



Towards Best Tourism Practices for Responsible Dolphin Watching in Red Sea

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ABSTRACT

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Egypt, especially the Red Sea, provides an ideal example of dolphin watching tourism. In Egypt, many areas involve a tourist center for dolphin watching tourism. This study aims to develop a blueprint to accomplish, in a responsible manner, the growth of this activity without harming dolphins in their natural environment and keeps them as a tourist resource. This attitude leads to achieve the benefits of dolphin watching tourism and reduce challenges. Qualitative approach was used to collect data through interviews with scuba diving instructors working in diving centers in the Red Sea. According to Egyptian Chamber of Diving and Water Sports (CDWS), there are 261 registered diving centers. A total of 30 diving centers, more than 10% of the whole population, have been interviewed. Dolphin watching areas should be permanently designated in Egypt. Therefore, an appropriate plan must be developed for their management, organization and marketing. Moreover, increasing awareness of marine environment in general and behavior pattern of dolphin in particular is intensively recommended.

Research Importance

Dolphins have attracted the attention of tourists along the Red Sea coast over the past few years. The growth of dolphin watching tourism is accompanied by concerns about the impact of this activity on dolphins and their natural behavior. Moreover, dolphins could leave their places of residence without returning. Therefore, the growth of dolphin watching tourism should be based on research and appropriate knowledge in order to provide information related to the needs and behaviors of dolphins and to take an approach to achieve responsible dolphin watching tourism. Research has an important role in managing tourism activity and achieving optimum benefits from it, whether for dolphins or tourism industry.

Objectives

1. Define dolphin watching tourism and its benefits.
2. Identify global best practices for responsible dolphin watching tourism.
3. Study and analyze Egyptian dolphin watching tourism.

4. Propose blueprint to manage responsible dolphin watching tourism in Egypt.
5. Make Recommendations to Egyptian diving centers and related authorities in order to meet the challenges that encounter Egyptian dolphin watching tourism.

Introduction

Niche tourism is a specific part of tourism market. It usually represents a well-defined product designed to meet specific interests of visitors. The term niche does not mean small, rather niche markets can generate large numbers of tourists. They can also diversify the product and reduce negative impacts of seasonality. There are many niche products such as bird watching tourism, charity tourism, culinary tourism, cycling tourism, golf tourism, extreme sports tourism, dolphin watching tourism among others (Caribbean Tourism Organization, 2008). Dolphin watching tourism is a type of niche market where tourists watch dolphins in their natural environment.

Over the past decade, cetaceans (i.e., whales, dolphins, and porpoises) have been regarded as a common resource used in many products. This attitude had a dramatic impact on cetaceans, and the world has witnessed a breakdown of their populations (O'Connor et al., 2009).

According to Orams (2017), the growth of tourism based on cetaceans such as dolphins and whales has led to preserve them as a tourism resource. Whale and dolphin watching tourism dates to the 1960s, yet its growth is relatively recent. In 1981, the value of whale and dolphin watching amounted to 14 million dollars of total tourism expenditure (Hoyt and Parsons, 2014). In 1983, whale and dolphin watching tourism has emerged in 12 countries (Orams, 2017).

In 1991, whale and dolphin watchers were 4 million and spent 317.9 million US dollars, and 31 countries participated in whale and dolphin watching activity. In 1994, the number of whale and dolphin watchers rose to 4.5 million (Hoyt and Parsons, 2014) and by 1995 whale and dolphin watching tourism has expanded to 65 countries (Orams, 2017). In 1998, whale and dolphin watchers reached 9 million, and about 87 countries e.g. Argentina, Norway, Japan, Tonga and South Africa had commercial whale and dolphin watching tours annually (Hoyt and Parsons, 2014). The 1990s has internationally witnessed whale and dolphin watching tourism (Orams, 2017).

In 2008, the number of whale and dolphin watchers rose to nearly 13 million and they spent 2.1 billion US dollars on whale and dolphin watching tours in 119 countries. This uncontrolled growth has led to sustainability challenges facing countries. This attitude requires effective regulatory frameworks to overcome these challenges (Hoyt and Parsons, 2014). In developing countries, whale and dolphin watching tourism has created new sources of income for local communities, reduced unsustainable fishing methods and increased awareness of marine environment (Stensland and Berggren, 2007).

Dolphin Watching Tourism

New tourists are interested in going beyond traditional tourism of the sea, the sun and the sand by enjoying watching animals in their natural environment (Gaitree and Ian,

2015). Dolphin watching tourism is defined as the viewing of dolphins in their natural environment. Dolphin interactions can involve shore-based viewing, boat-based viewing, as well as feeding and swimming with dolphins (Miles et al., 2006).

The previous definition clarifies that dolphin watching tourism also includes aspects such as crew hospitality on board, swimming with dolphin in the water, live- aboard experience, meeting other people and diving.

Responsible dolphin watching activity can bring a lot of benefits to the destination providing to be responsibly managed. It has turned into a tourism type which is able to:

1. Demonstrate economic benefits to dolphin watching tourism operators.
2. Increase participants' awareness of the environment and the importance of preserving it.
3. Contribute to generate income and provide employment opportunities.
4. Contribute to participants' sense of well-being through a feeling of attachment to nature.
5. Increase awareness of economic value of dolphins as a tourism resource and the need to conserve them.
6. Help to diversify tourism products offered by countries (International Whaling Commission, 2021).

Global Best Practices for Responsible Dolphin Watching Tourism

Dolphin watching tourism has been influenced by many regulations and measures developed by governmental and non-governmental institutions, bodies and organizations that have been long working to apply best practices to dolphin watching tourism and to develop necessary guidelines. They developed guidelines that are characterized by being practical, flexible, measurable and constantly evolving based on the state-of-the-art scientifically updated research (Lewis and Walker, 2018).

To manage dolphin watching tourism in a sustainable manner, all stakeholders must develop strategies to communicate, exchange information, monitor practices and provide a mechanism for continuous evaluation. An example of efforts to achieve sustainability for dolphin watching tourism is "Whale Heritage Site Initiative". This initiative is a program offered by the World Cetacean Alliance (WCA) to grant accreditation to sites that achieve responsible practices for whale and dolphin watching tourism (World Cetacean Alliance, 2021).

A) Vancouver Island North

In 1980, whale and dolphin watching tourism began in Vancouver Island North with forty visitors. This tourism pattern has increased, and today there are 40 companies that employ more than 250 employees using various types of vessels such as sail boats, power boats and kayaks. In 2002, Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) attempted to amend regulations of marine mammals along with requirements of whale and dolphin watching tourism. Guidelines have been developed to ensure best practices in the area, such as providing clear guidance on proper behavior when

watching whales and dolphins. Operators have implemented these guidelines as obligatory instructions although they are voluntary (Lewis and Walker, 2018).

B) India: Chilika Lagoon

Chilika Lagoon is an entirely enclosed body of salt water. It is located in the state of Odisha on the east of India. The lagoon is characterized by its natural beauty, migratory birds and Irrawaddy dolphins. In 1989, dolphin watching tourism began in Chilika. In 2010, it increased to include approximately 150,000 tourists annually. The expansion in watching dolphins has led to pressure and danger threatening dolphins. By 2010, more than 900 ships with 150,000 tourists have annually participated in this activity.

In 2016, dolphin watching tourism contributed to Chilika's economy by about 104 million US dollars annually. Therefore, it was necessary to continue and maintain this activity as an important source of income. The Chilika Development Authority has developed a protocol of dolphin watching. This protocol is in the form of printed leaflets. These leaflets have been distributed to tourists and boat operators. Then, a joint committee consisting of staff from Chilika Wildlife Division and Chilika Development Authority has been formed to monitor dolphin watching tourism.

In 2005, Whale and Dolphin Conservation (WDC) and Chilika Development Authority have implemented workshops to train boat operators for best practices and methods when approaching dolphins. Moreover, these workshops train tour operators to turn off their engines in the presence of dolphins and use long poles to move slowly around the dolphins. The Chilika Development Authority has cleared the area of illegal prawn aquaculture installations and prevented illegal fishing. In addition, it has issued guidelines for boat operators and tourists to watch dolphins safely and sustainably (International Whaling Commission, 2020).

Dolphin Watching Tourism in Egypt

Egypt is a great model of dolphin watching tourism. In 1998, the number of dolphin watchers reached 10,000. In 2008, this number became 35,396 with a growth rate of 13.5%. Egypt has become one of the top five dolphin watching growth countries in Africa and the Middle East. In Egypt, dolphin watching tourism has changed dramatically since the 1990s and has increased in popularity (O'Connor et al., 2009). In the Red Sea, a growing dolphin watching tourism has been targeting the spinner dolphin in two resting areas located in coastal waters of the Red Sea Governorate. In-water human interactions with spinner dolphin have been regulated with a time-area closure system in Samadai Reef which is located 7km of Marsa Alam. However, these interactions have been unregulated in Satayah Reef which is located approximately 30 km of Hamata. In addition, one area without tourism is at Qubbat'Isa where it is close to the political boundary with Sudan (Fumagalli, 2015).

Dolphin Watching Tourism at Samadai Reef

Samadai Reef is a unique site of dolphin watching tourism in the southern region of the Red Sea. It is a crescent-shaped off-shore reef located 5 km from Marsa Alam city. Samadai is 1 kilometer wide and 1.4 kilometers long. It is known as "Dolphin House" (Costa and Sciara, 2007). It is a preferred area for spinner dolphins. During

daylight hours, spinner dolphins head to coral reefs located in Samadai Reef to rest. These types of dolphins are nocturnal animals. They feed during night-time (Sarhan et al., 2004).

Samadai has become a popular tourist destination for diving and snorkeling. In the early 1990s, almost three diving operators visited the area. By the year 2002, there have been 15 operators operating approximately 60 boats per day to serve around 1000 to 1200 tourists from all over the world. Dolphins use Samadai Reef for resting, social interactions and mating. This unplanned growth of tourism activities has caused pressure on dolphins. As a result, a significant decline in dolphins' numbers has been noticed within one year (Costa and Sciara, 2007).

In 2003, The Red Sea Protectorates of The Nature Conservation Sector (NCS), the Egyptian Environment Affairs Agency (EEAA) and the Red Sea Governorate have decided to suspend all visits to Samadai Reef until a comprehensive plan is drawn up. By January 2004, the management plan has included the following measures:

1. Implementing a zoning plan in the Samadai Reef area (Sciara et al., 2008). This zoning plan consisted of area A for the exclusive use of dolphins' zone, area B for snorkeling activities zone, area C for boat mooring zone and area D for diving sites (O'Connor et al., 2009).
2. Developing best practice guidelines for tourism activities.
3. Implementing a proper monitoring program.
4. Implementing a service fee system to contribute to environmental conservation activities.
5. Restricting daytime use for visitors from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm.
6. Implementing a public awareness program (Sciara et al., 2008).

The management plan of Samadai Reef is to ensure the proper use of the site without affecting dolphins and their habitats. It also ensures sustainable use of the site as an important resource for local economy. This attitude leads to achieve the perfect balance between preserving wildlife and tourism industry. According to Fumagalli (2015), the Red Sea Protectorates was responsible for managing Samadai Reef and enforcing the measurements imposed by the management plan until 2013. In 2013, Hurgada Environmental Protection and Conservation Association (HEPCA) which is a non-governmental organization have evidently proved corruption and administrative interference in the management process. The Governor of the Red Sea has entrusted HEPCA with the responsibility of Samadai Reef Management instead of the Red Sea Protectorates.

Tickets and operations have become the responsibility of HEPCA. It has issued a code of conduct approved by decree of the Red Sea Governorate. Failure to respect this decree has led to a fine of 10,000 Egyptian pounds (International Whaling Commission, 2020).

Impacts of Management Plan of Samadai Reef

A) Human Impact

After implementing the management plan of Samadai Reef, human presence has been organized to practice recreational activities, diving, snorkeling and watching dolphins. The number of monthly visitors has been decreased by limiting the daily number of visitors to a maximum of 200 visitors. This attitude had a major impact on reducing negative human impact which has threatened dolphins.

In addition, Samadai service fee program has attracted only elite and well-educated visitors and those with good behavior with dolphins. The management plan has implemented a public awareness program that led to develop and promote the behavior of divers, diving boats and other users of marine resources.

B) Tourism Business

Samadai Reef has gained an international reputation as a destination for diving and snorkeling with dolphins. This attitude has led to a rapidly increasing number of visitors. Before implementing the management plan, tour operators who did not have a good reputation have raised the price of the trip for each visitor from 60 dollars to 80 dollars. This attitude has affected the entire commercial activity. After implementing the plan, dealing with high-quality aqua centers has been restricted. As a result, saving local tourism and raising the quality of tourism services have been provided.

Moreover, implementing Samadai service fee program has increased monthly revenues to 150,000 US dollars in the period from January to May 2004. This increase has contributed to improve local economy (Sarhan et al., 2004).

C) Dolphin Abundance and Behavior

Before implementing the management plan, visitors to Samadai Reef have practiced unacceptable behavior with dolphins whether by playing with them, touching or feeding them. This unacceptable behavior of visitors has caused a major change in their natural behavior. In addition, negative effects of unplanned growth of tourism activities such as congestion, noise and pollution have decreased the number of dolphins.

The implementation of the management plan has succeeded in returning dolphins to the region. The number of dolphins has increased from 32 to 78 after just one year. Also, implementing a zoning plan has helped dolphins to practice their natural behaviors.

The Samadai Reef management plan has combined the conservation of marine biodiversity with local economic benefits. Close encounters with dolphins in other sites have seriously threatened dolphins' population. Samadai Reef has been saved in the perfect time.

Dolphin Watching Tourism at Satayah Reef

Satayah Reef is a resting area for spinner dolphins. Spinner dolphins are the ocean acrobats. They love to jump, flip and roll over the surface of the water. Spinner

dolphins get their name due to their ability to spin multiple times in one jump. They are about 6.5 feet long. They have long and thin snout, white bellies and dark gray backs (The National Wildlife Federation, 2021). Satayah Reef is one of the best places to encounter dolphins in the Red Sea (Fumagalli et al., 2018). At Satayah Reef, tourism operation began in the mid of 2000s and dolphin watching tourism grew in uninformed, unregulated and uncontrolled manner. Thus, the population of dolphins experiences unsustainable levels of pressure and threat. It is important and necessary to implement an integrated management plan to achieve sustainability of dolphin watching tourism and to take immediate measures to improve it (Fumagalli, 2015).

Methodology

Qualitative approach has been used to collect data through interviews with scuba diving instructors working in diving centers in the Red Sea. According to Egyptian Chamber of Diving and Water Sports (CDWS), there are 261 registered diving centers. A total of 30 diving centers, representing 11.49%, have been interviewed.

The respondents were distributed as follows: 13 in Hurghada, 4 in Dahab, 3 in Sharm El Shaikh, 5 in Safaga, and finally 5 in Marsa Alam. Each instructor has been asked to participate in the study by responding to semi-structured survey including a mixture of open and closed ended questions. Respondents are encouraged to share their feedback, experience and reflections. Open-ended questions enabled them to give in-depth information and further details.

The interviews consisted of 12 questions focusing on how to manage dolphin watching tourism in Egypt. The interviews have been conducted from October 2020 till February 2021.

1) The peak season for the center's activity.

Despite that this question was addressed to respondents from different dolphin spots, they all agreed that the peak season for the centers is from April to November.

2) Nationalities that practice dolphin watching tours.

Instructors have listed many of nationalities that are attracted to this type of tourism, among them are: German, British, Russian, Ukrainian, French, Spanish, Danish, Italian, Swiss, Swedish, Europeans, as well as Egyptians.

3) Repetition of dolphin watching tour

This question aims to demonstrate whether tourists who visited the dolphin spots commonly repeat dolphin watching tour or not.

Table 1
Repetition dolphin watching tour

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	20	66.7
No	10	33.3
Total	30	100

Data tabulated above show that 20 instructors, 66.7%, have indicated that tourists repeat dolphin watching tour, while 10 instructors, 33.3%, have indicated that tourists

do not repeat the tour. This result indicates that dolphin watching tour is a desirable activity which meets visitors' expectations.

4) Tourists come to see dolphins in particular.

This question clarifies whether dolphin watching tourism is an independent tourism pattern, or is it carried out as an activity within a group of other activities such as diving and snorkeling.

Table 2

Tourists come to see dolphins in particular

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	9	30
No	21	70
Total	30	100

The majority of diving instructors, 70%, have assured that tourists do not participate in dolphin watching tours in particular. This notion shows that dolphin watching tourism in Egypt has not been an independent pattern. Yet, it is commonly incorporated with other tourism activities.

5) The age group that most participate in dolphin watching tours.

Table 3

The age group that most participate in dolphin watching tours

Attribute	Frequency	Percent
16-30	16	53.3
30-60	14	46.7
Over 60	—	—
Total	30	100

The result shows that 16 diving instructors, 53.3%, have stated that the age group that most participate in dolphin watching tours is from 16 to 30. Moreover, 14 instructors, 46.7%, have stated that the age group that most participate in dolphin watching tours is from 30 to 60. The ratio between them is very close, so the age group attracted by stakeholders should be from 16 to 60.

6) Dolphin watching areas

Dolphin watching spots are different in each city. It should be mentioned that dolphins have been permanently found in areas in the south of the Red Sea such as Marsa Alam, while they have been accidentally seen in areas in the north of the Red Sea such as Hurghada, Dahab and Safaga.

This information represents a major problem for diving centers in the northern Red Sea because tourists can book a tour to see dolphins, but it is not guaranteed to see them. Therefore, the reputation of diving centers in Egypt has worsened. This issue should be clarified to tourists from the very beginning; however, nothing is clarified.

The most important areas where dolphins appear are:

- a) In Hurghada (El Aruk, El Fanus, El Orouk 3 and El Fanadir).

- b) In Dahab (Abu Galum, Gabr El Bint and El Lagona).
- c) In Safaga (Sharm El Arab and Sharm El Naka).
- d) In Sharm El Shaikh (Ras Mohamed National Prk and Strait of Tiran).
- e) In Marsa Alam (Samadai Reef and Satayah Reef in Hamata).

In all previous areas, watching dolphins is accidental; however, in Samadai Reef and Satayah Reef, dolphins are permanently present.

7) The number of tours per day.

The question aims to find out the number of dolphins watching tours per day. The answer is one tour if the tour is by a cruise boat. And it can be three tours if it is by a speed boat. The number of tourists on the boat is determined according to the length of the boat.

8) The number of boats in the dolphin watching tour.

Table 4

The Number of boats in the dolphin watching tour

	Frequency	Percent
Less than 3 boats	—	—
3 boats	3	10
More than 3 boats	27	90
Total	30	100

The majority of diving instructors, 90%, have indicated that there are more than three boats during the dolphin watching tour. This result is not consistent with Lewis and Walker (2018), who stated that the number of boats in the dolphin watching tour should not exceed three boats. If a new boat comes, it waits for the next boat to leave and then takes its place.

9) Criteria for responsible dolphin watching tourism

The next part of the interview questions is to clarify whether the diving centers comply with the criteria of responsible dolphin watching tourism which include:

- A) All centers offering dolphin watching tours are licensed and registered.
- B) Implementing a zoning plan for the area.
- C) Implementing a service fee system.
- D) Restricting daytime use.
- E) Limiting daily number of visitors to the area.
- F) Providing participants with educational information about dangers that threaten dolphins they are encountering.
- G) Providing a knowledgeable guide in each boat.
- H) The distance that boats approach dolphins is 30 meters.
- I) All boats stay on the same side of dolphins when there is more than one boat on a tour.
- J) The boat remains at a constant speed with no sudden changes in directions.
- K) The boat approaching the dolphins is in parallel to their swimming directions.
- L) Do not follow dolphin inside resting area.

- M) Avoiding noise.
- N) Applying extra care when calves are present.
- O) Dolphins' movements are not restricted by boats.
- P) Applying a fine for violating these guidelines.

All diving instructors, who work in diving centers in Marsa Alam, have confirmed that these criteria are fully applied in Samadai Reef. On the other hand, other areas apply the criteria except implementing a zoning plan for the area and restricting daytime use. Diving instructors have explained that the boat moves after obtaining license from border guards. This is not related to a specific time, and it depends on the number of boats.

10) Criteria for responsible swimming with dolphins.

The next part of the interview questions is to clarify whether the diving centers apply the necessary criteria when providing the activity of swimming with dolphins. These criteria are:

- A) There is at least one guide on board who is fully acquainted with dolphins' behaviors.
- B) One crew member on board is fully trained in aquatic rescue.
- C) An approved first aid kit is available on board.
- D) There is at least one member of the crew on board who has a first aid certificate.
- E) All swimmers have a good level of fitness to be able to swim
- F) Swimming with swimmers before any attempt to swim with dolphins in order to assess their swimming skills.
- G) Informing swimmers about all potential impacts of activity on dolphins.
- H) Informing swimmers about guidelines to follow in water.
- I) Warning swimmers that any non-compliance with guidelines will lead to end the activity.
- J) All swimmers enter and leave water together.
- K) All swimmers wear fins, mask and a lifejacket.
- L) All swimmers enter slowly into water without jumping or excessive splashes.
- M) All swimmers keep quiet and swim gently using their fins only.
- N) All swimmers swim on the side of dolphins.
- O) All swimmers avoid touching dolphins.
- P) All swimmers never throw trash in water.
- Q) All swimmers never feed dolphins.
- R) Informing swimmers not to use sunscreens, before going into water, containing chemicals that may harm dolphins.
- S) Applying a fine for violating these guidelines.

All diving instructors have ensured that they meet all necessary criteria when they go swimming with dolphins.

11) Means of control used to ensure that the center adheres to guidelines.

The answer to this question explains how to control diving centers activities and the extent of their commitment to the necessary criteria in order to achieve responsible dolphin watching tourism. All diving instructors have stated that the official organization that controls the activity of diving centers is Egyptian Chamber of Diving and Water Sports (CDWS). There is also the Ministry of Environment as a governmental organization. In addition, Hurghada Environmental Protection and Conservation Association (HEPCA) is a non-governmental organization which aims to supervise and raise environmental awareness.

12) Promoting dolphin watching tourism.

This question aims to investigate to which extent the respondents perceive that dolphin watching tourism is effectively promoted.

Table 5

Promoting dolphin watching tourism

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	4	13.3
No	26	86.7
Total	30	100

The majority of diving instructors, 86.7%, have emphasized that dolphin watching tourism in Egypt is not being adequately promoted.

Proposed a blueprint for Responsible Dolphin Watching Tourism in Egypt

Unplanned and uncontrolled expansion in watching dolphins has led to pressure and danger that threaten dolphins. In addition, the best practices of dolphin watching tourism need a comprehensive management plan for achieving optimum benefits. In Egypt, the qualitative study has clarified that a management plan has to be applied to all spots of dolphin watching tourism. This plan includes all major aspects of planning, assessment, marketing, business and management.

Egyptian dolphin watching tourism should be able to maintain sustainable ecotourism. This notion depends on how this activity is carried out. This blueprint is presented as a practical to-do list in order to ensure sustainability of dolphin watching in Egypt.

Table 6

Proposed a blueprint for Responsible Dolphin Watching Tourism in Egypt

A) Planning and Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Defining and forming a committee to approve the draft action plan towards achieving responsible Egyptian dolphin watching tourism - Developing strategies in order to engage stakeholders. - Assessment of environmental, social and economic impact of Egyptian dolphin watching tourism.
B) Marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identifying current and future spots for dolphin watching tourism in Egypt. - Developing marketing plans and strategies to attract different

Continued

	<p>tourism markets.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conducting tourism marketing analysis which includes visitor background and expectations. - Designing customized tours for dolphin watching tourism.
C) Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Preparing business development plans for responsible dolphin watching tourism. - Developing different business models in order to impose fees. - Providing training programs and workshops for dolphin watching operators.
D) Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Developing a general policy for managing dolphin tourism industry. - Licensing all operators of dolphin tourism industry. - Studying legislations for dolphin tourism management and implementation. - Monitoring dolphin tourism development and determining its impact on dolphins. - Developing a mechanism to assess sustainability of dolphin watching tourism. - Providing remarkable long-term financial management.

Conclusion

Egypt has many spots where dolphins are found, from the northern Red Sea to the south, either permanently or accidentally. Tourists of all nationalities and different ages who visit the Red Sea want to participate in dolphin watching tours. This attitude makes it a basic activity that tourists desire and hope to repeat the experience. Egypt, as a tourist destination, should consider dolphin watching tourism as a tourist pattern. Dolphin watching tourism should be promoted optimally since Egypt applies the standards and has the resources to be a destination for this tourist activity. All stakeholders should collaborate to develop a management approach that makes Egypt one of the best destinations for dolphin watching tourism. In addition, Samadai Reef case study must inspire other precautionary conservation initiatives in other areas where dolphins are found such as in Satayah Reef.

Recommendations for diving centers

1. Improving the standards of diving centers to provide dolphin watching tours due to scientific research.
2. Monitoring all diving centers to raise the awareness of dolphins in order to avoid violations that negatively affect dolphins.
3. Reporting any violations by other diving centers in order to deal with them.
4. Paying attention to the number of boats that must be available in the areas where dolphins are found, so dolphins are not negatively affected.
5. Encouraging responsible authorities to pay attention to dolphin watching tourism and promote it appropriately by increasing authorities' awareness of the activities offered by centers. This attitude is performed by inviting these authorities to participate in study tours and special events.

6. Designing customized tours for dolphin watching tourism.
7. Providing dolphin watching tours that will create good word of mouth.

Recommendations for relevant authorities

Relevant authorities are national or local governments, non-governmental organizations, researchers, conservation agencies, coast guards or any other similar authorities which are interested in dolphin watching industry. These authorities are supposed to work on the following points:

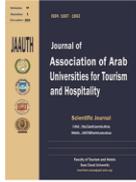
1. Providing continuous monitoring of dolphin watching activity in order to prevent any violations.
2. Promoting education programs and raising awareness about the importance of dolphin conservation.
3. Studying the implementation of the Samadai Reef management plan in other areas.
4. Renewing regulations and guidelines in order to combine the conservation of marine biodiversity with local economic benefits.
5. Conducting scientific research on the presence of dolphins and their needs, since this approach has an important role in sustainability and management of this tourism pattern.
6. Development of marketing plans and strategies in order to promote dolphin watching tourism.
7. Developing strategies aim to engage all stakeholders related to dolphin watching tourism such as researchers and non-governmental organizations to improve the conditions of this tourism pattern and manage available resources.
8. Carrying out a cost-benefit analysis of dolphin watching industry and taking an approach to enhance benefits and reduce costs.
9. Developing a sustainable evaluation mechanism of dolphin watching tourism in Egypt.
10. Using licensing fees, taxes, fines and tourism fees to provide funding for good management that includes research and educational programs.

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نحو أفضل الممارسات السياحية المسؤولة لمشاهدة الدلافين في البحر الأحمر

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معلومات المقالة	الملخص
الكلمات المفتاحية: السياحة المتخصصة؛ سياحة مشاهدة الدلافين؛ البحر الأحمر؛ الدلافين الدوارة؛ الممارسات المسؤولة.	تعتبر مصر مثلاً رائعاً كمقصد سياحي لسياحة مشاهدة الدلافين، ففي مصر وبصفة خاصة البحر الأحمر يوجد العديد من المناطق التي تعتبر مركزاً لمشاهدة الدلافين. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى وضع مخطط لممارسة سياحة مشاهدة الدلافين بطريقة مسؤولة دون الإضرار بالدلافين في بيئتها الطبيعية والحفاظ عليها كمورد سياحي مما يؤدي إلى تحقيق الفوائد المثلى من سياحة مشاهدة الدلافين والحد من التحديات التي تواجه هذا النشاط. تم استخدام المنهج النوعي لجمع البيانات من خلال المقابلات الشخصية مع عينة عشوائية من مدربي الغوص العاملين في مراكز الغوص بالبحر الأحمر، وفقاً للغرفة المصرية لسياحة الغوص والأنشطة البحرية يوجد 261 مركز غوص مسجلاً ولقد تم إجراء المقابلات مع 30 مركزاً بما يعادل أكثر من 10% من إجمالي عدد مراكز الغوص ومن أهم النتائج التي توصلت إليها الدراسة أن السائحين من مختلف الجنسيات والأعمار الذين يزورون البحر الأحمر يرغبون في المشاركة في جولات مشاهدة الدلافين وفي ضوء النتائج تم تقديم مجموعة من التوصيات لمراكز الغوص والهيئات ذات الصلة لجعل مصر واحدة من أفضل الوجهات السياحية لسياحة مشاهدة الدلافين وقد تم وضع مخطط لإدارة وتنظيم وتسويق سياحة مشاهدة الدلافين المسؤولة في مصر لزيادة الوعي بهذا النمط السياحي وضرورة ممارسته بالشكل الذي يحافظ على النمو المستدام له.
(JAAUTH) المجلد 21، العدد 1، (ديسمبر 2021)، ص 34-48.	