural diversity and helps protect the natural and cultural heritage of our beautiful planet. Communities

By increasing local capacity building and employment opportunities, ecotourism is an effective vehicle for empowering local communities around the world to fight against poverty and to achieve sustainable development.

### Interpretation

With an emphasis on enriching personal experiences and environmental awareness through interpretation, ecotourism promotes greater understanding and appreciation for nature, local society, and culture.

Since 1998, Sri Lanka Ecotourism Foundation is working as a Member of TIES Advisory Council. The Asia-Pacific Regional Council (APREC) is supporting the TIES as the Coordinator of the Asia-Pacific Region.

The SLEF and the APREC cordially invite our Members to join TIES as Professional Members.

## Ecotourism Professionals, Industry Experts, Professionals Working in Related Fields

### Benefits

Professional members receive benefits tailored to those working in ecotourism, and interested in sharing their expertise and improving their skills.

Professional Member Profile features include:

- Custom URL: Profile page link with individualized URL.
- Link Back: URL link directly to your website.
- Profile Picture: Your member profile features your profile picture.
- Biography & Expertise: Highlight your educational background, accomplishments, and expertise through your profile page.
- Reach potential clients by posting your interest area.
- Social Media Links: You can link to all your social media profiles on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram.

More info; <https://ecotourism.org/>

## Ecotourism Conference in Armenia

**Key Stakeholders gather to discuss the 'Future of Ecotourism in Armenia' connected with Protected Areas**



*Presenters, experts, and staff from the 2019 Ecotourism Conference in Armenia*

The fourth annual AUA Ecotourism Conference was held on August 30-31, 2019 in Armenia. The event was organized by the AUA (Acopian Center for the Environment) in partnership with the Tourism Committee of the Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Armenia (RA), RA Ministry of Environment, WWF Armenia and Trans boundary Joint Secretariat funded by the KfW German state-owned development bank and The International Ecotourism Society (TIES).

Experts from The International Ecotourism Society, EUROPARC Federation, and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) were among the key speakers. The invited participants included tour operators, policy makers, and protected area managers and experts.

This year's Conference focused on the role of protected areas in ecotourism and sustainable tourism development, which ensure protecting the environment and enabling nearby communities to benefit from growth in tourism.

### Protected Areas and the National/Regional Economy

Dr. Thiago Souza, from the IUCN Commission on Protected Areas' Tourism Specialists Group, talked about the global experience with investing in protected areas and the returns to the national and regional economies. "Politically, the value of investing in protected areas is often lost because we typically don't make an adequate economic analysis," points out Dr. Souza.

He explains that in most places officials simply make an accounting or financial analysis. That is, they look at the budget of the protected area and the revenues generated from the entrance fees. "For most protected areas, the fees would be substantially smaller than the budgets of the protected areas," he says. "In Brazil, for instance, budgets can be 9 times greater than fees collected."

But when an economic analysis is conducted, which considers more broadly the visitor spending and the tax and multiplier effects of this spending, a very different picture appears. "In Brazil, we've been able to show that for every dollar budgeted amount spent on protected areas, the national economy gains 15 dollars. The returns on investment are staggering," says Dr. Souza. Europe shows smaller but still impressive numbers. Once adequate investments are made in the protected areas and the needed infrastructure, every euro spent on protected areas see 7 to 10 euros in GDP activity.

A 2015 study shows that there are an estimated 8 billion visits per year to protected areas worldwide. This generates about US \$600 billion per year in direct in-country expenditures. (Balmford et al, 2015).

### Growing Market of Ecotourism and Visiting Protected Areas

Jon Bruno, the executive director of The International Ecotourism Society, offered a global perspective on the growth of the ecotourism sector. "Over 90 nations now have an ecotourism or sustainable tourism initiative nationally or at a regional level. This has happened in the last 30 years; there is no other form of tourism or industry that has become so fundamental to the global economy so quickly.

Mr. Bruno believes that this is a growing trend. And the travelers are developing greater sensitivity toward sustainable tourism. He says, "Travelers have greatly increased both their awareness of ecotourism and their willingness to increase payment to ensure a sustainable travel experience. Seventy percent of people under 30 say sustainable travel is a priority."

This is a market for which countries like Armenia have to be prepared as part of their efforts aimed at sustainable development. "Ecotourism and sustainable tourism can help local communities economically and create engagement for protecting their natural assets. Ecotourism provides the strongest community revenue and the best return on investment," emphasizes Mr. Bruno.



As a Member of the Advisory Council of The International Ecotourism Society (TIES) and its Coordinator for the Asia-Pacific Region, Sri Lanka Ecotourism Foundation and the Asia-Pacific Regional Ecotourism Council (APREC) strongly supporting TIES for its activities at global and Regional level. We kindly request our affiliated Ecotourism Organizations and the Members of the Asian Region to join TIES and to enroll its Certification Programme in Sustainable Tourism Management.



Almost 10 years ago we began our outreach on social media in earnest. Between all our properties, we now have over 120,000 followers with hundreds of thousands of engagements every month. We reach travelers, professionals, and organizations in more countries than any other ecotourism entity. We never advertise or pay for a single follower; every bit of interest in our work is organic. All our followers are self-selected ecotourism interested travelers and professionals.

Join TIES and celebrate your work on its social media.



#### TIES CERTIFICATION

The International Ecotourism Society offers several courses as part of our acclaimed core curriculum. We are offering these remarkable courses in addition to our standalone short classes, and as the 4-course series needed to obtain the TIES-1 certification.

1. Introduction to Ecotourism
2. Marketing Ecotourism & Sustainable Tourism Part I
3. Ecotourism & Sustainable Tourism Management
4. Ecotourism & Sustainable Tourism Assessment & Development

Each of these premium courses are also available as independent classes, which are also offered at discount rates, individually. The first course, Introduction to Ecotourism is prepared by The International Ecotourism Society (TIES). There are additional electives available.

Introduction to Ecotourism in particular is very popular and has received rave reviews. This course has been written to convey the fundamentals of modern ecotourism as it is being practiced now. Ecotourism is, by many estimates, an 800 billion to 1 trillion USD segment of the travel and tourism industry, and is regarded as one of the fastest growing, if not the fastest growing, segment of that industry.

For a full description of the courses and the program, visit TIES site at <https://ecotourism.org/certificate-in-sustainable-tourism-management/>

## THE HUMAN ELEPHANT CONFLICT IN ASIA

*"Driven from their home ranges, confined to small patches of forests near villages, wild elephants are left with no choice but to fight for their home ranges and food"*



At present, there is a serious problem in Asia as far as Human-Elephant Conflict is concerned, because hardly having any cohabitation amongst humans and elephants. In Sri Lanka also, Elephants and humans are not getting along well.

Elephant's Habitat is shrinking daily and humans are encroaching on the territory of elephants. At the same time, many poor farmers haven't changed their daily lives for hundreds of years but their crops and villages are being threatened. As urbanization takes, the elephants have nowhere else to go and end up in villages searching for food. In the villages of Asia the elephants are considered as very big and dangerous pests! They raid crops and devastate entire year's harvest. Like any wild animal that is losing its habitat, elephants are becoming more aggressive and people are losing their lives. Villagers are killing elephants, being shot, poisoned and electrocuted and planting hakka patas (Kind of explosives)

Human elephant conflict is a contemporary development in many Asian Countries now as a consequence of the reduction of forest cover due to cultivation, development and resettlement.

It is said, many wild elephants that roam in the the forests today carry large numbers of bullets within their bodies. Railway tracks are another man made system which lies across elephant corridors, especially, in the Northern and Eastern areas of Sri Lanka. There were tragic incidents in the past, where elephants were killed by moving trains. According to the sources of Department of Wildlife in Sri Lanka, 293 wild elephants have killed during past 09 months of the year 2019 due to human-elephant conflict and due to reasons mentioned above. During the same period 93 people have killed by the elephants. As per the last census of the elephants taken in 2011, the elephant population in Sri Lanka was 5876. From 2011 to 2019, 2535 elephants have been killed and the current population of the elephant now approximately 4500.

What are the main reasons for Human-Elephant Conflict?

1. Humans encroach elephants oasis.
2. In the name of tourism, politicians, their henchmen and big businessmen build hotels blocking the elephant's paths and corridors and some hotels even create artificial salt-licks to lure elephants close to their hotels for 'easy viewing of the guests'.
3. Create farms and housing projects blocking the elephant's paths and corridors.
4. Erecting of poor quality, sub-standard electric fences as a result of enormous corruptions by the politicians and the officials.
5. In Sri Lanka, 37,500 acres of jungles belongs to buffer zones of the wild life parks close to Welikanda village and the Maduruoya National Park had been earmarked by the government to grow manioc. Welikanda is one of the most seriously affected areas due to human elephant conflicts.

**Sri Lankans are happy to note that all three main Presidential Candidates, Mr. Sajith Premadasa, Mr. Gotabaya Rajapaksa and Mr. Anura Kumara Disسانayake pledged in their Election Manifestos to find out a long-lasting solution to the Human-Elephant Conflict in Sri Lanka.**



Photo; Curtsey- Sunday Times, Sri Lanka, 27th October, 2019

## Bird Watching and Wildlife in Sri Lanka

In the APREC newsletter, the Wildlife and Birds Page is compiled by Sam Casseer, a member of APREC and SLEF and one of the most knowledgeable and practicing Bird Watching Guide Lecturers in Sri Lanka.

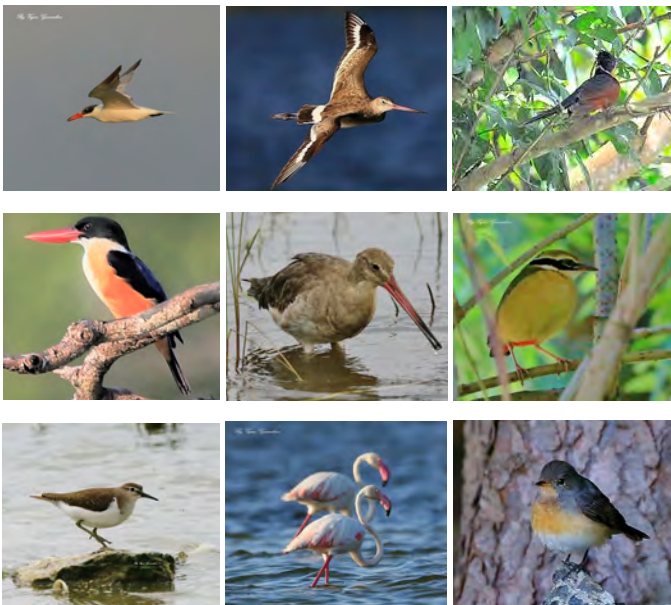
He writes about the Migrating Birds to Sri Lanka and the Human-Elephant Conflict in the Asia Region

### Visitors to Sri Lanka without Visa!

As an Island, Sri Lanka is strategically positioned in the Indian Ocean and the close proximity to the Indian Subcontinent. It is interesting to note that the Migrant Birds get more attention because of their colorfulness, feathers and calling.

### Why they visit Sri Lanka?

Simple answer is to escape from bitter cold and harsh weather conditions in Europe and availability of plenty of food such as insects and plant life. Another important reason is these migrant birds are well treated and looked after by the people of Sri Lanka. The toleration, admiration, and acceptance of them as our friends by the Sri Lankan communities are exceptional when compare to some other countries in the Asian Region, where the birds are considered as source of 'food'. This is very unfortunate.



**Photos above:** Grater Flamingo, Chestnut Winged Cuckoo, Black Tailed-Gotwit, Black-Capped Kingfisher, Blue-tailed Beeater, Caspian Turn, Common Sandpiper, Great Flamingo, Indian Pitta, Barn Swallow.



Sam Casseer, One of the best Bird Watchers in Sri Lanka (in action). Telephone + 94 77 305 48 38 Email: sam.casseer@yahoo.com

## Story of Ecotourism Sri Lanka

The book "Story of Ecotourism Sri Lanka" is authored by Palitha Gurusinghe, founding President of Sri Lanka Ecotourism Foundation and the founding Chairman of Asia Pacific Regional Ecotourism Council (APREC)

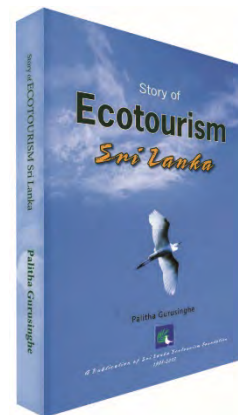
"Story of Ecotourism Sri Lanka" is written basically from the practical point of view, through the experience gained by the author over the years. Palitha thought it is good to record important land marks of Sri Lanka Ecotourism for the benefit of those who are interested, inquisitive and looking forward to widen their horizons in Ecotourism.

In Sri Lanka, many, even some academics, researchers and most of the tourism officials, government, local government, bank officials, and the tourism stakeholders do not clearly understand what Ecotourism is and often mix up the concept with adventure and nature tourism. Therefore, perhaps, to some extent, the information contained in the publication may help decision makers, academics and students who are pursuing their studies and researches in Ecotourism.

"Story of Ecotourism Sri Lanka" is a recollection of important land marks of Ecotourism development in Sri Lanka. For the author himself, it was something like 'Going down the Memory Lane' of his journey through twenty one years, and how he got involved in promoting Ecotourism in Sri Lanka. Therefore, by reading this book, you could get an idea on what Ecotourism is and to what extent the concepts of Ecotourism and activities are integrated and rooted into the tourism fabric in Sri Lanka.

In this book, the author has attempted to provide information on the enormous potential the Island possess to position Sri Lanka as an Ecotourism Destination on the world tourism map and also to identify the major issues and challenges that Ecotourism confronted in Sri Lanka. At the same time, he has clearly highlighted how Ecotourism in Sri Lanka could contribute to alleviating poverty in the tourism generating areas and support environmental and biodiversity conservation in Sri Lanka.

However, the author is of the view that Sri Lanka Ecotourism is still not developed up to the satisfactory standards in comparison to our neighboring countries in South Asia, South East Asia and the Pacific Region. To substantiate his views, he has sighted good examples and case studies from some countries like Sikkim, Tripura (India) and Bhutan etc.



The book is available for sale.

Please contact SLEF by email: sleco@sltnet.lk/mobile; + 9471 256 68 74

**Price LKR.1400/= (US \$8 per copy)**

### A New Sustainable Travel Startup ([www.fairjourney.com](http://www.fairjourney.com))

Fair Journey is an online travel platform dedicated to hosting genuine sustainable travel facilities, products, and services which are certified and monitored on a periodical basis to maintain standards, reduce leakage and accelerate economic, social and environmental development across tourism hotspots. We are currently seeking an investor(s) to help us jump-start the project. If you'd like to partner with us, please send us an e-mail to [apply@fairjourney.com](mailto:apply@fairjourney.com) along with your CV and a cover letter expressing your interest in our project.

**Editor's Note:** News appeared in the APREC News Letter is based on media reports, feature articles and internet publications, websites etc. If a reader wishes to know the source of the news the Editors could provide information on request.

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# Asia-Pacific Regional Ecotourism Council

"...marching forward in strengthening of ecotourism fraternity of Asia-Pacific Region..."

BY ASIA-PACIFIC REGIONAL ECOTOURISM COUNCIL (APREC) IN ASSOCIATION WITH SRI LANKA ECOTOURISM FOUNDATION (SLEF)

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Asia Pacific Region is a vast region, covering some 2.8 billion hectares of land area, or approximately 22 percent of the global land area with an approximate population that represents 60% of the world population and nearly 4.75 billion people and more than 55 countries.

Asia-Pacific Region is a treasure trove for the marine ecotourism sector with about 55,000 small and big islands located in and around the Pacific and Indian Oceans, creating hundreds of thousands of kilometers of beautiful coastal shores, beaches that attract travelers from all over the world. APREC is receiving many inquiries from the Ecotourism Organizations of Asia-Pacific Region requesting information about the organization and how to enroll as a Member of APREC.

## Profile of APREC

APREC is the oldest Regional Ecotourism Network founded by Sri Lanka Ecotourism Foundation (SLEF), and its core members during the first ever Regional Ecotourism Conference held in Colombo, Sri Lanka, in May 2009.

## Mission of APREC

*'... to give a "voice to the Ecotourism fraternity of the Asia-Pacific region" that can be heard in the wider global forum of discussions'*

## Core Objectives of APREC

- To promote and strengthen the Community Based Ecotourism (CBE) Projects in the Asia-Pacific region and to increase the competitiveness of CBE products and services worldwide, inter-and intra-regional tourism markets.
- To bring together Ecotourism industry segments in the Asia-Pacific region to discuss issues and challenges confronted by the ecotourism fraternity in the region and to explore in strengthening of their networks.
- To disseminate latest information on Sustainable and Ecotourism amongst the members of APREC and CBE organizations of Asia-Pacific region and to provide networking opportunities for stakeholders.
- Enabling the communities living in Asia-Pacific Region to fulfill their role as key custodians of natural resources and derive economic and social benefits from Ecotourism.
- To serve as an annual platform to bring together Ecotourism industry segments in the Asia-Pacific region to discuss issues and challenges and to strengthen marketing strategies.
- To showcase quality CBE products and services as best practice examples and to promote the Asia-Pacific region as an attractive Ecotourism destination on the world map.
- Promote cost-effective and donor supported National Sustainable Ecotourism Certification Programmes in the countries of Asia-Pacific Region which are adoptable to their socioeconomic and sociocultural background.
- To host training, research & awareness programmes, conferences, workshops, events in Ecotourism on regional basis and to offer financial assistance to APREC Members to take part at these events.

## APREC Steering Committee

We are in the process of expanding the **Steering Committee** of APREC. Those Ecotourism Associations based in the region could send their nominations to be appointed as Steering Committee Members.

## HOW TO BECOME A MEMBER OF APREC

APREC is a non-profit organization supported by Sri Lanka Ecotourism Foundation (SLEF) and its donor networks. **Membership of APREC is FREE** for Ecotourism Organizations active in the region. Membership of APREC is also open to any individual/professional/student that admires, and loves the genuine ecotourism principles such as supporting the community in need through tourism, alleviation of poverty in the society, environmental and biodiversity conservation, preservation of cultural heritage etc.

*For more info, please contact SLEF /APREC by an email*