

Rethinking Sustainable Tourism

Exploring sustainable tourism
from a multispecies perspective,
where humans and nonhumans coexist

Wildlife tourism, traditionally centered on observing rare species in the wild, is undergoing rapid diversification. A recent example is the growing trend of tourists flocking to see feral rabbits or cats, driven by social media influence. My research examines how public perceptions of animals are shifting and explores the potential for sustainable tourism from a multispecies perspective that emphasizes the reciprocal relationships between humans and nonhuman others.



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“If animals could participate in discussions on tourism management, what concerns might they raise? My research is an attempt to move one step closer to answering that question.”

Approaching tourism through an interdisciplinary and multispecies lens

Drawing on my background in anthropology, ecology, ethnoprimateology and geography, this research reflects my ongoing effort to advance research through an interdisciplinary lens.

I have been conducting research that builds on my interdisciplinary background, exploring sustainable tourism through a multispecies lens. The “multispecies” approach moves beyond a human-centered perspective and recognizes that humans and other living beings shape the world. It emphasizes coexistence and interdependence among multiple species including

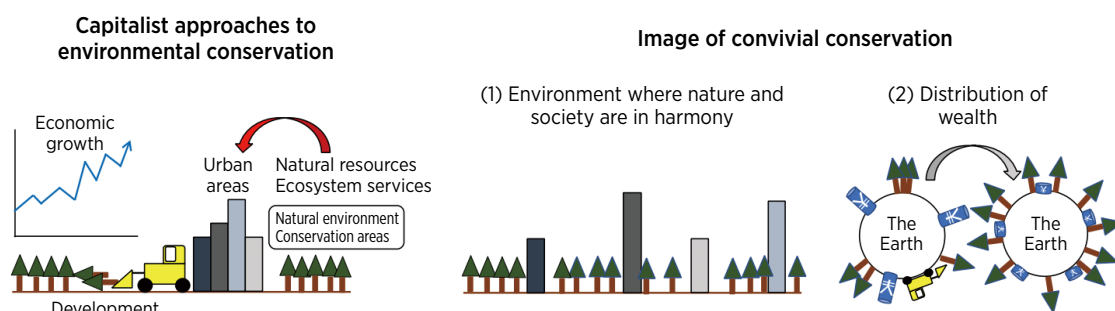
humans.

Additionally, I am also exploring whether the concept of convivial conservation could offer a pathway to promoting better coexistence between humans and other species. One aspect of convivial conservation emphasizes respecting the nature we encounter in everyday life and actively working to live in harmony with it. As a case study, I am investigating the potential application of this concept to locally-organized flying squirrel watching tours in Saiki, Oita Prefecture.



The relationships between people, animals, and tourism are becoming increasingly diverse. Tourism experiences like flying squirrel watching tours in Saiki demonstrate the potential for forms of tourism that aims to coexist with nature and more familiar local species. In contrast, there are also types of wildlife tourism that are tourist-driven and influenced by social media such as Ōkunoshima Island in Hiroshima Prefecture. (photo)

Conceptual diagram illustrating convivial conservation
(the left side represents capitalist approaches to environmental conservation)



Source: Created by the Researcher

| Efforts Towards Community Outreach

Bringing new perspectives into tourism education

This research can inform community outreach through educational initiatives. By applying a multispecies perspective not only in tourism research but also in educational settings, such as universities and tourism sites, we can advance scholarship while contributing to society. To support the sustainable development of tourism involving animals and nature, education that integrates ethical considerations is essential. To this end, I am collaborating with an educational researcher at APU to develop effective, hands-on learning methods that use game-based approaches. When applied to visitor education at tourist destinations, these

methods may help deepen understanding of animal welfare and environmental conservation, ultimately promoting more sustainable forms of tourism. Moving forward, I also plan to pursue partnerships with tour operators or local governments.

From an international perspective, I aim to contribute to global wildlife tourism research by introducing insights grounded in Japanese and broader Asian contexts—areas that have been underrepresented in a field largely dominated by perspectives from Europe and North America.

