Maximising the value of birds and wildlife for tourism

A guide for tourism businesses in the Rift Valley/Red Sea Flyway
The Rift Valley/Red Sea hosts the migration of over 2 million birds, with Soaring Birds in huge flocks numbering tens of thousands migrating from wintering grounds in Africa to breeding grounds in Europe and Central Asia and vice versa along the second biggest Flyway in the world.

Yet this area is also subject to huge development pressures, as increased demands for energy, food supply, and tourism lead to significant changes in land use and generate the need for increased waste management. Indiscriminate hunting and illegal killing of birds is widespread. Thus, these five sectors of Agriculture, Energy, Hunting, Tourism and Waste Management can create an increasingly inhospitable environment for Migrating Soaring Birds and have the potential to affect populations of soaring birds across three continents.

The Migratory Soaring Birds project aims to integrate conservation of visiting birds into these key sectors of our societies. This is being achieved through partnerships and strategic alliances with private businesses, NGOs, governments, international organizations. We are working with these sectors in order to incorporate protection of the flyway at the heart of the development decisions and land use changes within the region, and in the case of hunting, working with governments and sustainable hunting organizations to protect Migratory Soaring Birds from illegal killing.

The Migratory Soaring Birds project is supported by the following organisations:

The Global Environment Facility (GEF) unites 182 member governments – in partnership with international institutions, civil society organisations (CSOs), and the private sector – to address global environmental issues. GEF is the donor agency for the Migratory Soaring Birds project.

The United Nations Development Program. UNDP is the United Nations’ global development network, an organisation advocating for change and connecting countries to knowledge, experience and resources to help people build a better life. UNDP is the executing agency for the Migratory Soaring Birds project.

BirdLife International is a global Partnership of conservation organisations that strives to conserve birds, their habitats and global biodiversity, working with people towards sustainability in the use of natural resources. BirdLife is the implementing agency for the Migratory Soaring Birds project.


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Cover photograph by Lior Kislev

The analysis and recommendations of this report do not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations and Development Programme (UNDP).

This document has been developed by the Responsible Hospitality Partnership (RHP) Ltd, Thame, Oxfordshire
# Maximising the value of birds and wildlife for tourism

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Maximising the value of birds and wildlife for tourism

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Welcome by Jane Ashton, Director of Sustainability, TUI Group.

As a global player aspiring to market and brand leadership in the tourism sector, TUI feels a particular commitment to the principle of sustainability. For us, sustainability means the continuous balancing over the long-term of economic, ecological, social and cultural needs. We believe that by balancing these needs we can: safeguard our competitiveness, avoid risks, secure opportunities, promote the potential of employees, intensify cooperation with public interest groups, and sustainably improve the efficient use of natural resources.

Over the years, TUI has worked with many destinations to support the achievement of our sustainability ambitions. Increasingly, destination stakeholders tell us that their success depends not only on the quality of the tourism service that they provide, but also on the quality of the environments in which they operate. Our partners in destinations frequently ask us to help them to use the bird and wildlife in their area, not only to provide exceptional tourist experiences, but also as a mechanism through which they can stimulate active conservation of these environments.

Projects of which we are particularly proud have included: the development of nature and cultural excursions to support conservation of the mangrove forests in Sri Lanka (in partnership with the Global Nature Fund), initiatives to protect sea turtles in Turkey, programmes to work with tourists and dive operators to support coral reef protection in Egypt and the partnership between Jaz Hotels and BirdLife in Egypt.

This handbook provides practical information to maximise the value that birds add to all tourism experiences and to support the conservation of habitats on which birds depend.

We wish you good luck in implementing the advice in the pages that follow.
How to use this guide

This handbook has been designed for use interactively (as a .PDF) or to be printed as a conventional book. If you choose to use it interactively, you can click on references to page numbers in the text and use the contents, back and forwards tabs at the base of the screen to navigate to the elements that interest you.

“Birding plays a significant and growing part in the tourism industry, and creates direct and indirect economic benefits for many countries and communities, also amongst developing countries. Wildlife watching appeals to a wide range of people, and opportunities to participate in wildlife watching are and should increasingly be a factor in tourists’ holiday choices today.”

Elizabeth Maruma Mrema Acting Executive Secretary of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS).

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Turn to page 9 to see how birds and wildlife add value to tourism experiences

Turn to page 17 to implement steps to maximise the value of birds and wildlife to tourism

Turn to page 24 to take action to protect the bird and wildlife of the Rift Valley/Red Sea Flyway

Turn to page 12 to see how management processes can maximise the positive impacts of tourism

Turn to page 15 to understand why the Rift Valley/Red Sea Flyway is a unique tourism asset

Download the Powerpoint slides that accompany these guidelines. These can be used to present the guidelines to other stakeholders

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If you want a hard copy, please ensure you only print the pages you need.
Glossary of Terms

Ecotourism
In its purist term, ecotourism is “Responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment, sustains the well-being of the local people, and involves interpretation and education” (TIES, 2015). Education within this context is meant to be inclusive of both staff and customers. In real life, the term ecotourism is generally applied to tourism experiences in which the viewing of nature is a core component. The need to conserve that nature or contribute to the well-being of local people is a lesser concern for many ecotourists.

Mass tourism
There are few accepted definitions of mass tourism, but all include the concept of large numbers of tourists, usually travelling with a tour operator, generally holidaying in a country that is not their home, and usually travelling to a well-defined destination or holiday resort that has large scale facilities designed specifically for the purpose of hosting tourists. Mass tourism is often perceived as incompatible with conservation. However, this is not necessarily the case and there are a number of examples of ‘mass tourism’ operators engaging in conservation projects.

Mainstream tourism
A concept that is similar to mass tourism and that generally describes tourists who are travelling as a part of an organised tour to a destination that offers conventional tourist activities such as beaches and city breaks and who like to mingle with people similar to themselves. Mainstream tourism should not be confused with the concept of mainstreaming. The term mainstreaming in an environmental context describes the process of embedding mechanisms to conserve biodiversity into industrial sectoral strategies, plans and programmes that recognise the crucial role that biodiversity has for human well-being.

Migratory flyways
An established route used year after year by large numbers (millions) of migrating birds. They fly over continents, oceans, mountains and valleys, as a part of their annual migration between breeding and wintering grounds. In the Rift Valley/Red Sea Flyway, birds migrate north in the Spring to breed and south in the Autumn to winter in Africa.
**Glossary of Terms**

**Migratory soaring birds**
These are birds of prey, storks, cranes, ibis and pelicans, migrating by day using thermals to gain height and glide. They avoid sea crossings and thus migrate in huge numbers through land connections between continents as is seen in the Rift Valley/Red Sea Flyway. There are at least 37 species numbering over 2 million individuals passing through this region in Spring and Autumn.

**Responsible tourism**
Responsible tourism can apply to any type of holiday, from a luxury beach villa to a volunteering project. Responsible tourism simply means holidays that care about local communities & culture as well as wildlife conservation & the environment (responsibletravel.com).

**Sustainable tourism certification schemes**
Typically based on environmental management systems, these schemes have a number of criteria that encourage tourism businesses to minimise their negative impacts on the environment and sometimes the communities in which they are based. Tourism businesses that demonstrate that they surpass a specific number of criteria are allowed to use a logo to display their 'green' credentials. Some of the international hotel and tour operator businesses now ask all of the hotels that they own or manage to gain accreditation to one or more of these schemes.
Tourism hit a new record in 2014 with over 1.1 billion international tourists travelling the world in one single year. Add to this the millions of people who travelled within their home country (domestic tourists) and you begin to appreciate the scale of the global tourism industry.

It is estimated that tourism contributes more than 9 per cent to GDP globally.

Travel for tourists is facilitated by a wide range of businesses, from the international hotel, airline and tour operators that transport millions of people across the globe every year, to the tiny family run guided tours, cafés and accommodation establishments that provide unique cultural experiences to a handful of tourists a year.

These businesses all have one important attribute in common; they depend upon the quality and long-term viability of the natural environment in the destinations in which they exist. This is becoming more rather than less important to the tourism industry, and tourism businesses are becoming increasingly aware of this fact.

If well managed, tourism is one of the few industries that can play a transformative role, especially in developing countries. It can provide valuable economic development opportunities at all levels of society alongside a powerful incentive for community cohesion and environmental protection (Christie et al, 2014). If poorly managed, tourism can damage the environments on which it depends.

“It used to be that if one area was built up, you could always move on somewhere else… but increasingly we are not in a position to escape the mess that we have created”

Martin Brackenbury, former chair of the international organisation that represents the mainstream tour operators (known as the International Federation of Tour Operators)

Well managed, tourism can be:
- An essential source of income for local people
- A mechanism to stimulate small business development
- A powerful generator of jobs
- An incentive to protect wildlife and the local environment
- A nexus for communities to come together and celebrate their respective cultures.
Birds and wildlife add value to tourism experiences. For example,

- Costa Rica and South Africa (both located on prominent migratory flyways) actively promote themselves to birdwatchers to attract high spending tourists. In 1999, the Costa Rican Tourism Institute estimated that 41% of its $1-billion dollar tourism revenues was from tourists who came primarily for the purpose of birdwatching.

- A study of villages in Poland that have established stork nesting colonies indicated that tourists spent an average of US $60 per visit (excluding travel costs) and US $120 per visit (including travel costs) as a result of viewing the storks.

- A study by the RSPB in the UK estimated that each tourist spends £4.92 on a day trip and £55.96 on a visit to view birds (Molloy et al, 2011).

When people talk about bird and wildlife tourism, they are often discussing just one small part of the leisure travel market, referred to as ecotourism (see glossary for a definition of this term). However, birds and wildlife, can appeal to a much wider range of travellers (the blue circles opposite).
Maximising the value from all types of tourism

Some of the terms used to describe different types of tourism have specific value judgements associated with them. Most common among these terms are **mass tourism** (often portrayed as bad and damaging to the environment) and **ecotourism** (often described as good and supporting environmental protection). These judgements can mean that some businesses fail to recognise the opportunities to enhance tourism income from wildlife (including birds) because they perceive these attributes to be of no interest to the type of tourist they attract. Tourism businesses should be aware that:

- The same tourist can fit into a range of different categories. For example: a mainstream tourist to a beach resort may choose to go on an excursion organised by an inbound tour operator to a prime bird sanctuary. In so doing, they may become an ecotourist for the day, learning about the flora and fauna of the destination and generating revenue for the bird sanctuary.
- A large scale hotel with facilities such as golf courses and swimming pools may have bird nesting areas or wildlife of interest within their boundary. These can attract ecotourists in their own right. In so doing, a mass tourism destination can have some of the attributes of an ecotourism site, requiring the same conservation input and interpretation that has much in common with the management of protected areas.
- A hotel that accommodates mainstream tourists during the peak tourist season may attract bird watchers or other special interest groups during low season times. Embracing and encouraging birds and wildlife around the hotel will also add value to the mainstream tourist visitor experience. This can make the customer aware of a unique asset of your hotel that otherwise would not be immediately apparent.

Studies have demonstrated that destinations with diverse bird and wildlife can use these resources to:

- Increase the length of stay of tourists
- Increase the spend per tourist
- Increase the satisfaction of tourists
- Retain tourist loyalty and achieve a higher percentage of return visits.
The value that wildlife in general and birds in particular can add to the specific experiences of tourists will depend upon a range of factors, including: the variety of birds and wildlife in the destination, the steps that are taken to bring bird and wildlife closer to customers (whether by providing viewing opportunities or interpretation within the grounds of a hotel or offering excursions to local bird reserves), the extent to which wildlife can be easily observed, and the type of tourists that visit. The diagram opposite illustrates the types of tourist that may be interested in birds and wildlife as a part of a broader holiday experience.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason for travel:</th>
<th>Nature lovers (ecotourists)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To experience nature</td>
<td>Spend profile: $$$$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major markets: USA, UK, Europe and Australia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demographic profile: Urban, 30-55’s, affluent, travelling independently or with a small specialist operator.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attracting them: Wildlife spectacles, (eg: migration spectacle) easily accessible and observed wildlife.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason for travel:</th>
<th>Domestic tourists</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To visit friends and relatives, take a short break.</td>
<td>Spend profile: $</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major markets: Domestic, cities within a 2 hour drive.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demographic profile: Generally younger often family groups. Often city dwellers returning to an area with which they are already familiar.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attracting them: Stories, unique attributes, reiterate links with local culture, festivals and other options to view iconic species.</td>
<td></td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason for travel:</th>
<th>Bird watchers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To watch birds</td>
<td>Spend profile:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major markets: USA, UK, Europe and Australia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demographic profile: Older, affluent, often travelling alone or as part of a specialist group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attracting them: Highlighting birds and the wildlife opportunities in your area, especially rare species, migration, high diversity of species or easily observable wildlife. Log book of sightings.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason for travel:</th>
<th>Tourists in their hotels</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To relax in vibrant, attractive and well managed environments</td>
<td>Spend profile: $-$$$$$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major markets: UK and Europe</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demographic profile: Couples, families, group tours, 30+ - Usually travelling with a mainstream operator.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attracting them:</td>
<td>Provide bird feeders, kids club activities, wildlife identification cards.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Reason for travel:</th>
<th>Tourists taking excursions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To have a new experience, to relax and enjoy the scenery.</td>
<td>Spend profile: $-$$$$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major markets: UK and Europe</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demographic profile: Couples, families, group tours, 30+ - Usually travelling with a mainstream operator.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attracting them:</td>
<td>Promote opportunities to explore bird and wildlife as a part of the broader experience. Wildlife spectacles, (eg: migration movements) easily accessible and observed wildlife. Wildlife log books for tourist use.</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<th>Reason for travel:</th>
<th>Independent/ responsible travellers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To experience different cultures and the great outdoors</td>
<td>Spend profile: $-$$$$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major markets: USA, UK, Europe and Australia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demographic profile: Affluent, 25-40’s professional, often travelling in couples. Usually travelling independently or with a specialist operator.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attracting them:</td>
<td>Authentic experience, story-telling opportunities to experience the real destination</td>
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Minimizing the negative and maximising the positive impacts of tourism

All tourism businesses will have both positive and negative impacts on the environment in which they operate. What is important is not the type of tourism or the size of the business, but the management processes that are in place to maximise benefits and minimise negative impacts.

The guidelines in this document will help any tourism business benefit from the birds and wildlife in the vicinity and to take steps to conserve these assets for future tourists and residents to enjoy.

If you want a hard copy, please ensure you only print the pages you need.
Mainstreaming conservation of birds and wildlife into all tourism businesses

Most tourism businesses recognise that the long term viability of their businesses is dependent upon a good quality natural environment. Many have adopted formal strategies to maximise the positive and minimise the negative environmental impacts of their operations. Tourism businesses often refer to these strategies with terms such as ‘green’, responsible business, corporate social responsibility (CSR) or environmental management.

The strategic objective of the TUI Group is to continuously “attach value” to biodiversity as a natural resource in holiday destinations and as the natural basis for tourism – today and in future.


A wealth of advice has been developed to help tourism businesses reduce their environmental impacts. This is usually based on the experiences of the global companies and some of the most useful information is available in the resources section of this guide. Most businesses that have a common approach to addressing these issues base them on an environmental management system (opposite).
Sustainable tourism certification schemes have been developed as a mechanism to help tourism businesses minimise the negative environmental impacts of their operations (including supporting bird and wildlife conservation). Sustainable tourism certification schemes are all based on an environmental management systems approach. Sustainable tourism certification schemes have attracted membership from many of the mainstream tourism businesses as well as small scale ecotourism operators. Hotel business Rezidor, for example, use Green Key and tour operator TUI Travelife as their preferred scheme. It is estimated that more than 5,000 businesses globally currently belong to one of the sustainable tourism certification schemes. The logos associated with the most widely recognised schemes are illustrated opposite. Tourism businesses that belong to one or more of the schemes can gain additional points for any steps they take to enhance bird or wildlife around their business.

BirdLife would welcome discussions with sustainable tourism certification schemes about working together. This means that these schemes may recognise the bird and wildlife conservation activities described within this guide in their criteria. It is recommended that any business that is seeking to manage its impacts on birds and wildlife places this does within the context of one of the existing sustainable tourism certification schemes, or a broader environmental management systems framework.

Watch out for these symbols in the Guidelines on pages 19 to 32. They highlight the actions that can gain additional points within a sustainable tourism certification scheme.
The remarkable migration along the Rift Valley/Red Sea Flyway and its unleashed tourism potential

This document is designed for Hotels within the Rift Valley/Red Sea (RV/RS) flyway. This hugely important migration area extending through the Middle East (including Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, Palestine Saudi Arabia, Yemen) to Africa (notably in Egypt, Djibouti Eritrea Ethiopia and Sudan) is witness to one of the greatest bird migrations in the world.

Together with many millions of smaller birds which migrate unseen at night; there is a visible migration of soaring birds (numbering at least 37 species; mostly birds of prey but also cranes, ibis, storks and pelicans) which migrate by day and can be observed flying over in large "kettles" of circling birds through the region. These spectacular kettles are the birds utilising columns of rising air—known as thermals—in order to travel great distances whilst expending little energy. They simply rise on the thermal to gain height, minimising energy expenditure to the next thermal where they repeat the process. Tracked eagles average 177km a day using this method. Studies have shown that soaring birds can spend over a quarter of the year on migration. A satellite-tracked Steppe Eagle Aquila nipalensis flew 9,543 km from Botswana to Kazakhstan over the course of eight weeks (Meyburg et al. 2012).

Their reliance on thermals, however, requires that they avoid large bodies of water. Consequently, large numbers of soaring birds concentrate at land crossings into Africa. These ‘bottleneck’ sites include popular tourism locations such as Ain Sukhna in Egypt can host tens of thousands of birds during periods of migration and soaring bird migration is very apparent across much of the RV/RS.

Some countries along the flyway are already significant tourist destinations. In Egypt, for example, tourism is thought to represent 10 per cent of GDP, 40 per cent of non-commodity exports and around 20% of foreign currency revenues. In Lebanon, tourism employs around 129,500 people (around 9.5 per cent of the total labour force) and this is expected to increase to 32 per cent by 2022. Tourism in both of these countries is already dependent to some extent on the Flyway and tourism...
businesses are already actively engaged in conserving the environment on which Migratory Soaring Birds depend.

UNWTO recognise that tourism potential in most countries along the Flyway is untapped. In some cases, this is a result of the current political climate. In many countries, however, there is a significant opportunity to make tourism a mainstay of economic development and conservation strategies. Since tourism positively affects many other sectors within the economy (construction, agriculture etc.), its overall contribution in local economies is much higher than other sectors. A failure to protect the ecosystem of the Flyway will, however, undermine the tourism potential for these countries, and especially the potential in high spending tourism market segments. All countries can maximise the tourism potential of the Flyway and this guide provides some tips on achieving this. All tourism businesses are also able to Take Action to Protect the Flyway and guidance is provided on these issues too. Most tourism businesses find that steps they take to support conservation contribute towards sustaining the tourism potential of the area, but also reduce internal costs and ultimately improve their profitability. If appropriately communicated, they are also well received by tourists.

Saker Falcon (Photographer: Lior Kislev)
Maximise the tourism potential of the Flyway and take action to protect it.

All tourism businesses can maximise the benefits from and take action to protect the Flyway. If all tourism businesses implement just one of the actions from each section of the guidelines that follow, they will make a significant difference to the future of tourism and the wild and bird life of the region.
Maximise the value of birds and wildlife for tourism

Birds and wildlife can add authenticity to any tourism experience in any destination. In addition to providing enjoyment to the casual observer they can act as a powerful incentive to travel to the dedicated ecotourist and differentiate one resort from another in the eye of the everyday tourist.

Tourism businesses can maximise the value of birds and wildlife by taking steps to:

1. Enhance the enjoyment of existing tourists on the premises  
   Page 19
2. Increase revenue by offering existing tourists new experiences  
   Page 21
3. Increase revenues by attracting new types of tourist  
   Page 23

The symbols on the map illustrate the type of birdwatching tourism opportunities that are generally available across the region.

**Bird migration**
Sites that will enable tourists to see birds as they make their migration across the region. Mid to late morning and into the afternoon are the best times for viewing, but sightings cannot be guaranteed.

**Breeding sites and wetlands**
Sites which have an abundance of bird life year round. Tourists can usually observe birds (sometimes including migratory birds) feeding and nesting.

**Watching**
Sites that have bird watching facilities for general tourists, including interpretation panels. Some of these sites have refreshments available for tourists.

**Excursions**
Sites that have facilities to receive excursions of large numbers of tourists with an interest in bird or wildlife (perhaps alongside cultural or other facilities).
1. Enhance the enjoyment of existing customers

Whether watching glossy starlings sharing food in a tree close to the hotel restaurant or listing a sighting of white stork flying overhead in the hotel bird watching log book, birds and wildlife can add a new and unique dimension to many tourism experiences.

Many traditional folk tales, festivals and foods have their roots in the birds and wildlife of an area. So much so that some hotels choose to tell the story of their own development through the wildlife of the area (Banyan Tree do this really well – see www.banyantree.com/en/the-banyan-tree-stories).

Others choose to provide the information in menus (explaining, for example, the origin of the name of a dish that is named after local bird life). An example may include the Bulbul’s nest, a very common sweet available in the Levant area.

The following page provides guidelines to help Businesses enhance the enjoyment of their customers.
Guidelines for tourism businesses

1. Enhance the enjoyment of existing customers

- Provide information in the lobby/guest handbook to help guests identify species that may be observed from different parts of the hotel.
  To read more go to page 39

- Designate a part of the hotel grounds as wild or bird life friendly.
  To read more go to page 39

- Help tourists view some events from the comfort of the hotel. Use flowering native plants, bird feeders and bird tables to enable customers to easily observe the wildlife. One could also provide video or other footage that can be viewed from the hotel web site or in a specific screening.
  To read more go to page 40

- Provide maps and ideas for walking trails that customers may enjoy.
  To read more go to page 40

- Identify local festivals and other events that are focussed around birds and wildlife and promote these to customers.
  To read more go to page 41

- Ensure your team can talk about the steps that the business is taking to maximise positive and minimise negative environmental impacts.
  To read more go to page 41

- If you have a kids club, focus some activities around the flora and fauna of the area.
  To read more go to page 42

(Source: www.naturedetectives.org.uk) (Source: Centerparcs.co.uk)
Guidelines for tourism businesses

2. Increase revenue by offering existing tourists new experiences

For some tourism businesses, especially those that achieve high peak season occupancies but have excess capacity at other times of the year, new types of tourist can be attracted to utilise excess capacity during low season periods. Examples may include bird watchers visiting to see a particular migratory spectacle. For other hotels new types of tourist may bolster profitability by providing a new stream of income year round.

Examples may include attracting tourists on a wildlife tour who spend a night or two in the hotel to view the specific species in the area before moving on to another hotel, or visiting your hotel specifically because you are using feeders which are attracting birds that are otherwise difficult to see.

These steps can all add authenticity, which in the words of Justin Francis (Managing Director of online operator Responsibletravel.com) “… is the latest buzzword in tourism. Fed up with mock European resorts; increasingly embarrassed by theatrical performances staged especially for tourists; and curious about different cultures and ways of life tourists want ‘real’ and authentic experiences – and they are prepared to pay for it”.

If you want a hard copy, please ensure you only print the pages you need
2. Increase revenue by offering existing tourists new experiences

Work with a partner organisation (e.g. a local tour guide, inbound travel agent, wildlife or BirdLife partner) to offer guided tours of local flora and fauna to existing customers. Some organisations such as BirdLife International can even offer training for those who wish to become bird guides. Contact your local BirdLife office to see if they can help.

Display local arts, crafts or stories about birds and wildlife around the business.

Understand bird and wildlife opportunities at different times of the year.

Invite customers to attend events about the birds and wildlife of the area.

(Source: Marcus Kohler)
Guidelines for tourism businesses

3. Increase revenues by attracting new types of tourist

Tourism businesses that are located in rural areas with unique birds or interesting wildlife, or tour operators with specialist knowledge in these issues may be able to use these attributes to attract specific types of bird watching tourists.

It is important to remember that tourists who travel specifically to view birds and wildlife are a small and specialist niche of the general tourism market place. They are, however, generally a high spend market segment. Most are experienced travellers and will have high expectations of the types of species they will see and the level of knowledge of your guides. Many will also avoid staying in large scale holiday hotels (preferring smaller and less apparently commercial establishments) so check that your hotel has the right profile for this type of customer. Before committing to marketing expenditure, ensure that you can: reach these target markets, meet their expectations of the species they will see, and justify the marketing expenditure by converting it into a sufficient volume of tourists. Your national BirdLife partner or the BirdLife Regional Flyway Facility can provide insight and advice to take this forward.

Include wildlife or bird watchers as a designated niche group within your marketing strategy.

To read more go to page 45

Build packages with sufficient variety to attract tourists who enjoy bird watching alongside other activities (e.g. walking).

To read more go to page 46

twitter sites are particularly popular with wildlife audiences such as bird watchers. Surfbirds, for example, has 5,371 followers on twitter and 12,500 Facebook fans.
Guidelines for tourism businesses

Take action to protect the Flyway from the impacts of tourism

One of the biggest threats to tourism development in the Rift Valley/Red Sea Flyway is environmental degradation. Most of this is caused by urbanisation, infrastructure developments and increasingly intensive farming methods and other industrial sectors. Some of the impacts are, however, related to tourism activity. Many tourism businesses find that a little time and effort spent looking after their surroundings, will ensure that customers can benefit from that environment for years to come. Some destinations with well-managed environments claim that they attract customers who spend more, have better quality experiences, are more likely to return and stay for longer. Staff also claim that they prefer to work for businesses that look after the environment.

All tourism businesses can integrate a few basic actions to protect the Flyway into their routine practices. Tourism businesses that manage to implement just one measure from each of the following 5 sections will be making a significant contribution to protecting the Flyway for future tourists to enjoy.

The guidelines provide ideas to help:

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Tourism businesses often have extensive grounds (in some cases including golf courses) and – if well managed - these can provide great habitats for birds and wildlife, including Migratory Soaring Birds. In fact, hotel grounds in some countries along the Flyway may be the first opportunity that Migratory Soaring Birds have to drink since they started their long migration. Effective management can make your grounds an asset, providing diversity and authenticity to customer experiences. This can also protect the Flyway for future generations to enjoy.

### Guidelines for tourism businesses

#### 4. Maximise the potential of grounds to attract birds

**Does the beach attract turtles?** Is there an area that can be kept for them. What an opportunity for customers to observe a magnificent animal whilst protecting some breeding habitat. This will need some simple management and advice is available.

**Can part of the bay be left for roosting and migrating waders.** If you have a jetty, provide posts on which the birds can roost at high tide and point out the spectacle to your customers.

**Does the beach attract turtles?** Is there an area that can be kept for them. What an opportunity for customers to observe a magnificent animal whilst protecting some breeding habitat. This will need some simple management and advice is available.

**Add variety of nest boxes to trees.** Boxes for Kestrels; Pied Wagtails; Sparrows; Owls (Barn, Little) will all nest in boxes. Consider installing a video link to bring nesting events into the hotel.

**Planting native and high nectar species.** These will attract sunbirds to the poolside and bring other wildlife closer to customers.

**Adapt rock features to allow crevices to attract reptiles.** Add a cave feature close to the water’s edge and provide small access points. These can provide a night spectacle of bats and birds of prey feeding.

**Consider the potential to grow vegetables and fruit trees.** Mangos; Papaya; Plantain and Fig and Olive trees attract wildlife as well as having potential use in the hotel kitchen. Fruiting trees are of interest to everyone, wildlife and customers!

**Areas of dense native plants away from the tourism area can form the link to attract wildlife closer to the customer.** Consider how your design could link to a wildlife area beyond the hotel grounds.

**Consider a water feature in addition to the pool with gentle gradient to attract migrant waders.** When planted with native plants and sand banks, these features can attract colonies of breeding bee eaters to the hotel grounds.

**Consider within rock landscape a cliff structure to attract crag martins nesting over the pool.**

**Consider the potential to grow vegetables and fruit trees.** Mangos; Papaya; Plantain and Fig and Olive trees attract wildlife as well as having potential use in the hotel kitchen. Fruiting trees are of interest to everyone, wildlife and customers!

**Add variety of nest boxes to trees.** Boxes for Kestrels; Pied Wagtails; Sparrows; Owls (Barn, Little) will all nest in boxes. Consider installing a video link to bring nesting events into the hotel.

**Planting native and high nectar species.** These will attract sunbirds to the poolside and bring other wildlife closer to customers.
4. Maximise the potential of grounds to attract birds

- Provide nesting sites, and welcome birds that nest in unexpected areas as long as they do not provide a risk to the health of staff, customers or the birds themselves.
  
  To read more go to page 47

- Maintain existing fresh water resources as drinking areas for birds and wildlife and provide new ponds/drinking areas.
  
  To read more go to page 48

- Deter predators, especially cats from bird and other wildlife habitats.
  
  To read more go to page 49

- Use indigenous plants in landscaping wherever possible.
  
  To read more go to page 49

- Reduce/avoid the use of toxic pesticides and chemical fertilizers and depend on natural/sustainable alternatives.
  
  To read more go to page 50

- Minimise the use of hard landscaping.
  
  To read more go to page 50
National parks along the Flyway are already significant tourist attractions, providing economic benefits to local communities.

Ras Mohammed and Giftun Island in Egypt, for example, generated an estimated 5 million tourism visits in 2008/9 (Arab Republic of Egypt, Ministry of Tourism, 2009). Reminding communities of the economic and cultural value of birds (as well as supporting them in gathering information about them) can make them champions of conservation in their own right.

5. Engage staff and communities in valuing the contribution of birds to the tourism economy

Make sure all staff, tour guides etc. that you employ are aware of the law, especially vis-à-vis collecting animal parts, protection and status of species and avoiding disturbance to breeding and roosting wildlife.

To read more go to page 51

Provide information to staff about birds and wildlife. Encourage them to learn to identify key species so they can talk knowledgeably to customers about them.

To read more go to page 51

Promote the value of birds and wildlife to hotels and other tourism organisations that you work with.

To read more go to page 52
Guidelines for tourism businesses

6. Embrace bird friendly operating practices and encourage suppliers to do the same

Tourism businesses have significant potential to support bird and wildlife conservation in and around their sites. Many of the steps that are suggested below will not only enhance the quality of bird and wildlife experiences that you can offer to your customers, but they will also: add authenticity, make a wider contribution to the quality of the local environment and, in some instances, reduce operating costs. Tourism businesses that implement good environmental practices also report that they result in improved staff morale and customer perceptions of quality.

Many hotels choose to utilise sustainable tourism certification schemes as a mechanism to develop a systematic approach to reducing costs, reducing pollution and supporting conservation and community engagement. Some tour operators, including TUI, ask the hotels they work with to join such a scheme. If your business is interested in sustainable tourism certification, you should talk to your national tourism administration in the first instance.
### Guidelines for tourism businesses

#### 6. Embrace bird friendly operating practices and encourage suppliers to do the same

<table>
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<tr>
<th>✔️</th>
<th>Adopt a comprehensive and environmental management systems based approach to managing environmental impacts.</th>
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<tr>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>Minimise water consumption in your hotel.</td>
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<tr>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>Ensure that waste water is treated before being discharged.</td>
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<tr>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>Minimise wastes, especially potentially hazardous wastes.</td>
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| ✔️ | Manage litter, and especially food waste and plastic bags, with care.                                      |
|    | To read more go to page 55                                                                                 |
| ✔️ | Limit group sizes when out and about.                                                                      |
|    | To read more go to page 56                                                                                 |
| ✔️ | Ask your suppliers (including hotels if you are a tour operator) to tell you about the measures they take to support birds and wildlife. |
|    | To read more go to page 56                                                                                 |
7. Plan new and refurbish existing tourism infrastructure in a bird-friendly way

The greatest opportunities for ensuring that birds and wildlife are sustained occur at the planning and design stage for new tourism businesses or the refurbishment stage for existing businesses. Many tourism businesses do not have the opportunity to exert an influence at this stage, but if you are able to influence this process, make sure that your proposed new build or refurbishment includes conservation of habitats and as a minimum meets regulatory requirements.

On the following page are a list of things you could consider.
Guidelines for tourism businesses

7. Plan new and refurbish existing tourism infrastructure in a bird-friendly way

- Undertake a thorough environmental impact assessment of your planned development (even if it is not required by law), including its impact on the immediate footprint of the property and its wider environment.
  
  To read more go to page 57

- Ensure that your plans have minimal impact on water resources.
  
  To read more go to page 57

- Ensure that all waste water from the business will be treated to an acceptable minimum standard prior to discharge.
  
  To read more go to page 58

- Develop a holistic landscaping programme that maximises value for bird and wildlife.
  
  To read more go to page 58

- Provide a bird or wildlife watching area as part of the design and include customer interpretation as a key part of the design.
  
  To read more go to page 59

- Select your building contractor(s) and materials with care.
  
  To read more go to page 59
Guidelines for tourism businesses

8. Build partnerships with credible organisations to ensure the conservation of the Flyway.

Wildlife organisations have a host of skills and expertise that can support your initiatives. BirdLife International is the global focal point for knowledge and expertise about bird conservation and BirdLife and its regional partners can work with tourism businesses to support conservation. Many are only too willing to work with tourism businesses to support wildlife management or monitoring. Some can even help you promote the birds and wildlife on your site.

On the following page are a list of things you could consider.
Guidelines for tourism businesses

8. Build partnerships with credible conservation organisations to ensure the preservation of the Flyway.

- Work with a local conservation organisation to improve staff awareness of local wild and bird life.
  
  To read more go to page 60

- Provide information to customers about birds and wildlife items that are commonly traded in the area, but which should not be purchased, especially those that are protected by national or international law.
  
  To read more go to page 60

- Work with BirdLife partners to support the protection of a local nature reserve or natural areas.
  
  To read more go to page 61

- Work in partnership with a conservation partner to monitor the impact of your programmes.
  
  To read more go to page 61
BirdLife International is a global Partnership of nature conservation organisations. The BirdLife network organisations in the Red Sea/Rift Valley Flyway are listed below.

BirdLife International host a wealth of resources on their web site about the region. Visit www.migratorysoaringbirds.BirdLife.org. The contacts for specific partners are included below.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Name of organisation</th>
<th>Web site</th>
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<tr>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>Society for the Protection of Nature in Lebanon</td>
<td><a href="http://www.spnl.org">www.spnl.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature</td>
<td><a href="http://www.rscn.org.jo">www.rscn.org.jo</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Djibouti</td>
<td>Association Djibouti Nature</td>
<td><a href="http://www.djiboutinature.org">www.djiboutinature.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Palestine</td>
<td>Palestine Wildlife Society</td>
<td><a href="http://www.wildlife-palestine.org">www.wildlife-palestine.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>Syrian Society for the Conservation of Wildlife</td>
<td><a href="http://www.sscw.syria.org">www.sscw.syria.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>Ethiopian Wildlife and Natural History Society</td>
<td><a href="http://www.ewnhs.org.et">www.ewnhs.org.et</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>KSA</td>
<td>Saudi Wildlife Authority</td>
<td><a href="http://www.nwrc.gov.sa">www.nwrc.gov.sa</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>Nature Conservation Egypt</td>
<td><a href="http://www.natureegypt.org">www.natureegypt.org</a></td>
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ANNEX 2 – Resources from other organisations

• Travel Foundation – various training resources and information about environmental management systems.
  - www.thetravelfoundation.org.uk/

• TUI – manuals on environmental management in hotels and customer communications advice.
  - http://www.tui-travelplc.com/sustainability/priorities/our-customers/our-customers-overview#.VMAEn0esWCo
  - https://www.tui-group.com/dms/nachhaltigkeit/umwelt/biodiv/Artenschutzflyer_eng0/Artenschutzflyer_eng.pdf

• Accor environmental management materials

• Inter-Continental Hotels environmental management materials

• UNEP resources

• Green Hotelier
  - www.greenhotelier.org

• RHP – www.rhpltd.net

• Major sustainable tourism certification schemes and accreditation bodies
  - Green Key – www.green-key.org
  - Travelife – www.travelife.org
  - Green Globe – www.greenglobe.com
  - Green Tourism Business Scheme – www.green-tourism.com
  - Global Sustainable Tourism Council – www.gstcouncil.org
ANNEX 3 – Suggested regional wildlife books

- **Collins Bird Guide**
  Collins Bird Guide Killian Mullarney, Dan Zetterström & Lars Svensson The most complete field guide to the birds of Britain, Europe, North Africa, to Egypt

- **Raptors of Europe and Middle East**
  Raptors of Europe and Middle East Dick Forsman
  17 K - 18 Jan 2015

- **Birds of the Middle East (2nd Ed.)**
  17 K - 18 Jan 2015

- **Birds of Europe with North Africa & The Middle East**
  Birds of Europe with North Africa & The Middle East Lars Jonsson Still one of the better field guides. Covers all but a few ...
  18 K - 18 Jan 2015

- **Birds of the Horn of Africa**
  Birds of the Horn of Africa Nigel Redman, John Fanshawe & Terry Stevenson Helm Field Guide to the birds of Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti, Somalia, Sudan...
  19 K - 18 Jan 2015

- **Ethiopia (Bradt Travel Guide)**
  Ethiopia (Bradt Travel Guide) Philip Briggs 6th edition (2012). Of all the African nations, Ethiopia is most prone to misconceptions. The 1985 famine and ...
  17 K - 18 Jan 2015

- **Birds of Ethiopia and Eritrea**
  Birds of Ethiopia and Eritrea John Ash & John Atkins
  17 K - 18 Jan 2015

- **Where to watch birds in Ethiopia**
  Where to watch birds in Ethiopia Claire Spottiswoode, Merid Gabreamichael & Julian Francis An extremely comprehensive guide to the 50 best birding sites in...
  16 K - 18 Jan 2015

- **Guide to Endemic Birds of Ethiopia and Eritrea**
  Guide to Endemic Birds of Ethiopia and Eritrea Jose Luis Vivero Pol Each account is illustrated with a photograph and features a distribution map...
  17 K - 18 Jan 2015

- **Birds of Africa south of the Sahara**
  Birds of Africa south of the Sahara Ian Sinclair & Peter Ryan Second edition, including 500 new images and 400 updated distribution maps. Unrivalled ...
  18 K - 18 Jan 2015
ANNEX 3 – Suggested regional wildlife books

- **Mammals of Europe, North Africa and the Middle East**
  Mammals of Europe, North Africa and the Middle East S Aulagnier, P Haffner, A J Mitchell-Jones, F Moutou & J Zima...
  17 K - 18 Jan 2015

- **Kingdon Pocket Guide to African Mammals**
  Kingdon Pocket Guide to African Mammals Jonathan Kingdon pocket identification guide to all African land mammals
  18 K - 18 Jan 2015
ANNEX 4 – Further information on implementing the guidelines.

The following annex, provides further information on how to implement the guidelines listed from page 20 onwards of this document.
Guidelines for hotels and tour operators

1. Enhance the enjoyment of existing customers

Provide information in the lobby/guest handbook to help customers identify species that may be observed from different parts of the hotel.

How
Remember that even species that are a common sight to you and your team such as the Palestine Sunbird, Laughing Dove or Common Bulbul may seem exotic or provide entertainment to customers from different climates. Include common species that customers will almost certainly see and a few iconic ones (e.g. migrating storks and other raptors) that are less frequent visitors.

Add value
Some customers (and especially children) enjoy making a record of the species they see. You can provide simple formats for this. You can maximise the value of guest sightings by working with a local BirdLife Partner (see Annex 1 in the main document for a list of BirdLife Partners in the region). They may be able to help you to keep records of what has been seen (some organisations call this citizen science). For maximum impact, keep a simple log book in the reception area so customers can see which species are regular sightings and which are rare. If you use social media, consider keeping a blog, twitter or other social media presence about sightings to help you keep in touch with customers. A log book enabling customers to write their sightings can over time become a valuable point of reference for people to see and learn about the wildlife of the hotel.

Designate a part of the hotel grounds as wild or bird life friendly.

How
Identify a new or protect an existing part of the hotel grounds that will be designated as a bird and wildlife area. If designating a new site, make sure your design includes native species of plant that provide both cover and food for birds and wildlife. Place seating to enable those customers with an interest in local birds and wildlife to enjoy the spectacle (ensuring that this does not disturb the wildlife). In some environments, feeders can encourage specific types of wildlife into your grounds. (Specialist bird books can help customers who are particularly interested in what they see – see Annex 2 for some recommended titles). Select feeders with care and make sure they are well managed so they do not:

- Bring birds and wildlife into easy reach of predators
- Attract the wrong type of visitors (especially vermin).

Your BirdLife partner NGO may be able to advise you on effective bird feeders. Feeders that can be accessed by, or provide food that is attractive, to a very limited number of target species (such as sugar and water that is attractive to Palestinian and Nile Valley Sunbirds) are most effective. The use of excess fruit from breakfast can also be placed on a bird table to attract a range of species from Common Bulbuls in the north of the region to Glossy Starlings in the south.
1. Enhance the enjoyment of existing customers

Help tourists view some events from the comfort of the hotel. Consider providing video or other footage that can be viewed from the hotel web site or in a specific screening.

**How**

Video can be a great way to bring wildlife into the hotel and engage customers in current activities without causing disruption to breeding and feeding cycles. Some hotels with nesting boxes or nesting sites have used unobtrusive web cams to allow customers to get up close with their wildlife – but always take specialist advice to ensure that you don’t cause disruption when installing them. This is increasingly common, see for example, the web cam on the Sheraton Hotel in Hamilton which has been particularly popular with birdwatchers.

**Add value**

Put video footage on your web site and maintain your social media presence so customer are aware of any changes in the information available.

Provide maps and ideas for walking trails that customers may enjoy.

**How**

Local wildlife and conservation organisations, notably your national BirdLife partner or tourism organisations often already have maps of walking tours with opportunities to view bird or wildlife highlighted.

**Add value**

If maps don’t exist for your area, or if you want to differentiate your hotel from the crowd, see if you can work with staff, a local school, an artist, college or community group to create a map. Make sure that all of the people who have contributed to the map are listed and consider asking other local businesses to advertise on it.
1. Enhance the enjoyment of existing customers

Identify local festivals and other events that are focussed around birds and wildlife and promote these to customers.

How
Work with your regional tourism organisation to identify festivals and events that might be of interest to your customers and build them into your marketing calendar. Don’t forget about World Migratory Bird Day, which is celebrated in most of the countries in the region, in May each year.
http://www.worldmigratorybirdday.org/

Add value
Build special packages and special offers around festivals and events to encourage customers to book in advance and stay for longer (e.g. include a ticket to the event, transport to and from the event and a ticket to see a VIP guest at the event). If appropriate, you could extend these packages to local community groups to raise their awareness of the significance of the species in the area. Remember to invite the local media to add value for future events.

Ensure your team can talk about the steps that the business is taking to maximise positive and minimise negative environmental impacts.

How
More than 50% of tourists from Europe say that they would prefer to travel with a company that protects the environment. Host regular staff training sessions about your steps to protect birds and wildlife; include information about your broader environmental credentials in all induction training and keep information about achievements on staff notice boards. See the Resources Section for more information.

Add value
Communicate examples of activities regularly so staff can talk about them with pride.
1. Enhance the enjoyment of existing customers

If you have a kids club, focus some of your activities around the flora and fauna of the area.

How
Work with staff to make sure they feel confident about the local flora and fauna to present it to children. Activities that work well include bringing in local stories that are based on flora and fauna or encouraging children to dress up or behave like local wildlife.

Children are often fascinated by small wildlife. Creating and exploring areas for reptiles (focusing on lizards with appropriate precautions for poisonous snakes) can be very exciting. A real winner is the use of an overnight moth trap to capture the amazing range of beautiful moths in the region. At its simplest this can be done by checking walls next to strong lights left on overnight. A dedicated light or simple moth trap would be a much stronger way to do it.

Add value
If you have a shop in your hotel, provide opportunities to purchase the costumes, stories, pictures to colour in and so on. You could also consider selling national field guides about the birds, mammals, reptiles and butterflies of the region. If you don’t have a shop but source these items locally, you may be able to offer opportunities for external traders to sell these items to customers from carefully managed market stalls on your site.
Guidelines for hotels and tour operators

2. Increase revenue by offering existing tourists new experiences

Work with a partner organisation (e.g. a local tour guide, inbound travel agent, wildlife or BirdLife partner) to offer guided tours of local flora and fauna to existing customers.

How
Some organisations such as BirdLife International can even offer training for those who wish to become bird guides. Contact your local BirdLife partner to see if they can help (See Annex1 of the main document for a list of BirdLife partners). Organise a meeting with all those who are interested in offering this service to your customers (e.g. local charities, an inbound tour operator, your regional tourism office, the restaurant in a bird watching area). Make sure you discuss the attributes of the area that will be attractive to customers, how you will bring together a tour that includes those attributes, who will provide marketing information and who will take responsibility for ensuring that health and safety and other considerations are taken into account. When working out the cost for these tours, remember to include a contingency which can be used to build the market presence.

Add value
Many customers will be willing to pay for guided tours. Often, they will value the tour more if the fee (or an element of it) is focussed on protecting the natural areas they have visited. Let them know what you will do to support this area and remember to keep a record of how their donations have helped.

Understand bird and wildlife opportunities at different times of the year.

How
Build these seasonal differences into your marketing for tourists. This works especially well if you can tell visitors over the summer months about opportunities to – for example – view migrating birds in Spring or Autumn to encourage them to return. Video footage, word of mouth complimented by packages of seasonal activities can all encourage tourists to come back for another visit.

Add value
Provide a discount for tourists who wish to take advantage of one of these packages by bringing a friend. This does not have to be a discount on room rate, it may be a subsidized early morning tour to view bird activity in a local protected area.
2. Increase revenue by offering existing tourists new experiences

Display local arts, crafts or stories about birds and wildlife around the business.

How
Include photographs, paintings, local carpets, sculptures with names of the artist and species listed. Alternatively, select foods and other products that have been produced in ways that support wildlife conservation and promote these on the menu.

Add value
Ask local artists or crafts people if they would like to display their works in your hotel. Or consider integrating stories of local food choices into the menu. These items add authenticity to the tourism experience. They can also create a revenue stream for you and support the range of local producers who have an interest in bird or wildlife conservation. Consider helping local arts and crafts people to sell their goods. Put the price (including a small commission) on art works that are for sale (making sure you give a fair price to the artist), encourage local food producers to sell products in your shop (especially when they are produced in traditional ways that conserve landscapes for wild species) or provide information so customers can visit his premises or a local market and buy the goods themselves.

Invite customers to attend events about the birds and wildlife of the area.

How
Invite local experts to come in and present. Think creatively about how to present such talks to maximise appeal beyond a specialist audience. Customers often enjoy stories that link the sites that they see into the culture and history of the destination. There are a wealth of story-telling opportunities around wildlife and these can add a sense of authenticity to your specific product and differentiate it from the crowd. An example may include telling the story of the Eagle that is on the national flag of Egypt and is also widely used as a symbol in Palestine, Syria and the Yemen as a way of presenting the cultural links to the Great Saladin.

Add value
Encourage local people to come in and talk about their experiences of birds and wildlife. See if you can record video footage of village elders talking about the significance of wildlife and birds and how it has changed. Include old photographs - if they are available - of how the area used to be. This footage can be useful in your tourism promotions and presentations. Make sure you engage local people in a discussion about how wildlife and birds can be conserved when you meet with them. The support of local people is essential in securing the conservation of species and many will feel passionate about ensuring that those species they grew up around survive. Some local people may be willing to work with you and your customers, for example, to provide an introduction to falconry or to invite them into their villages to see their lifestyles. These all add authenticity to tourism experiences.
Guidelines for hotels and tour operators

3. Increase revenues by attracting new types of tourist

Include wildlife or bird watchers as a designated niche group within your marketing strategy.

How
Identify specialist tour operators, including online operators, who target these market segments and who may be able to provide clients for your business. These may include online operators that attract the general ecotourist/responsible traveller (e.g. responsibletravel.com as well as specialist bird and wild life sites (Naturetrek and Ornitholidays) If you prefer not to work through tour operators, consider placing adverts in specialist wild or bird life magazines, contributing to blog spots (e.g. Forumbiggonline.co.uk, birdforum.net, or chatterbirds.com), or social media conversations.

Add value
Consider forming a partnership with your local conservation group and invite them to write about siting's around your area/business. Remember that this audience are more interested in the birds and wildlife viewing opportunities rather than the unique attributes of the hotel, so make sure these are a major element of any marketing materials. Wildlife and bird watchers have specific needs and anticipating these in advance can significantly improve perceptions of value. Feedback from other hotels, illustrates that:

- Wildlife, including birds, is often most interesting at dawn and dusk. Wildlife watchers, therefore, often appreciate flexible meal times or options to take food out with them to allow them to enjoy the best spectacles.
- Guide books, identification guides in the lobby or a library can help improve enjoyment, especially specialist guides that focus on the area.
- Specialist information about the best bird and wildlife sites in the area, including detailed maps can add value to the visit.
- Log books listing species that have been seen by other customers and in which customers can record their own experiences are appreciated by some.
3. Increase revenues by attracting new types of tourist

Build packages with sufficient variety to attract tourists who enjoy bird watching alongside other activities (e.g. walking).

How
Set up partnerships with other hotel and tourism providers in the area who may wish to attract tourists interested in wildlife. Use the partnership as a mechanism to pool information about customer profiles, maximise the value of marketing investment and exchange best practice. Develop itineraries that include a number of different wildlife sites (and perhaps involve stays in 2 or more hotels). These can provide tourists with opportunities to view wildlife from diverse environments in the same trip.

Add value
Take care not to get too carried away with your marketing campaign. Only promote wild or bird life experiences that customers are likely to see and be honest about the times that sightings are most likely. If you believe that you can attract specific wildlife visitors, work with your local hotel association, tourism organisation or just invite other tourism businesses from the region to come to a meeting at your hotel. Don’t forget to ask your local BirdLife partner and wildlife charity to come along as well as any local people who have great knowledge about the area— they will have a wealth of knowledge about birds and wildlife in the area that you can include in your activities. Broaden the appeal of your packages by offering a combination of activities e.g. snorkelling and/or diving among the Red Sea Coral, a night with Bedouin communities and an opportunity to view the birds and wildlife in Ras Mohammed Natural Park in Egypt.
Guidelines for hotels and tour operators

4. Maximise the potential of grounds to attract birds

Provide nesting sites, and welcome birds that nest in unexpected areas as long as they do not provide a risk to the health of staff, customers or the birds themselves.

How
Identify sites in which birds are likely to prefer nesting and provide nest boxes to encourage them. Remember to minimise noise and light in the areas around nest boxes. There are many opportunities within hotel grounds:

- Larger trees can have Kestrel and Owl boxes placed in them.
- A Barn Owl flying over the grounds at night, or a Little Owl calling in the open as dusk falls will be a great attraction to the customers; especially when it is pointed out that you have provided the nesting habitat for them.
- Trees can also have small nest boxes to attract Sparrows, Flycatchers and Wagtails. Strategically placed nest boxes for these species can encourage them to live their lives in close proximity to hotel customers.
- It is a very visual way of showing that the hotel is caring for its wildlife.

The built environment can provide an amazing range of wildlife opportunities.

This can be achieved without disturbing customers in their rooms but still adding huge value to their visitor experience:

- Sheer walls can have crevices within which will enable Crag Martins to nest on the facia.
- Create a green wall of climbing plants which will be an attraction in its own right and will attract Finches, Thrushes, Wrens, Sunbirds and Bulbuls.
- On the building soffits or the roof Swifts can be attracted through the provision of boxes providing a wonderful early evening ambience of spectacular flocks calling and flying in symmetry around the hotel.
- A tall hotel and high isolated points can provide great sites to provide nest boxes for Peregrine Falcons. A bird that many would love to see.
- Camouflaged radio masts can provide this full range of nesting opportunities making them a living feature rather than a novelty.

Your national BirdLife Partner or the BirdLife Regional Flyway Facility can advise you.
Add value
Encourage staff to talk about the species that have appeared, especially rare species such as large raptors. Include them on social networking sites and so on to keep in touch with customers. A log book (which can be as simple as a annual desk diary) is a great way of capturing all the wildlife events within your grounds and over time becomes a valuable resource for understanding the wildlife around your hotel. You may able to use web cams (if they can be introduced without disruption to the birds in question) to allow your customers to see the detail of what is going on. Remember that footage from web cams can be great when displayed on social media sites (including those used by dedicated bird watchers). Invite customers to attend events about the birds and wildlife of the area.

Maintain existing fresh water resources as drinking areas for birds and wildlife and provide new ponds/drinking areas.

How
Hotels can support water conservation in general by managing water use carefully and can support bird and wildlife conservation by providing and maintaining fresh water drinking and bathing areas for birds. This can be remarkably effective in arid regions. A strategically placed bird bath that is maintained can bring the birds to the customers; sometimes uncommon species such as Sinai Rose Finch or Desert Finch can be attracted.

Add value
Ponds and small natural pools and lakes wildlife areas can add increase the appeal of the areas around the hotel and provide entertainment and enjoyment for customers (especially if information about the wildlife on view is easily accessible in the hotel). Features, such as sandy banks, can attract stunning birds such as Kingfishers and Bee Eaters to the hotel grounds. A bank constructed near a small pool could even start a bee eater colony and this can provide a significant attraction for some customers.
4. Maximise the potential of grounds to attract birds

Deter predators, especially cats from bird and other wildlife habitats.

How
Consider placing half full plastic bottles in borders (an old gamekeepers trick – the light reflection deters cats), using old CDs or other reflective materials on strings, planting prickly bushes and thick climbers to provide secure cover for birds and wildlife (make sure it does not provide cover for the cats when they are stalking the birds), investing in scent deterrants such as citronella or Silent Roar, sprinkle lemon or orange peel (cats hate the smell of citrus).

Add value
Customers from European markets are often distressed if they see apparently hungry cats and dogs (or other poorly treated wildlife) in the destination. Discourage customers from feeding these species themselves and sign up to a code of conduct, such as that promoted by ABTA. Consider supporting a local charity (if there is one) that neuters cats and other non-native predators to prevent a population explosion. Tell the story of your support to customers and others who are concerned about the number and quality of life for predators.

Use indigenous plants in landscaping wherever possible.

How
Work with the senior management team to specify that any new planting should utilise indigenous plants as a priority where possible. When reviewing/changing existing landscaping seek to replace non-native species with appropriate indigenous alternatives.

Add value
Indigenous species are often resistant to local pests and are better adapted to local conditions, therefore, usually requiring less water and chemical treatment. Labelling indigenous plants can also help customers learn about the local area. Labels can be extended to explain how these plants have been used for medicinal, basket weaving or another purpose to add interest. Some hotels set up their own indigenous herb or vegetable gardens and offer courses in cooking to add value to the experience. If your business has a golf course, use indigenous species to provide a wildlife corridor. See the BirdLife Guidance on golf courses for more information about this topic.
4. Maximise the potential of grounds to attract birds

Reduce/avoid the use of toxic pesticides and chemical fertilizers and depend on natural/sustainable alternatives.

**How**
In large doses, pesticides and fertilisers can poison wildlife and birds. In small doses, they get washed into water courses and ultimately into the sea where they damage coral reefs and other ecosystems, some of which are essential to sustaining tourism. Check the components of the pesticides, insecticides, fertilisers and other landscape chemicals you use. Ask suppliers to provide items with fewer toxic substances, or identify the opportunities to create some of your own fertilisers (e.g. by composting garden and uncooked kitchen vegetable waste).

**Add value**
Publicise your initiatives to customers (especially if you are on a coastal zone in proximity to a coral reef that is used by your customers), most will really appreciate the steps that you take to support environmental conservation.

Minimise the use of hard landscaping.

**How**
When landscape areas are under review/undergoing routine maintenance, identify options to reduce hard landscaping and replace with alternative materials (e.g. gravel for car parks). Break up hard landscapes with selected native planting to provide wildlife havens.

**Add value**
Hard landscaping can prevent water from being absorbed by the soil and can, thus, contribute to flash floods and water shortages. They can also crack in high temperatures and be costly to maintain. Water that runs off from concrete car parks, in particular, can be heavily polluted with soils and other chemicals and this can run directly into water courses rather than being naturally filtered through the soil from softer landscape features.
Guidelines for hotels and tour operators

5. Engage staff and communities in valuing the contribution of birds to the tourism economy

Make sure all staff, tour guides etc. that you employ are aware of the law, especially vis-à-vis collecting animal parts, protection and status of species and avoiding disturbance to breeding and mating cycles.

**How**

Ensure that information about environmental regulations that affect your business is updated on a regular basis (at least annually) and integrated into staff training on a regular basis (e.g. when staff join the business, at the start of every season, at the start of the spring and autumn migrations). This will mean that staff are aware of their role in complying with regulations (including, for example, ensuring that tourists they accompany on trips do not collect eggs). Ensure training makes staff sensitive to the need to manage both the number of tourists viewing a species at any one time and the behaviour of those tourists as well as regulations relating to water quality and so on.

**Add value**

Ensure that training helps guides to recognise the signs that wildlife is under pressure and provides them with training to take relevant actions to back off. There are many codes of conduct that are available (if there are none available in your area, work with a BirdLife partner to provide some). These can be an easy way to communicate with tourists and can be used to help tour guides spot the signs of animal stress. Most wildlife tourists hate the spectacle of hordes of tourists trying to film an isolated animal. If areas are congested, see if you can arrange a rota/timetable for all of the operators in the area to visit specific sites at different times to reduce crowding and stress on the birds/wildlife.

Provide information to staff about birds and wildlife. Encourage them to learn to identify key species so they can talk knowledgeably to customers about them.

**How**

See Annex 2 in the main document for a list of suggested books that may be useful or send staff who express a particular interest in these issues on a course managed by a local nature conservation charity. Host competitive quizzes on wildlife identification; invite specialists to come in from nature reserves to stimulate interest among as wide a range of staff as possible.

**Add value**

Customers love talking to knowledgeable staff and will be impressed by your team’s abilities to talk about the destination.
5. Engage staff and communities in valuing the contribution of birds to the tourism economy

Promote the value of birds and wildlife to the hotels and other organisations that you work with.

How
Make sure hotels and other organisations that you work with in the area are aware of the value of wild and/or bird life to the destination.

Add value
Once people recognise the value of their wildlife, they tend to value it more as an asset. Some destinations have nurtured wildlife conservation by actively helping resident communities to understand the value of that wildlife alive or dead. There have been many studies of the value of wildlife alive and dead, especially in Africa. The David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust’s ivory campaign, for example, found that an African elephant in its habitat is worth 76 times more alive than dead. This kind of information is essential in helping local people to value wildlife and can deter poaching/hunting (http://focusingonwildlife.com/news/elephants-worth-much-much-more-alivethan-dead-says-new-report/).

Stork chicks (Photographer: J. Viana)
Guidelines for hotels and tour operators

6. Embrace bird friendly operating practices and encourage suppliers to do the same

Adopt a comprehensive and systems based approach to managing environmental impacts.

How
Assess the key impacts of the business on the environment and develop an environmental management system to respond to these.

Minimise water consumption in your hotel by measuring how much water you use.

Why
Demands on water for electricity generation as well as to service growing numbers of residents and tourists, means that fresh water resources are under stress in much of the Rift Valley/Red Sea Flyway. Water prices are likely to increase in response to shortages.

How
Set a target for water saving (most hotel businesses that have taken no steps to measure or reduce water consumption can easily achieve a 5% target). Work with staff to identify ways that you can achieve this target. Simple steps like implementing a one flush policy when cleaning the WC, asking staff to use bowls rather than leave the tap running when cleaning vegetables, reusing waste water from veg cleaning etc. for watering plants, and introducing schemes that ask customer to reuse their towels for more than one day can make a surprising difference. Technologies such as tap aerators and low flow shower heads can reduce water consumption significantly (flow rates of around 6 – 8 litres per minute can be achieved for the former and 8 – 10 for the latter). These devices are widely used by most of the corporate hotels.

Add value
Even if you draw your water from a bore hole, you will save money by reducing water consumption. Remember every litre that you don’t have to heat reduces energy costs too. Most customers expect their hotels to take steps to protect water courses and towel cards etc. are now almost standard industry practice. Make sure staff are trained for any towel reuse system. A failure to implement it will make your customers question your environmental credentials (the term greenwashing was invented in the 1970s because of hotels that lay claim to environmental credentials they did not have).
6. Embrace bird friendly operating practices and encourage suppliers to do the same

Ensure that waste water is treated before being discharged.²

How
All birds and wildlife depend upon the quality of water resources in the area if they are polluted or have dried up they can present a serious threat to survival. This is particularly the case for migratory soaring birds because the water resources of the area provide the first option to drink since they started their migration in Europe. If your business:

• Has its own waste water treatment plant, undertake regular checks (especially of biological and chemical oxygen demand) to ensure that the treated waste water meets national regulatory minimum or the manufacturers specification (whichever specifies the purest waste water quality). If your businesses does not have access to waste water treatment facilities and uses septic tanks or discharges waste water to the ground/nearest water course, minimise the chemical inputs. Consider using low or no impact cleaners (including indigenous cleaning technologies) and reduce solid waste by asking customers to dispose of paper and sanitary waste to bins rather than WCs. Remember to trial any new cleaning products carefully as hygiene and health is essential and some chemicals may be required.

• Uses a municipal waste water treatment plant and you are unsure of the quality of the resultant waste water, work with other hotels in the region to get data and ensure this is not undermining the sea and fresh water quality that is at the core of your product.

Add value
Work with other businesses in the region to improve waste water quality. If sea or river bathing is important in your destination, see if you can work together to achieve the Blue Flag award. This is managed by FEE and widely recognised by customers as symbolising good bathing water quality.

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² Excessive or poorly treated sewage is a major pollutant. It can undermine the quality of coral reef and other marine ecosystems, threaten human health and cause eutrophication which results in large algal blooms that are poisonous to wildlife and humans, create a pervading and strong odour throughout the resort. These incidents are rare, but can destroy the reputation of a destination.
6. Embrace bird friendly operating practices and encourage suppliers to do the same

Manage litter, and especially food waste and plastic bags, with care.

**How**
Litter can be fatal for birds and wildlife and can also attract the wrong type of visitors. Beaches, waterways and other landscapes often get clogged up with litter which is unsightly for tourists too. Make sure that all hotel rubbish is collected by a registered contractor and disposed of safely.

**Add value**
Tourists don’t expect to see litter in their destination and so beach clean ups, wildlife conservation days etc. can contribute towards the overall quality of the experience. Lots of hotels organise these events with local charities and often offer staff the opportunity to attend a party or barbeque afterwards to say thank you. These events often motivate staff and the communities that share these amenities.

Minimise wastes, especially potentially hazardous wastes.

**How**
- Manage all litter collection areas with care to ensure that birds and wildlife cannot get in and get trapped or that litter does not stray into surrounding areas.
- Separate hazardous wastes (including items like CFL lamps that may contain mercury) and seek a contractor who can take them away and dispose of them properly. If such a contractor does not exist work with other businesses in the area to request that the local authority makes such a service available.

**Add value**
If recycling is not available in your area, see if there are other businesses that can use your waste as a resource. Jam jars, for example, may be useful to the local honey supplier. Customers (especially European customers) often expect to be able to recycle their waste so provide bins into which they can separate waste in public areas of the business.
6. Embrace bird friendly operating practices and encourage suppliers to do the same

Limit group sizes when out and about

**How**
Smaller groups often have a lower impact. Set a maximum number of tourists on any trip and don’t exceed it. People are more likely to book when they think that the last place may be sold to someone else, so don’t forget to advertise when the last place is available.

**Add value**
Promote the personal and intimate nature of the tour – tourists like the feeling of customisation and getting an experience that is not available to everyone.

Ask your suppliers (including hotels if you are a tour operator) to tell you about the measures they take to support birds and wildlife.

**How**
Develop a standard question (or series of questions) that you can ask for all suppliers as standard. Ask these questions before you issue contracts and reinforce the requirement in contract conditions.

**Add value**
Promote this action in your CSR and other materials. If you are a part of a sustainable tourism certification scheme, be sure to tell the auditor about these contract clauses (and keep a copy in your certification file).
Guidelines for hotels and tour operators

7. Plan new and refurbish existing tourism infrastructure in a bird-friendly way

Undertake a thorough environmental impact assessment of your planned development (even if it is not required by law), including its impact on the immediate footprint of the property and its wider environment.

How
Talk to your local government office and/or a specialist planning and ecological consultant about completing such a study for you. The ecological consultant may assess and consult with BirdLife partner or local wildlife charity to assess the key habitats and wildlife present that needs to be conserved within the development process. A responsible operator will implement the recommendations of the EIA and ensure that you implement mitigation measures throughout the build to minimise impacts.

Ask that the environmental impact assessment specifically identifies birds and wildlife in the area and makes recommendations to minimise the impact on these species during the construction and operational phase. Focus on ensuring bird and wildlife is brought closer to customers within the hotel for the operational phase.

Add value
“Engage policy makers and local conservation groups in discussion about your environmental technologies. See if there is potential for the hotel to provide a technology show case. If there is interest in ‘green’ initiatives in your area, don’t forget to promote your environmental initiatives to see if you can appeal to conference or meeting organisers who seek out low impact businesses.

Ensure that your plans have minimal impact on water resources.

How
Work with your design team to ensure that the hotel operates in a water efficient manner. Consider:
- Maximising use of low flow technology
- Using treated waste water for irrigation and/or toilet flushing
- Specifying technology (e.g. dishwashers and laundry equipment) that can operate with minimal water and using low impact chemicals.

Add value
Communicate about the steps that your business has taken to minimise its impact on the environment in your communications with customers.
7. Plan new and refurbish existing tourism infrastructure in a bird-friendly way

Ensure that all waste water from the business will be treated prior to discharge.

How
Business installing new waste water treatment plant have a major opportunity to minimise water pollution and create bird and wildlife habitats. Consider reed bed or other natural filtration systems. These provide valuable habitats for birds and wildlife. If this is not feasible, consider biological rather than chemical systems.

Add value
Promote the value of the habitat you have created by providing viewing platforms, binoculars or photographs of the wildlife in your business.

Develop a holistic landscaping programme that maximises value for bird and wildlife.

How
As a minimum consider the wildlife opportunities in all design aspects (see the annotated photograph on page 24). There are many small tweaks that can add value to the hotels wildlife potential: native planting, green roofs, nest boxes, wildlife pools and nesting areas and rock formations that enable wildlife to thrive. In particular, consider the following:
- Minimise hard landscaping
- Specify indigenous plant species
- Provide some areas that will bring wildlife closer to the hotel and others that are more discreet from visitors
- Provide well contained spaces to hold waste until it can be disposed of.

Add value
These resources can add authenticity so ensure the design is reflective of the local culture to add value to customers.
Guidelines for hotels and tour operators

7. Plan new and refurbish existing tourism infrastructure in a bird-friendly way

Provide a bird or wildlife watching area as part of the design and include customer interpretation as a key part of the design.

How
Specify seating, viewing platforms and walkways if appropriate. Specify these areas at the outset of your design.

Add value
Communicate with tour operators and tourists to identify how they would like to hear about these attributes and work with them to develop marketing materials that reach your target audience.

Select your building contractor(s) and materials with care.

How
There is little value in seeking to operate your hotel in a way that protects bird and wildlife if these attributes have been decimated during the construction process. Ask your contractor to specify how they will protect key habitats during construction and minimise area of construction to ensure habitats are maintained. In particular ask how they will:

- Minimise noise, runoff and other disturbances during the construction process
- Choose the construction materials for the hotel. Thatch from local reeds, for example, may sound great, but the impact of cutting it may devastate local habitats. Sustainable suppliers should feature high in their list.
- Maximise the authenticity of the building both to minimise costs of – for example – air conditioning but also to provide a unique selling point to attract customers.

Add value
Keep a diary of the hotel construction phase. Record key events and decisions in it and make it a part of your marketing story. There are some customers (commonly known as eco-luxury) who actively seek out hotels that are authentic, provide low impact environments alongside attributes such as organic locally sourced food and low impact spas.
8. Build partnerships with credible partners to ensure the conservation of the Flyway.

Work with a local conservation organisation to improve staff awareness of local wild and bird life.

**How**
Invite a local charity in to present to staff or nominate one or more members of staff as your environmental champions. Some BirdLife partners offer formal training in bird identification and tour guiding so consider offering interested staff an opportunity to complete this training.

**Add value**
Invite customers to attend events organised by your conservation partner, including guided walks.

Provide information to customers about birds and wildlife items that are commonly traded in the area, but which should not be purchased, especially those that are protected by national or international law.

**How**
Work with a conservation partner to build awareness among customers about items (such as bird eggs) that should never be purchased. Make sure any information that you pass onto customers explains why this is important (for example, in the case of buying bird eggs, they can encourage local people to collect these items undermining bird populations). Provide access to information (e.g. CITES leaflets) to help customers make the right choices about the merchandise they buy on holiday. Make sure the hotel shop (if you have one) or any concessions/traders on your site also do not sell items made from endangered animal parts.

**Add value**
Provide customers with suggestions about alternative products that can be purchased and will add value to the local environment. This may include local locally produced food or soaps and fragrances.
8. Build partnerships with credible partners to ensure the conservation of the Flyway.

Work with BirdLife partners to support the protection of a local nature reserve or natural areas.

**How**
Conservation charities in particular are great at building partnerships to clean up or conserve local environments. If you think an area near you is worthy of their attention, build a partnership to deliver change. Some can even find funding to support such initiatives.

**Add value**
Promote your partnership and offer reciprocal arrangements (e.g. host an event for a conservation charity with a view to recruiting new local champions).

Work in partnership with a conservation (BirdLife) partner to monitor the impact of your programmes.

**How**
Conservation organisations are often experts in monitoring the impacts of programmes, completing wild or bird life surveys and so on. Ask them to develop effective metrics and monitoring methods so you can check the impact of your programme.

**Add value**
Ask your chosen partner to allow you to use their logo in your progress report, or to provide another statement to validate your achievements.
Guidelines for hotels and tour operators

References

- The International Ecotourism Society (2000) Ecotourism Statistical Fact Sheet, TIES, USA