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TOURISM ATTRACTIONS AND SATISFACTION OF AMBOSELI NATIONAL PARK, KENYA

MOSES MAKONJIO OKELLO,* DANIELLE E. D'AMOUR,* and STEPHANIE GRACE MANKA†

*School for Field Studies, Kenya
†University of Missouri at Columbia, USA

Tourism is a lucrative but fragile business. Most tourism in Kenya is wildlife based and wildlife conservation is greatly funded by the revenue generated from tourism. Therefore, it is essential to evaluate tourist satisfaction and expectations in order to ensure and maximize ecotourism as an economic asset to support wildlife and manage protected areas wisely. Currently, marketing for East Africa involves seeking specific species like the *big five*. This study investigated tourism satisfaction in two lodges in Amboseli National Park. Questionnaires were designed to determine levels of satisfaction, animals heavily sought after, opinions on cultural attractions, and Mt. Kilimanjaro. Sixty-six percent of tourists were highly satisfied in Amboseli and 99% would recommend the park to other tourists. Tourists were looking for a variety of wildlife rather than one specific species. Highly ranked animals included the black rhinoceros, African elephant, cheetah, African lion, and Maasai giraffe. Most people thought Mt. Kilimanjaro was an attraction for the park and about half expressed interest in the local Maasai culture. While large mammal species collectively brought satisfaction to tourists, the species were not necessarily members of the *big five*. Results indicated the *big five* were not important as a tourist attraction. Instead, tourists were interested in a variety of attractions including culture and landscapes.

Key words: Amboseli National Park; Big five; Kenya; Ecotourism; Marketing

Introduction

Traditionally, marketing for tourism in East Africa has centered on members of the *big five* (Okello, Wishitemi, & Mwinzi, 2001), a concept originated during the colonialist hunting days of Africa (Olindo, 1991). Historically, these five earned their ranking as a result of tourist interest in hunting these species to procure them as tro-phies. They were considered to be the most diffi-cult and dangerous to species to hunt and therefore produced the most coveted and desired trophies (Draper, 2005). Okello, Wishitemi, and Lagat (2005) showed that the *big five* were not necessarily the most associated with visitor numbers in Kenya. They have become powerful influences on tourist images of Kenya, yet they seem less important once the tourists reach Kenyan protected area des-

tinations. This may partly be explained by the *expectation disconformity theory*, which predicts that behavior and expectations of tourists may differ from site products and may be influenced by factors such as preformed images and expectations (Murphy, Pritchard, & Smith, 2000; Oliver, 1997). Tourist satisfaction may no longer lie solely in seeking the coveted *big five* as tourist interests are dynamic and are focusing more on photography and observing rather than hunting (Ceballos-Lascuráin, 1996).

Demand conditions affect tourism satisfaction level and future decisions. The three main elements of site tourism demand (awareness, perception, and preference) should be evaluated for each major tourist destination as a means to improve the tourism product and strategize current and future tourism management. Actual visitation will depend on the congruency between tourism preference and perceived quality of destination product (Dwyer, Mellor, Livaic, Edwards, & Kim, 2004).

The large wild mammals of East Africa are a prime attraction for international tourists. There is 44,000 km^2 (8%) of land in Kenya reserved as protected areas (Okello et al., 2001). Kenya capitalizes on its rich resource of wildlife by generating tourist revenue from most of its protected areas, where the wildlife resides. Wildlife-based tourism contributes about US$350 million to the Kenyan economy annually, amounting to approximately 12% of the country's GDP (Okello et al., 2001).

In a study by Dharmaratne, Sang, and Walling (2000), the greatest increase in ecotourism has been observed in countries with the greatest number of protected areas and the establishment and continued existence of protected areas depends largely on market forces. Therefore, it is important that tourists coming to Kenyan parks are satisfied enough to repeat visit and/or recommend Kenya to other potential tourists. Nature-based ecotourism has shown an unprecedented growth in recent times and is expected to grow well into the next century (Dharmaratne et al., 2000; Sindiga, 1995). However, tourism is fickle and affected by many factors. Political stability, good facilities, a stable world economy, and good recommendations from previous visitors all increase the number of tourists wanting to experience Kenya's wildlife (Nyeki, 1993; Okello et al., 2005). Thus, knowledge

about tourist preferences is essential for managers so they can recognize which species are economically valuable and should be used in marketing strategies so as to stay competitive in the tourism industry.

Tourism contributes to conservation by providing the financial means for wildlife conservation and research in addition to raising awareness about different cultures (Van der Duim & Caalder, 2002). Kenya has a great opportunity to simultaneously maximize tourist dollar earnings as well as protect wildlife. However, little research has been done on the constraints of tourism and the opinions, expectations, and levels of satisfaction of tourists in East African parks. This results in the trend that some parks are heavily visited while others are deprived of tourists and tourist revenue. Based on a study by Okello et al. (2001) and Okello et al. (2005), some popular tourist areas have exceeded their potential, while the potential of other areas still remains unrealized. Kenya has very few protected areas frequently visited by tourists so it is important to first know why certain protected areas are more frequently visited than others so that domestic competitiveness of other protected areas can be improved (Murphy et al., 2000). The heavy flow of tourism in only few areas causes amplified negative impacts of tourism and increased challenges for management (Okello et al., 2005).

One of the most visited national parks in Kenya is Amboseli National Park. Despite its small size, it is a significant contributor to the country's tourism industry, bringing in over 150 million Ksh (approximately US$2 million) in income each year (Okello et al., 2001). The park provides one of the highest revenues per unit area of protected land. Amboseli offers many attractions to tourists, including a high density of large wild mammals, ease of viewing wildlife, a backdrop of Mt. Kilimanjaro, and cultural Maasai presentations. In a survey by Okello et al. (2001) on tourism in 40 parks and protected areas, Amboseli achieved high scores for attractions based on cultural activities, bird species, and ranked highest for overall tourism potential.

The purpose of this study was to evaluate tourist expectations in Amboseli National Park and, particularly, to evaluate and document the role of

various attractions. Amboseli is one of the more heavily visited protected areas in Kenya and tourism behavior, activities, and preferences provide critical information on managing tourism impacts on biodiversity conservation. It also provides valuable information on how maintain the park's competitiveness as an international tourist destination. Results will be useful for other protected areas and can guide marketing strategies for similar parks. The specific objectives of the study were to:

1. Determine which attractions invoke tourist satisfaction and desire to be a repeat visitor to Amboseli National Park.
2. Determine which large mammal species are most sought after for viewing by tourists and which brings the most satisfaction to tourists in the park.
3. Determine which attractions, apart from the wildlife, are important for overall tourist satisfaction.
4. Determine the role of tour drivers in tourist experiences and attractions in game viewing.

Study Area

Among the protected areas in Kenya (Fig. 1), Amboseli National Park (Fig. 2) ranks as the fifth most visited park per area in Kenya (Okello et al., 2005). It covers an area of about 392 km^2 (Nyeki, 1993). With approximately 140,000 tourists visiting the park each year at US$30 nonresident entrance fee, Amboseli brings in over 150 million Ksh annually (Okello et al., 2001). The park is located in the Kajiado County district at longitude 37°15 E and latitude 2°37 S, 250 km from Nairobi (Thresher, 1981). It is situated within the Loitokitok Division of the Kajiado District, part of the greater Rift Valley Province of Kenya (Nyeki, 1993). Amboseli is located in Maasai arid to semiarid rangelands in which wildlife ranges freely between protected areas and Maasai group ranch dispersal areas.

Amboseli is one of three national parks that form the Tsavo-Amboseli Ecosystem. The area includes Chyulu Hills National Park, Tsavo West National Park, and six group ranches: Mbirikani, Kuku, Kimana, Rombo, Olgulului-Olarashi, and Eselenkei (Okello et al., 2005). The area receives an average annual rainfall of 240 mm, with 160 mm during the long rains season from March to May and 88 mm during the short rains from October to December. Local springs provide permanent water sources in swamps of Amboseli, thus becoming a dry season concentration of large numbers of wild large mammals. The swamps and grasslands of the Amboseli therefore support some 376 different bird species and 31 species of large mammals during the dry season (Nyeki, 1993).

Amboseli contains three lodges within the park boundaries and two in the surrounding group ranches; Amboseli Serena Lodge, Amboseli Ol Tukai Lodge, and Amboseli Lodge are located within the park, while Amboseli Sopa Lodge and Tortilis Camp Lodge are found immediately outside the park. Ol Tukai Lodge is a three-star hotel owned by Harbhon Sinsh and Associates and is located at longitude 37°28 E and latitude 2°67 S, and with elevation of 3,784 feet above sea level within the park. The lodge accommodates the many tourists visiting the park, and in addition provides game viewing opportunities if a tourist is traveling alone, as well as exposure to cultural Maasai lectures and visits to local Maasai cultural homesteads (*bomas*).

Amboseli Serena Lodge is a five-star hotel and is part of the international Serena chain of hotels owned by Agakhan. It is located at longitude 37°10 E and latitude 2°40 S, and with elevation of 3,675 feet above sea level. The lodge accommodates tourists, arranges for game drives if not traveling with a tour company, as well as exposes them to cultural aspects of the Maasai.

Method

Data were collected between July and August 2005 from 0900 to 1200 hours and 1430 to 1530 hours. Information was collected via interviews and discussions with tourists at Ol Tukai Lodge and Amboseli Serena Lodge. Interviews and discussions were guided by a structured questionnaire (mixed closed and open ended) regarding tourist expectations and satisfaction level at Amboseli National Park. Some of the key areas of discussion were: other protected area destinations in Kenya visited on current visit and how they compare in terms of viewing experience with Amboseli, views
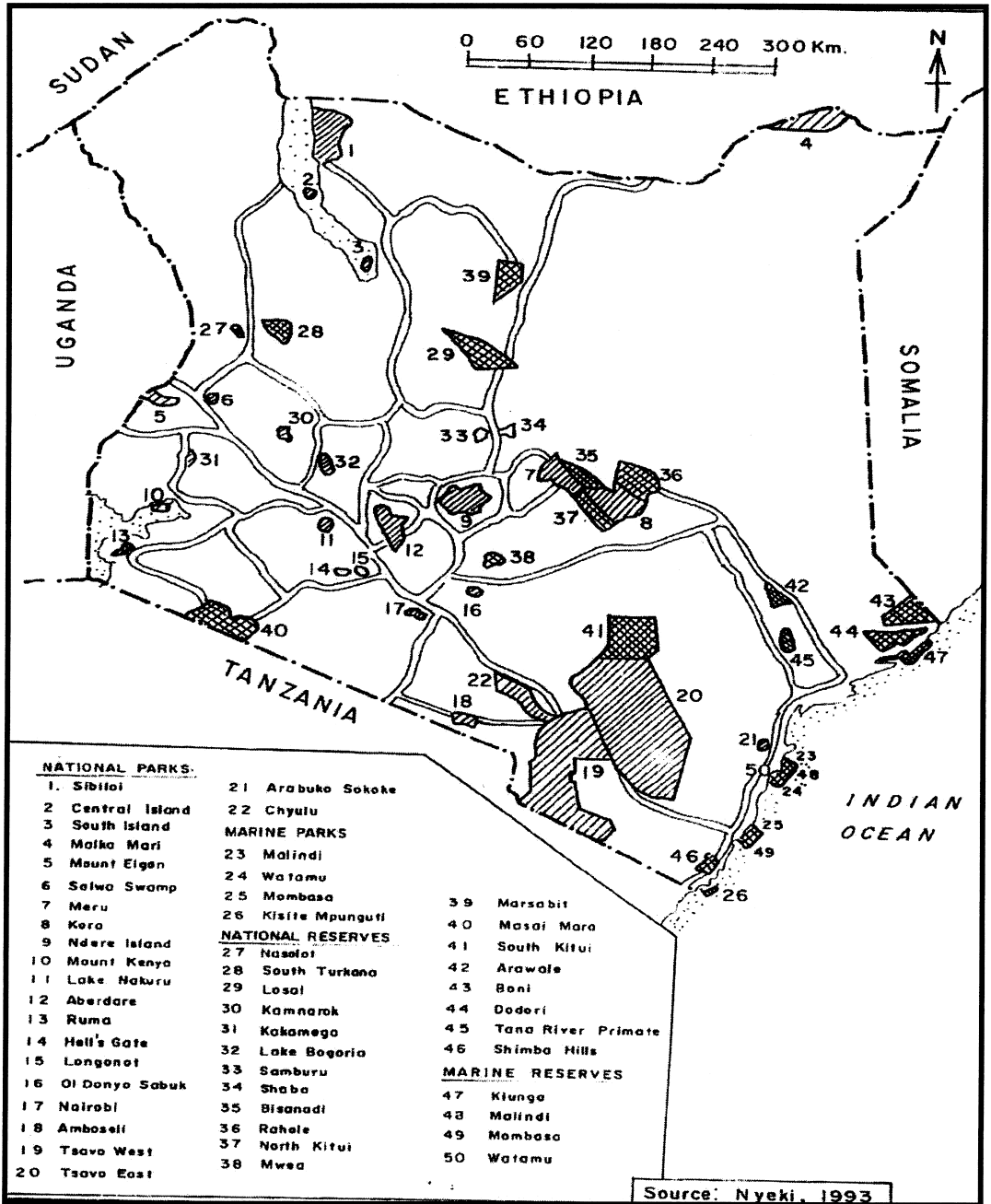
Figure 1. Protected areas in Kenya (national parks and reserves). Amboseli National Park (18) is located on the southern border of Kenya and Tanzania. Amboseli National Park makes an excellent tourist circuit with Tsavo (East and West) national parks (19, 20), Chyulu Hills National Park (22), Nairobi National Park (17), and Marine Parks at the coast. Further, it can be visited with community-owned wildlife sanctuaries such as Kimana Community Wildlife Sanctuary.
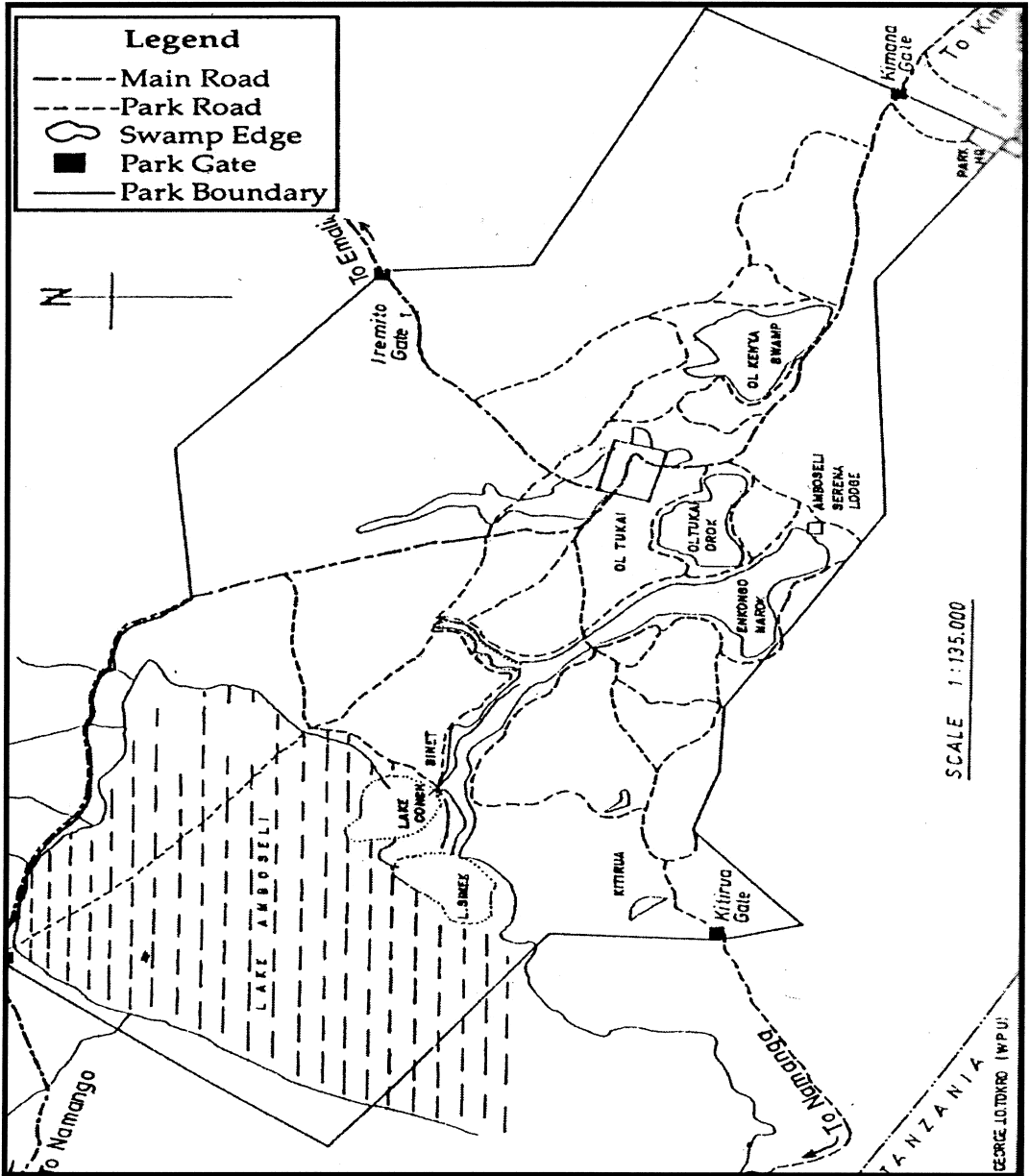
Figure 2. Amboseli National Park. Amboseli National Park in Kenya is located in southern Kenya closer to the Tanzania border and near Mt. Kilimanjaro. It is one of the leading tourism earners among protected areas in Kenya. Large wild mammals are attracted to its permanent swamps fed by snow melts from Kilimanjaro, and concentrate there in great numbers, especially in the dry season. Oltukai and Serena lodges located in the park were sites of interactions and discussions with tourists.

on attractions (large mammals, Maasai culture, and Mt. Kilimanjaro) and how they influence satisfaction, overall wildlife viewing satisfaction level in Amboseli, role of tour drivers on tourist viewing activities, and animals that contributed most towards their viewing satisfaction. Tourist attributes (sex, gender, profession, country of origin, length of stay in Kenya, and whether they had visited other protected areas in Kenya) were also recorded.

Data were tallied and processed in Excel® software (Microsoft Corporation, 2000). Statistical analysis of data was done using SPSS® for Windows Version 9.0. Significant differences between numbers of frequencies giving particular responses were examined using a chi-square goodness of fit test, while chi-square cross-tabulation was used to analyze relationships between responses and tourist attributes (Zar, 1999). Tests were considered significant alpha (type 1 error) of 5% (Zar, 1999).

Results

The majority (23%) of tourists visiting Amboseli were from the US (Table 1), followed by the UK (21%), and other European countries (44%). Most of the tourists (77%) stayed for 2 days in Amboseli, and the majority (82%) stayed for more than 1 week in Kenya. A significant majority $[\chi^2(1) = 10.71, p < 0.001]$ of 66% had visited other protected areas in Kenya prior to visiting Amboseli Park, and a majority (56%) had been to the Maasai Mara National Reserve and was more impressed with it than they were with Amboseli.

A significant $[\chi^2(1) = 63.04, p < 0.001]$ majority of tourists (90%) traveled with tour companies (Table 1), and a few of these tourists (38%) felt that they had high influence on the frequency and length of stops during game drives (Table 2). But a significant $[\chi^2(1) = 77.404, p < 0.001]$ majority of tourists (97%) thought their tour leaders were knowledgeable, and a significant $[\chi^2(1) = 19.253, p < 0.001]$ majority of tourists (75%) noted that being in a tour group positively influenced their experience in Amboseli (Table 2).

Nearly all tourists (91%) were aware that Mt. Kilimanjaro was nearby, and a significant $[\chi^2(2) = 125.2, p < 0.001]$ majority (85%) felt it was an important additional tourist attraction for Amboseli (Table 1). However, only 42% noted that the proximity of Mt. Kilimanjaro was a factor that influenced their decision to visit Amboseli. Similarly, an insignificant $[\chi^2(1) = 0.160, p = 0.689]$ slight majority (52%) of tourists were attracted to the surrounding Maasai culture (Table 1), and half of them noted that culture had drawn them to Amboseli. But a significant $[\chi^2(1) = 6.188, p = 0.013]$ majority of tourists (62%) had visited or planned to visit a Maasai cultural *manyatta* (Table 1) near the park.

A significant $[\chi^2(1) = 69.176, p < 0.001]$ majority of tourists (91%) were open to seeing any large mammal species rather than seeking specific species (Table 1). The African elephant (*Loxodonta africana*) was anticipated by 16% of tourists, 11% expected African lions, and 7% expected cheetahs (*Acinonyx jubatus*) (Table 3). However, the majority of the tourists said they would continue to seek until they found specific animals, mainly big cats including cheetahs (18%), leopards (*Panthera pardus*) (16%), and lions (*Panthera leo*) (13%). Tourists also highly sought other large mammal species such as the black rhinoceros (*Diceros bicornis*), Maasai giraffe (*Giraffa camelopardalis*), and common hippopotamus (*Hippopotamus amphibious*).

The black rhinoceros was ranked highly on viewing appeal on first sighting by 89% of tourists (Table 4). The elephant (88% of tourists), cheetah (87%), African lion (86% of tourists), and giraffe (73%) followed as large mammals highly rated by tourists (Table 4). However, tourists rarely saw these animals during their game drives (Table 3). The black rhinoceros was not seen at all by the tourists, while the elephant and the lion were the most frequently seen among these top five highly ranked large mammals (Table 3).

About 78% of the tourists were aware of a group of large mammals generally referred to as *the big five*. However, only 28% were able to correctly name all of these animals. About 14 different large mammal species were mentioned as members of the big five by the tourists. The African lion (98%) and elephant (97%) were the two species most correctly identified by tourists. The black rhinoceros was correctly named by 82% of tourists, the cape buffalo (*Syncerus caffer*) by 72%, and the leopard by 63%. Other frequently

Table 1

Tourist Responses (*n* = 109 Respondents) Regarding Their Expectations, Experiences, and Satisfaction Level in Amboseli National Park

Information Sought/Response	No. of Tourists (%)	Chi-Square
Country of origin		$\chi^2(4) = 49.80, p < 0.001$
USA	23 (23%)	
Great Britain	21 (21%)	
Australia	9 (9%)	
Non-British European countries	44 (44%)	
Asian Countries	3 (3%)	
Been to other protected areas		$\chi^2(1) = 10.704, p < 0.001$
Yes	71 (66%)	
No	37 (34%)	
Frequency of large mammal viewing in Amboseli		$\chi^2(4) = 66.027, p < 0.001$
Very high	12 (11%)	
High	27 (24%)	
Moderate	46 (42%)	
Low	15 (14%)	
Very low to none	11 (10%)	
Openness to viewing any available large mammal species		$\chi^2(1) = 69.176, p < 0.001$
Open to everything	93 (91%)	
Target species sought	9 (9%)	
Length of stay in Amboseli		$\chi^2(2) = 87.223, p < 0.001$
1 day	13 (13%)	
2 days	79 (77%)	
3+ days	11 (11%)	
Protected areas previously visited that impressed tourists more than Amboseli		$\chi^2(2) = 15.05, p < 0.001$
Maasai Mara	23 (56%)	
Tsavo (East/West)	3 (8%)	
Other different parks mentioned rarely	14 (35%)	
Traveling with a tour company		$\chi^2(1) = 63.04, p < 0.001$
Yes	89 (90%)	
No	10 (10%)	
Mt. Kilimanjaro influenced decision to visit to Amboseli		$\chi^2(1) = 2.806, p = 0.094$
Yes	43 (42%)	
No	60 (58%)	
Tourist considered Mt. Kilimanjaro an important attraction for Amboseli		$\chi^2(2) = 125.2, p < 0.001$
Yes	89 (85%)	
Maybe	6 (6%)	
No	10 (10%)	
Tourist attracted to culture of the local Maasai		$\chi^2(1) = 0.160, p = 0.689$
Yes	52 (52%)	
No	48 (48%)	
Culture influenced decision to come to Amboseli		No test necessary
Yes	54 (50%)	
No	54 (50%)	
Tourist has visited or will visit a Maasai cultural home (*Manyatta* or *boma*)		$\chi^2(1) = 6.188, p = 0.013$
Yes	63 (62%)	
No	38 (38%)	
Tourist satisfaction level with visiting and viewing experience in Amboseli National Park		$\chi^2(2) = 48.495, p < 0.001$
High satisfaction (8–10)[a]	61 (60%)	
Moderate satisfaction (5–7.9)	36 (36%)	
Low satisfaction (1–4.9)	4 (4%)	
Tourist would recommend Amboseli to others		$\chi^2(1) = 68.81, p < 0.001$
Yes	95 (90%)	
No	10 (10%)	
Tourist will return to Amboseli to visit again in the future (potential for repeat visits)		$\chi^2(1) = 10.701, p < 0.001$
Yes	71 (66%)	
No	37 (34%)	

[a]The scale ranks from 1 to 10, with 10 being the highest and 1 being the lowest.

Table 2

The Role of Tour Companies ($n = 92$ Respondents) and Tour Drivers on Tourist Wildlife Viewing Experience at Amboseli National Park

Issue/Options	Number (%)	Chi-Square
Influence of tour drivers on stopping frequency during game drives		$\chi^2(5) = 42.598, p < 0.001$
Very high	25 (28%)	
High	37 (42%)	
Moderate	14 (16%)	
Low	7 (8%)	
Very low	1 (1%)	
None	4 (5%)	
Influence of other tourists on stopping frequency and length during game drives		$\chi^2(2) = 2.273, p = 0.321$
Very high	11 (17%)	
High	27 (41%)	
Moderate	17 (26%)	
Low	—	
Very low	—	
None	11 (17%)	
Opinions of tourists on the guide/driver knowledge regarding wildlife and guiding		$\chi^2(1) = 77.404, p < 0.001$
Knowledgeable	86 (97%)	
Not knowledgeable	3 (3%)	
If being in a tour group positively influenced the experience		$\chi^2(1) = 19.253, p < 0.001$
Yes	59 (75%)	
No	20 (25%)	

(though incorrectly) named mammals were the Maasai giraffe (22% of tourists), common hippopotamus (21%), and cheetah (19%). Other species mentioned were crocodile (*Crocodile niloticus*) (3%), zebra (*Equus burchelli*) (2%), baboon (*Papio anubis*) (1%), waterbuck (*Kobus ellipsymprimnus*) (1%), and wildebeest (*Chonochaetus taurinus*) (1%).

A significant [$\chi^2(1) = 10.71, p < 0.001$] majority (66%) of tourists were willing to be repeat visitors (Table 1). The decision for tourists to be repeat tourists was independent of their nationality [$\chi^2(15) = 19.064, p = 0.211$], whether or not they thought Mt. Kilimanjaro was an important tourist attraction [$\chi^2(1) = 0.350, p = 0.554$], and whether they had prior viewing expectations for particular large mammals [$\chi^2(1) = 0.010, p = 0.920$]. However, the decision to be a repeat tourist was associated only with the knowledge of large mammals, particularly the *big five* [$\chi^2(1) = 4.430, p = 0.035$].

A majority of tourists (97%) were satisfied with Amboseli, with almost [$\chi^2(1) = 68.81, p < 0.001$] all of them (90%) willing to recommend the park to other tourists. Tourist satisfaction level was in-

dependent of nationality [$\chi^2(26) = 24.42, p = 0.552$], whether tourists were traveling alone or with tour companies [$\chi^2(2) = 0.53, p = 0.752$], their opinions of tour drivers in terms of knowledge of wildlife and guiding [$\chi^2(2) = 1.58, p = 0.443$], and knowledge of *big five* mammals [$\chi^2(2) = 5.702, p < 0.058$]. Further, tourist satisfaction was independent of prior viewing expectations in regards to specific large mammals [$\chi^2(2) = 1.360, p = 0.506$] and whether or not tourists regarded Mt. Kilimanjaro as an important tourist attraction [$\chi^2(2) = 0.614, p = 0.736$] for Amboseli Park. However, tourist satisfaction was dependent on whether tourists thought they influenced stopping for wildlife during game drives [$\chi^2(6) = 12.90, p = 0.045$], and opinions on whether they perceived tour companies as having had a positive influence on their visit [$\chi^2(4) = 74.47, p < 0.001$].

Tourists also had concerns for the viability of Amboseli Ecosystem. Some common concerns for negative tourism impacts in Amboseli included animal harassment/tourist interference on animals (20%), high tourist numbers (19%), potential water depletion (10%), and elephant habitat damage (7%).

Table 3

Tourist Expectations Regarding Viewing of Some Common Large Animal Species in Amboseli National Park

Species	No. of Tourists Expecting to See the Species	No. of Tourists That Actually Saw the Species	No. of Tourists That Will Continue to Seek the Species
Cheetah (*Acinonyx jubatus*)	17 (7%)	28 (8%)	45 (18%)
Leopard (*Panthera pardus*)	6 (3%)	5 (1%)	40 (16%)
African lion (*Panthera leo*)	25 (11%)	45 (13%)	33 (13%)
Black rhinoceros (*Diceros bicornis*)	5 (2%)	None	23 (9%)
Maasai giraffe (*Giraffa camelopardalis*)	9 (4%)	20 (6%)	14 (6%)
Common hippopotamus (*Hippopotamus amphibius*)	7 (3%)	18 (5%)	12 (5%)
African elephant (*Loxodonta africana*)	37 (16%)	68 (20%)	6 (2%)
Burchell's zebra (*Equus burchelli*)	9 (4%)	25 (7%)	4 (2%)
Common warthog (*Phacochoerus aethiopicus*)	3 (1%)	7 (2%)	4 (2%)
Cape buffalo (*Syncerus caffer*)	3 (1%)	15 (4%)	3 (1%)
Spotted hyena (*Crocuta crocuta*)	5 (2%)	16 (5%)	3 (1%)
Common wildebeest (*Connochaetes taurinus*)	10 (4%)	19 (5%)	3 (1%)
Thompson's and Grant's gazelle (*Gazella thomsonii/Gazella granti*)	4 (2%)	11 (3%)	3 (1%)
Yellow savannah baboon (*Papio cynocephalus cynocephalus*)	3 (1%)	7 (2%)	3 (1%)
Black backed jackal (*Canis mesomelas*)	3 (1%)	6 (2%)	3 (1%)
Impala (*Aepyceros melampus*)	4 (2%)	5 (1%)	3 (1%)
Serval (*Felis serval*)	4 (2%)	5 (1%)	3 (1%)
African civet (*Civettictus civetta*)	4 (2%)	5 (1%)	3 (1%)
Common waterbuck (*Kobus ellipsyprumnus*)	3 (1%)	5 (1%)	2 (1%)
Common reedbuck (*Redunca arundium*)	4 (2%)	5 (1%)	2 (1%)
Fringed-eared oryx (*Oryx gazella*)	3 (1%)	5 (1%)	2 (1%)
Eland (*Tragelaphus oryx*)	1 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (1%)
Vervet monkey (*Cercopithecus aethiops*)	3 (1%)	6 (2%)	2 (1%)
African wild dog (*Lycaon pictus*)	1 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (1%)
Gerenuk (*Litocranius walleri*)	3 (1%)	5 (1%)	2 (1%)

Discussion

Implications for Marketing and Management

Tourism satisfaction in Amboseli National Park appeared to be high as almost all tourists said they would recommend the park and a majority said they would return visit. However, even with high satisfaction, tourists revealed interesting insights in terms of expectations and desires. Traditionally, international marketing for East Africa has targeted the *big five*, a term coined for the five large mammal trophy species for hunters during colonial days. Since Kenya's hunting ban in 1977, the term has become outdated, yet it still remains in marketing jargon and gift shops. Based on the results of this survey, the *big five* collectively did not play a strong role in satisfying tourists. In fact, satisfaction was independent of being aware of, correctly identifying, and actually seeing the *big five*. Tourists may be aware of the name, but most of them do not know the origin or even all the

animals on this list, indicating that it may not be significant in the level of satisfaction or tourist experiences. That explains why most of the tourists were open to seeing any large mammal, implying that large mammal density and diversity may influence tourism satisfaction much more than the mere list of the big five. This is also consistent with observations made by Okello, Manka, and D'Amour (2008).

However, some *big five* mammals individually were among the list of the highly sought after large mammals. Tourists preferred to seek and observe the big cats as well as species with the largest body size. Other factors that seem to influence tourist preference include: level of availability, desire to see unique behaviors (i.e., foraging, mating, and socialization), population status (i.e., the publicized dramatic plight of both elephant and rhino), and popularization in documentaries and movies (such as the lion in Disney's *The Lion King* and cats in BBC's documentary, *Big Cat Di-*

Table 4

Tourism Ranking of Wildlife Species for Appeal in Terms of First Viewing Experience

Species	High Rank[a] 10–8 (%)	Moderate Rank 7–5 (%)	Low Rank 4–1 (%)	Tourist Sample Size
Black rhinoceros (*Diceros bicornis*)	47 (89%)	2 (4%)	4 (8%)	53
African elephant (*Loxodonta africana*)	68 (88%)	8 (10%)	1 (1%)	77
Cheetah (*Acinonyx jubatus*)	54 (87%)	6 (10%)	2 (13%)	62
African lion (*Panthera leo*)	68 (86%)	9 (11%)	2 (3%)	79
Maasai giraffe (*Giraffa camelopardalis*)	49 (73%)	12 (18%)	6 (9%)	67
Common hippopotamus (*Hippopotamus amphibious*)	41 (67%)	16 (26%)	4 (7%)	61
Spotted hyena (*Crocuta crocuta*)	32 (47%)	27 (40%)	9 (13%)	68
Plains zebra (*Equus burchelli*)	34 (44%)	24 (31%)	19 (25%)	77
Cape buffalo (*Syncerus caffer*)	28 (38%)	26 (36%)	19 (26%)	73
Savanna baboon (*Papio cynocephalus*)	25 (38%)	28 (42%)	13 (20%)	66
Black-backed jackal (*Canis mesomelas*)	21 (37%)	27 (47%)	9 (16%)	57
Black-backed jackal (*Canis mesomelas*)	21 (37%)	27 (47%)	9 (16%)	57
Gazelles (*Gazella thomsonii* and *G. granti*)	24 (34%)	31 (44%)	16 (23%)	71
Vervet monkey (*Cercopithecus aethiops*)	19 (30%)	28 (44%)	16 (25%)	63
Warthog (*Phacochoerus aethiopicus*)	19 (29%)	35 (54%)	11 (17%)	65
Common wildebeest (*Connochaetes taurinus*)	19 (28%)	28 (41%)	22 (32%)	69
Impala (*Aepyceros melampus*)	18 (29%)	28 (44%)	17 (27%)	63
Maasai ostrich (*Struthio camelus*)	16 (25%)	32 (49%)	17 (26%)	65
Common reedbuck (*Redunca arundinum*)	14 (30%)	22 (47%)	11 (23%)	47
Kirk's Dik dik (*Madoqua kirkii*)	14 (28%)	25 (50%)	11 (22%)	50
Common waterbuck (*Kobus ellipsiprymnus*)	11 (21%)	27 (52%)	14 (27%)	52

[a]The scale ranks from 1 to 10, with 10 being the highest and 1 being the lowest.

ary), and species with unique characteristics. However, animals alone do not monopolize tourist desires. The perceived competency and cooperation of tour drivers impacts tourist experience. Other significant factors in tourist satisfaction are cultural attractions and the general aesthetics of the landscape. It is clear that there are several factors contributing to the overall experience for tourists and it is important to recognize what these factors are and they can be marketed to optimize tourist satisfaction.

The availability of a species seemed to play a large role in satisfying tourists. The less the probability and frequency a species is seen, the more tourists desire to seek and observe it. Common gazelles and zebras are less sought after than more rare species such as the leopard or cheetah. Foraging behavior also corresponds to availability. Grazers and mixed feeders like elephants, zebras (*Equus burchelli*), gazelles (*Gazella thomsonii* and *Gazella granti*), and wildebeest live in large herds, making it almost commonplace to see them. Elephants, in particular spend 16 hours a day feeding and wander widely across the savanna in search of the most nutritious food (Estes, 1997). However,

predatory animals such as lions, leopards, and cheetahs are much more elusive and cryptic and are often active only at night. To observe foraging behavior of these animals is a rare and satisfying experience for tourists. In fact, these three species ranked highest in the percentage of tourist pursuance. According to Cunningham and Berger (1997), and Okello et al. (2008), cats such as the cheetah, leopards, and particularly the lion remain the major attractions in Africa. They rank highest in terms of thrill to tourist, on the list of animals that are a must see in Africa, and animals that attract repeat visitor observers. The availability and sighting frequency of these species may be very low but they are the species tourists seek the most and the species tourists consider the most satisfying when they did have the opportunity to see and observe them (particularly in hunting process).

Another factor contributing to tourist satisfaction is when they observe unique behaviors such as foraging, mating, and social interactions. The feline species and other predators have the most interesting foraging behaviors for tourists. Large carnivores are big business in Africa, Asia, and elsewhere throughout the world (Cunningham &

Berger, 1997). To watch a pride of lions take down a wildebeest or a leopard drag an impala (*Aepyceros melampus*) up a tree is, by nature, more exciting and satisfying for guests to see, even if it is rare and happens only once. This is probably a significant reason behind the cheetah's allure. Being the fastest terrestrial animal, it would be extremely satisfying to see it hunt a Thompson's gazelle at a speed of 60–70 mph or 90–112 kph (Estes, 1997). Observing a rare behavior such as mating is another significant source of satisfaction for tourist. Observing elephants interact on the African savannah is satisfying in and of itself but the experience would compound if tourists could observe copulating elephants.

Although species like zebra and wildebeest are common and not as sought after as the big cats, the phenomenon of the enormous herds does contribute to tourist satisfaction. Large group sizes make animals accessible and have the ability to awe tourists. One of the largest draws for the entire Kenyan tourist industry is when millions of wildebeest migrate annually to the Maasai Mara. Tourists ranked the African elephant highly in preference in Amboseli but they also had a high viewing frequency. The satisfaction level of elephants was most likely due to their shear number and resulting ease of viewing. Amboseli currently has over 1,200 elephants (Soila, personal communication) and scientist Cynthia Moss has been studying them for approximately 30 years in the longest running and most detailed investigation into the nature of elephant society. Because the elephants are well protected from poachers and routinely studied by researchers in vehicles, they are acclimated to cars and can tolerate tourists approaching closely. The habituation of elephants to vehicles provides tourists a unique and extremely close elephant encounter.

The elephant is also a charismatic species because of its dramatic history of survival. Elephants were heavily poached in the 1980s and 1990s for their ivory tusks and received great sympathy from the international community as well as news coverage. Pictures of dead elephants lying with their tusks cut off outraged animal enthusiasts. In 1989, President Moi of Kenya captured headlines around the world when he lit fire to 12 metric tons of raw ivory worth Ksh 60 million (approximately

US$800,000) to demonstrate the austerity of Kenya's dedication to antipoaching (Nyeki, 1993). Elephants are still endangered today and are used as an icon in conservation projects around the world.

The black rhinoceros shares a similar story. Their population took a tremendous dive as their horns were a rare commodity coveted by poachers. In Amboseli, there were more rhinoceroses than in any other location in Kenya (Bonner, 1993). The black rhinoceros, a CITES endangered species, is so threatened now that they can only be seen in 11 protected areas, most of which are fenced, with no more than 60 rhinos per sanctuary (Brett, 1990). Though very rare, the rhino remains extremely popular for tourists to seek and they have the highest number of tourists giving it the top rank in viewing desire. One of the attractions Lake Nakuru National Park offers is its high likelihood to see a rhino. The park is completely fenced and houses the less reclusive and reintroduced white rhino, making the rhino a frequently seen species. In a study by Okello et al. (2005), Lake Nakuru was the most visited park in terms of tourist numbers and exceeded its tourism potential, and the availability of the rhino clearly contributes to its popularity.

Popular movies and television series can also have an influence on tourists' preconceptions and desires. Much of the information many tourists receive about Africa and its wildlife comes from television. Thus begins the desire to see the featured animals in their natural habitats. For example, the series *Big Cat Diary* specializes on the big cats and their survival stories. The stories are interesting to see on television but can also inspire tourists to want to see them in real life.

Finally, the last features that may interest tourists are distinguishing characteristics that certain species have. As previously mentioned, the cheetah is the fastest land animal, the elephant is the largest terrestrial animal, the giraffe is the tallest, and the ostrich is the largest bird. Cats like cheetahs and leopards have unique spotted coats that were hunted for fashion and decoration and are extremely aesthetic to see in real life. Male lions have distinct impressive manes that add to tourist satisfaction. Part of the allure of tourists to elephants is that they have very interesting social behavior such as touching the bones of dead ele-

phants or placing branches over dead family members (Moss, 1998). Species that offer such intriguing unique characteristics capture the interest and curiosity of tourists.

It seems as if tour drivers make most of the decisions on what to see and what to ignore and tourists seem to have great faith in tour guides. It may be important to note that high levels of satisfaction are associated with tourists' own participation and contribution in stopping and viewing decisions. This is an important insight that needs to inform the tour companies to initiate much more involvement of tourists in viewing decisions rather than tour operators rushing from one animal to another, spending less time viewing animals, and focusing entirely on a few presumed key species. A negative consequence of excluding the tourists in viewing decisions is that tour drivers can spend more time driving rather than viewing as they search for key species. Okello et al. (2008) also observed animal harassment and off'road driving by tour drivers in hopes of providing their clients more viewing time or closer encounters with animals. Despite the excellent viewing potential, breaking the rules of the park may not be in the tourists' interests.

Negative aspects concerning highly valued or ranked species can include stresses caused by tourist vehicles. Tour drivers communicate with each other over radios to transfer information about the location of popular species. This can lead to overcrowding and harassment by tourist vehicles (Voorspuy, 1999). Tourists mentioned this as one of their primary concerns for the management of Amboseli. This is especially detrimental when animals are engaged in hunting, mating, or are endangered because tourists can inhibit natural processes important to the survival of that species. Bonner (1993) states that the harassment of lions in Serengeti has led to so many kills being missed that lion cubs starve to death. Cheetahs are especially at risk. Caro (1994), states that their diurnal activity pattern and relative timidity make cheetahs particularly susceptible to visitors disrupting their hunts. Concentrations of more than six vehicles sharply diminish hunting activity and in Amboseli, large aggregations of tourist vehicles often cluster around cheetahs (Caro, 1994). The majority of tourists stated that tourist drivers had a high influence on their length and frequency of stopping for game viewing. By communicating to tour drivers to diversify species viewing or incorporate lesser known species, pressure can be taken off more popular ones. Additionally, park managers should also educate and penalize drivers about the effects of vehicle harassment to animals.

Accessibility to experience culture also plays an important role in tourist satisfaction as cultural aspects of Kenya attracted and astounding 50% of the tourists. The Maasai are world famous and have the ability to draw people to Amboseli and enrich safari experiences. Echtner and Prasad (2003) state that tourists coming to countries like Kenya want to undertake an expedition to an almost primordial place, where civilization is largely absent and nature is savage. To satisfy such desires of the tourists, inhabitants must appear in a primitive state despite industrial revolutions, colonialism, wars of independence, nationalism, rise of new countries, economic development, tourism, and production of modern technology (Echtner & Prasad, 2003). Some tourists said culture influenced their decision to come to Amboseli. One problem, however, is that cultural attractions appear to be less publicized, and cultural experiences with the Maasai seem stage'managed, less authentic in representing Maasai culture and its current dynamics, commercially driven and shallow in its interactions with tourists. Many tourists were unaware of the possibility of visiting a cultural *manyatta*, a homestead constructed for tourists to experience traditional Maasai culture. It may be beneficial to actively promote cultural attractions to create a more complete African experience for tourists. Cultural attractions are also a way for the local community to benefit financially from nearby protected areas.

Non-wildlife attractions in Kenya were shown to influence tourist satisfaction despite the fact that the majority of Kenya tourism is wildlife based (Okello et al., 2001). Okello et al. (2005) and Deng, King, and Bauer (2002) state that five major components contribute to national park attractiveness including tourism resources, tourism facilities, accessibility, local communities, and peripheral attractions. Most tourists felt that Mt. Kilimanjaro was an important attraction for Amboseli and almost half of them said it had influenced their decision to come to the park. One of the possible reasons why Mt. Kilimanjaro did not

influence satisfaction strongly may be because of its poor marketing, as well as its almost permanent cloud cover and poor visibility. This study was conducted in the winter months of July and August, which are dominated by overcast weather. Conducting interviews when visibility is clear would be more appropriate to determine satisfaction levels of the proximity of Mt. Kilimanjaro. To avoid tourist dissatisfaction, tourist companies should convey information about the best viewing times and seasons for Mt. Kilimanjaro. Because most tourists travel with tour companies, these companies should be involved in diversifying marketing and game drive activities to accommodate each area's unique features.

Since Kenya's ban on hunting, tourism motivation has shifted to photography and overall experience. Size and trophy potential may be important criteria to a hunter but grace and aesthetics are desirable prizes to a photographer. Since Kenya currently caters to photographers and observers, parks can abate negative tourist impacts by advertising unique aesthetics of an area and displace pressure from a selected few key game species. In fact, tourists will often visit more than one destination on a trip and typically experience a range of natural and cultural environments. Only a small proportion of tourists travel to exclusively experience nature or culture alone (Deng et al., 2002). For Amboseli, the diversification of tourism attractions should include advertising its view of Mt. Kilimanjaro, lush wetland areas, and proximity to the world famous Maasai culture. In a report for the Royal National Parks of Kenya, the director stated, "Amboseli is unique. It can have no rival in the rest of Africa. Nowhere is it possible to see so much big game in such a small area under conditions which are ideal and suitable to the photographer" (Bonner, 1993).

Conclusions

Concentrating marketing on the *big five* can give tourists unattainable desires. Only three of the *big five* are available in Amboseli. Tourists never have a chance to see the rhinoceros or leopard, which automatically leaves their checklist incomplete. There are very few parks where tourists can actually see all five members at once. According to Okello et al. (2001) the three most important

attractions influencing visitor numbers in Kenya are large terrestrial mammal species, cultural attractions, and physical features, respectively. The *big five* are not included in that list. In another study, Okello et al. (2008) looked at the contribution of large mammals to tourism satisfaction in Amboseli and notes much higher appeal of non'*big five* mammals. Also noted was the poor appeal of the buffalo, a member of the *big five*. A high density and diversity of free-ranging animals, along with other varied attractions, is likely to satisfy and please a greater portion of tourists. Protected areas therefore need to market the large mammals and make their own lists of most sought after large mammals based on availability and criteria of actual tourist desires. This will take of pressure off of few species and possibly reduce negative tourism impacts on selected species as well as form more accurate tourist expectations and ultimate satisfaction.

Tourism marketing campaigns should introduce other aspects of the park that people may be less aware of including birds, culture, and Mt. Kilimanjaro. According to Okello et al. (2005), Amboseli National Park has exceeded its tourism potential and is a small remnant of its former ecosystem, implying that the park is vulnerable to degradation and animal harassment. Amboseli has the ability to raise park fees to limit tourist attendance and raise more money for local communities and wildlife conservation. Excess money raised from park fees can go to local communities to ensure they benefit from wildlife and therefore ensure protection of the various species. Because Amboseli is so small, community sanctuaries like KWCS in the group ranch to preserve land for dispersing wildlife should be encouraged. Deng et al. (2002), note that national parks constitute complex systems where many different aspects influence tourists' experience and satisfaction. One should not assume that each dimension will be of equal importance in contributing to a satisfying trip. Various components fulfill expectations to different degrees, but only in combination can they lead to a satisfying experience.

Kenya as a country has to diversify its marketing to target a wide range of tourists from high-paying upper class to middle classes who have a temporal and financial budget (Okello et al.,

2005). Backpacker tourism is becoming increasingly popular where people travel more widely than other tourists seeking unusual or out of the way locations and/or experiences (Scheyvens, 2002). The Kenya Tourism Board and agencies should target diverse audiences including student tourists or researchers who wish to learn about the ecology, anthropology, or history of given areas. By diversifying tourists' interests, satisfaction is more likely, thus assuring a repeat visit or recommendation. Diversifying tourist interests can also introduce lesser known or more remote parks. Parks should boast individual features, lesser known species, or species that other parks do not have to spread interest across a range of wildlife rather than just a few target species. The Kenyan tourism industry should work to promote parks that have not yet reached their tourism potential and try to release the pressure from popular parks and optimize tourist satisfaction.

Acknowledgments

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