

Classifying Wildlife Tourists: A Market Segmentation Approach



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Introduction

- Existing research is focussed on bird and whale watching and often specialised groups
- Need to better understand the full range of visitors to wildlife based tourism (WBT) attractions, including:
 - Interest and participation in WBT
 - Socio-demographics
 - Travel behaviours
 - Responses to wildlife experiences



The Research in Context

- One component of the CRC Sustainable Tourism National Integrated Project (NIP) is to build a database of visitors to WBT attractions
- Aims
 - To understand:
 - the markets for wildlife tourism opportunities and products;
 - visitor satisfaction with the available opportunities; and
 - their evaluations of, and likely responses to, management of visitor wildlife interactions.

The W B T D atabase

- The database currently includes 2160 cases from four visitor studies:

	<i>n</i> =
Rainforest Habitat, Port Douglas	567
Flinders Chase NP, Kangaroo I s	362
GBR daytrips, Cairns & Whitsundays	743
Far North Qld visitors, Cairns	489
- Methods
 - Self-completion questionnaires distributed post visit
 - Surveys were conducted in English only
 - Response rates of around 90% or more in all cases except for the rainforest sample (63%)



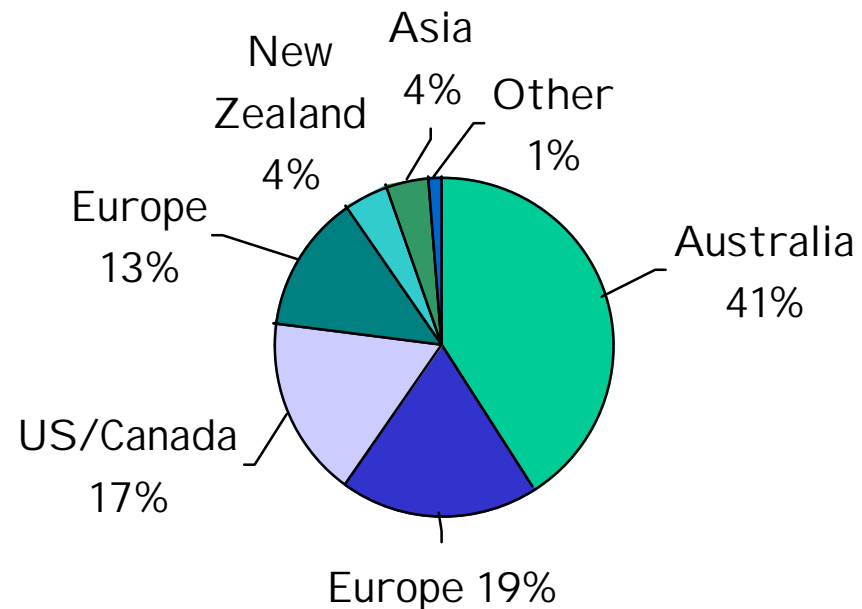
The W B T D atabase

- Cases currently being added/planned
 - Seaworld, Gold Coast
 - BnB accommodation, Atherton Tablelands (SE Cairns)
 - Glow worms, Gold Coast Hinterland
 - A GBR wildlife case study, possibly Heron I s (off Gladstone), Mon Repos (Bundaberg), or Lady Elliot I s (off Bundaberg)

Characteristics of the sample to date

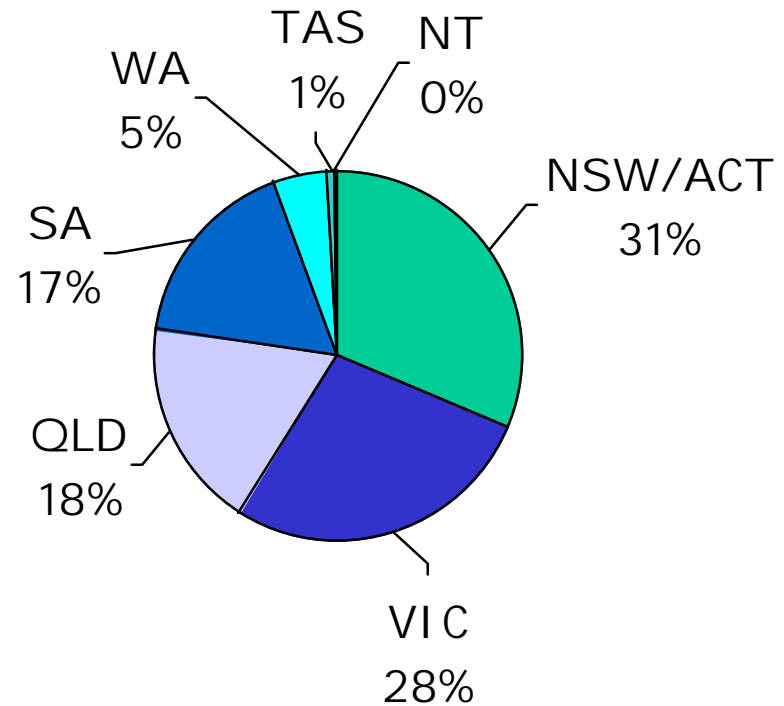
- Gender:
 - 47.5% male 52.5% female
- Age:
 - range 13-97, mean of 43 years

- Overall Origin:



Characteristics of the sample to date

- State of Origin:



- Travel Party:

- median group size of 2
- majority were travelling with their spouse/partner (37.8%), 16% were with friends and 15% travelling with a family group

Identifying W B T M arkets

Importance	%
I avoid/am not interested in viewing wildlife while on holidays	1
Viewing wildlife is not included in my travel decisions, but I enjoy seeing wildlife while doing other things (Generalists)	30
The opportunity to view wildlife is included as part of my travel decisions (Emerging Specialists)	48
The opportunity to view wildlife is one of the most important factors in my travel decisions (Specialists)	21

Profiling W B T M arkets

- Generalists (30% of the sample)
 - Seeing and learning about wildlife and getting close to nature in general are of less importance to this group.
 - Place greater importance than the other two groups on wildlife being easy to see, and feeling safe.
 - More likely than expected to be travelling as a couple.
 - Place less importance than the other two groups on seeing wildlife behaving naturally.
 - Major recommendation for improvement is more wildlife information.

Profiling W B T M arkets

- Emerging Specialists (48% of the sample)
 - Similar in patterns of behavior and interests to Specialists, although at a lesser intensity.
 - More likely than expected to be an international visitor, particularly from USA/Canada and Europe, and to be travelling alone.

Profiling W B T M arkets

- Specialists (21% of the sample)
 - This group places the highest importance on seeing wildlife in general and were significantly more likely to have seen wildlife during their trip.
 - More likely than expected to be from within Australia and to be travelling with a family or larger tour group.
 - Place greater importance on seeing a large variety of wildlife and unique or rare/endangered animals.
 - More likely to identify individual species and more satisfied by the range of wildlife seen.
 - The highest levels of satisfaction, especially in the case of intention to repeat their visit.

Management Implications

- For a substantial proportion of the sample, the chance to see wildlife was a part of their destination choice.
- More specialised wildlife tourists come with sufficient skills and the experience to make the most of the wildlife opportunities available.
- Opportunities exist to enhance and/or increase experiences for Generalists.
- The use of interest and participation measures is a relatively simple way to describe different types of WBT participants.

For further details on the study, please contact:

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