African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure Vol. 4 (1) - (2015)
ISSN: 2223-814X Copyright: © 2014 AJHTL - Open Access- Online @ http//: www.ajhtl.com

Profiling the international avitourist: preferences of avitourists at the British and Dutch birdwatching fairs

Nicolene Conradie
Department Transport Economics, Logistics and Tourism
College of Economic and Management Sciences,
University of South Africa
E-mail: conran@unisa.ac.za

Abstract

Despite the rapid growth of avitourism (birding tourism) globally, the international market potential of avitourism in Africa, with its remarkable birdlife, is not yet being utilised to its full potential. The purpose of the research reported in this article was to profile the international avitourist, based on preferences. Primary data was gathered by distributing questionnaires at the British Birdwatching Fair and Dutch *Vogelfestival*. These bird fairs attract exhibitors and birders from all over the world. Respondents were examined in terms of their biographic profile, self-categorisation into birder types (casual, active and committed) and preferences. Using descriptive statistics, an international avitourist profile was created. Results indicated that the majority of avitourists are male and relatively older (46–55 years) although awareness among younger birders was noted. Respondents at the British fair were more active and committed, while mostly casual and active at the Dutch fair.

Avitourists travel in pairs or small groups and travel independently. The most important attributes at the birding destination were accessible walking trails, information about birds and bird lists, and time spent in bird hides. Other activities while on a birding trip were considered of relative importance. Avitourists prefer mid-range priced accommodation and are comfortable with planning their birding trips on the Internet. It is recommended that avitourism marketers should acknowledge differences between birder groups to attract and satisfy the needs different birder types, depending on their preference. Results support the notion of avitourism development in Africa in guiding avitourism marketers in product development and destination marketing.

Key words*:* Avitourism (birding tourism), avitourists, profile, preferences, Africa

Source: http://www.lynxeds.com/sites/default/files/images/logo-dutch-bird-fair-899x567.png

Source : Dutchbirding.nl

ISSN: 2223-814X Copyright: © 2014 AJHTL - Open Access- Online @ http//: www.ajhtl.com

Introduction

"Niche tourism is widely acknowledged as a major trajectory in contemporary tourism" and it is "garnering increasing international scholarship" (Robinson & Novelli, 2005, p. 7; Rogerson, 2011). As Africa has a remarkable wealth of birdlife and because birding is one of the fastest growing niche tourism markets around the world, avitourism (birding tourism) provides an opportunity in terms of economic, social and conservation benefits. It also offers significant growth potential. Tourism can play a significant role in the realisation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) of reducing the greatest threats to people and our planet, including poverty and social and environmental challenges (Christie, 2008). The governments of many developing countries support avitourism development in an effort to simultaneously achieve community development and biodiversity conservation (Biggs, Turpie, Fabricius and Spencely, 2011; Nicolaides, 2014). For example, in South Africa, avitourism has become incorporated into national tourism planning – the final draft of the National Avitourism Strategy of South Africa set out the country's vision of "positioning South Africa as a globally competitive avitourism destination" (DoT, 2011).

Although the importance and value of avitourism as a niche market is recognised, Steven, Morrison and Castle (2014) suggest that research in avitourism is still relatively embryonic and therefore highlighted future research priorities to inform sustainable avitourism management. In their quantitative systematic review of avitourism literature, it was found that studies conducted in the northern hemisphere dominated those from the southern hemisphere. A need for avitourism research on the African continent is therefore identified. Furthermore, despite Africa's richness of bird diversity (2 316 extant bird species) and endemism (305 species found only within Africa), it is surprising that only a few studies have assessed avitourism in Africa (Steven *et al*., 2014). Further research is therefore required as a better understanding of avitourism products and avitourist desires could guide avitourism development in Africa (Steven *et al*., 2014).

Consequently, to effectively present Africa in the progressively competitive avitourism market, avitourism managers need to study their consumers intensively to attract and satisfy the needs and expectations of both local and international avitourists (Bennett, Jooste and Strydom, 2005, p. 64). The avitourism industry could advance their current knowledge of their target market by understanding, for example (Winer, 2007, p. 88; Bennett *et al*., 2005, p. 64): (1) Who are the avitourists? (2) Why do avitourists buy a birding trip? (3) What are birders looking for when going on a birding trip? (4) What criteria do avitourists use when choosing birding destinations? (5) Do avitourists use travel agents, or do they make reservations via the Internet? A customer profile is one of the key elements of a marketing strategy, and no strategy can be developed without an understanding of consumer behaviour (Winer, 2007, p. 88).

Consumer behaviour in tourism is defined as "the study of why people buy the products they do and how they make decisions" Swarbrooke and Horner (2007, p. 6). Avitourism behaviour therefore concerns the way avitourists, as purchasers of products and services, behave in terms of spending, and their attitudes and values towards what they buy (Page, 2007, p. 78). Avitourist behaviour is influenced by various factors. For example, intrinsic and extrinsic forces that initiate travel demand and lead to motivations and preferences of avitourists (Cooper, Fletcher, Fyall, Gilbert & Wanhill, 2008, p. 46). The current research will focus specifically on the preferences of avitourists when on a birding trip.

Preferences are a component of the socio-psychological processes (perception, learning and attitude) involved in the decision-making process (Decrop, 2006, p.

7). Decrop (2006, p. 9) defines preferences as "the predisposition of choosing one product alternative over the other". The tourist takes a position that is the result of a comparative process (through ranking or rating) of products or destinations (Decrop, 2006, p. 9). This implies that the avitourist will evaluate and compare birding products and destinations, which make it clear that countries and the avitourism industry should research avitourist preferences to position themselves as preferred birding destinations.

Consequently, an attempt to develop and market avitourism in Africa without considering the preferences of the international avitourism market would be fruitless, as the international avitourist is the target. The need to consider the avitourism market and its requirements is supported by Biggs et al. (2011) who contend that increased commercial viability will increase the prospects of avitourism initiatives surviving in the long term. Furthermore, Nicolaides (2013, 2014) suggested that if avitourism was marketed more vigorously, the potential market size for Africa would be far larger than it currently is. Therefore, the purpose of the research that informed this article was to create a profile of the international avitourist, based on avitourist' preferences. In order to consult with the international market, data was collected at two international bird fairs, namely the British Birdwatching Fair (2008) in Rutland (England) and the Dutch Vogelfestival (2008) in Lelystad (Netherlands). Questionnaires were used to obtain information on the (1) biographics of avitourists (2) classification of birders into birder types and (3) preferences when on a birding trip. Using descriptive statistics, a profile was created based on the international avitourists' preferences.

For marketers who sell and promote avitourism products and services, avitourist preferences are crucial information to provide specific products to specific people (Page, 2007, p. 79). Role-players, such as government, avitourism management and marketers of birding products, are concerned with avitourist preferences, as their job involves making and enabling decision-making or policy choice about avitourist activities (Pearce, 2005, p. 6). If these role-players understand what prompts avitourists to leave their home area and travel to other places, they may be able to develop approaches that help manage avitourists and assist them in planning for a more enjoyable experience at the birding destination (Page, 2007, p. 66).

A literature review on avitourism, the avitourist and preferences of avitourists is presented in this article. The empirical design and method applied are discussed, followed by a discussion of the survey results including the general profile and preferences of an avitourist. The article closes with conclusions and recommendations for avitourism marketing in South Africa.

Literature review

Context and definitions: Avitourism and the avitourist

The literature review of avitourism reveals that birding or birdwatching is the act of observing and identifying birds in their native habitats (Sekercioğlu, 2002). These experiences stimulate people to travel for the purpose of observing birds. Benchmarks concerning the travelling experience were identified. According to La Rouche (2003) birding or birdwatching is referred to as avitourism if the birder takes a trip a mile (1.6 km) or more from home for the primary purpose of observing birds. Lindsay (n.d) describes avitourism as "overnight travel to experience birds in a natural setting". Furthermore, Hvenegaard (2002) and Sekercioğlu (2002) classify avitourism as a component of ecotourism since it is expected to contribute to ecotourism's goal of enhanced conservation and wellbeing of the local community. Currently in South Africa, avitourism is defined in the National Avitourism Strategy

(DoT, 2011) as travel outside of a person's usual environment for the purpose of viewing birds in their natural habitats.

According to La Rouche (2003), to be considered a birder, an individual must take a trip of a mile (1.6 km) or more from home for the primary purpose of observing birds or must closely observe or try to identify birds around the home. However, birders who take trips away from home (non-residential birders) are referred to as avitourists.

Furthermore, avitourists are not all alike and consist of "a group of heterogenous recreationists, exhibiting a diversity of skills and interests (Scott & Thigpen, 2003; Hvenegaard, 2002). For example, Scott, Ditton, Stoll and Eubanks (2005) developed three measures of birding specialisation. The three birder types were defined as follows (Scott *et al*., 2005):

- *Committed birders*: In general, people who are willing to travel at short notice to see a rare bird, who subscribe to a number of birding magazines (such as *Birding*) that specialise in the identification of birds and places where they may be seen, who lead field trips or seminars for local birding clubs, who keep a detailed life list as well as a daily journal, who purchase ever-increasing amounts of equipment to aid in attracting, recording and seeing birds, and for whom birding is a primary outdoor activity.
- *Active birders*: In general, people who travel infrequently away from home specifically to go birding, who may or may not belong to a local birding club, who subscribe to general interest bird magazines (such as *Wild Bird* or *Birdwatcher's Digest*), who participate in but do not lead local field trips or seminars, who keep a general list of birds seen, and for whom birding is an important but not exclusive outdoor activity.
- *Casual birders*: In general, people whose birding is incidental to other travel and outdoor interests, who may not belong to a formal birding organisation, who may read an article on birds in a local newspaper but do not subscribe to birding magazines, who keep no life list, and for whom birding is an enjoyable yet inconsistent outdoor activity.

In summary, for the purpose of this article avitourism is defined as being an activity of observing and identifying birds in their native habitats where birders need to travel outside their usual environment for the primary purpose of observing birds. Furthermore, avitourists are a group of heterogenous recreationists, exhibiting a diversity of skills and interests and can be categorised into different birder types (e.g. casual, active and committed birders). One major aspect that influences avitourist behaviour and decision-making, namely preferences discussed next.

Context and definition: Preferences of avitourists

Decision-makers are interested in variables that influence the decision-making process and subsequent consumer behaviour, as these kinds of interests focus on what tourists prefer and how they make their travel choices and purchases (Pearce, 2005). Preferences could assist in developing avitourism products that meet the needs of particular birders and help them plan for a more enjoyable experience at the birding destination.

Preferences are one aspect of the socio-psychological processes (which comprise perception, learning and attitude) involved in the decision-making process (Decrop, 2006, p. 7). According to Decrop (2006, p. 9), preference is a special case of the broader attitude construct. Preferences are defined as "the predisposition of choosing one product alternative over the other" (Decrop, 2006, p. 9). This implies taking a position as the result of a comparative process with respect to products or destinations. Comparison may be explicit (ranking objects) or implicit (rating objects) (Decrop, 2006, p. 9).

ISSN: 2223-814X Copyright: © 2014 AJHTL - Open Access- Online @ http//: www.ajhtl.com

Preferences for tourism products and services are often expressed in terms of the *attributes* that the product or service possesses (Decrop, 2000, p. 105). Manfredo and Larson (in Scott & Thigpen, 2003) state that setting preferences includes those attributes at the destination that are valued because they facilitate particular types of experiences . Lefkoff-Hagius and Mason (in Decrop, 2000, p. 105) distinguish between the following attributes:

- *Characteristic or product referent attributes*: These attributes refer, for example, to the accessibility of walking trails and bird hides at the birding destination.
- *Beneficial or outcome referent attributes*: These attributes refer to the friendliness of the local people at the birding destination.
- *Image or user referent attributes*: These attributes refer, for example, to notions that 'birding in South Africa would give me a prestigious and adventurous image'.

Destination attributes are also referred to as 'pull factors'. Pull factors are those factors that encourage or pull tourists to travel to a specific destination, for example the scenery or the birdlife at the destination (Holloway, 2006, p. 68). Decrop (2006, p. 98) distinguishes between three levels of values regarding various activities in which the tourist is likely to be involved, as follows:

- *Preference*: The preference level pertains to the ideal vacation values, which are not necessarily available.
- *Expectation*: This level is concerned with what the vacationer expects to find in the next vacation experience.
- *Tolerance*: This level involves a vacation plan with minimum values on some aspects.

There is a discrepancy between what is expected or preferred and what the situation allows. It is therefore important for destination marketers and planners to know tourists' preferences in order to minimise these discrepancies and offer products that are close to what consumers prefer (Decrop, 2006, p. 98). This should also be applied in the context of avitourism. The preferences of avitourists at the birding destination are discussed in the following section.

Preferences of avitourists at the birding destination

According to Page, (2007, p. 67), one of the challenges that avitourism suppliers and managers will face is that suppliers must compile their product offerings in such a manner as to allow flexibility and thereby give avitourists the opportunity to customise the travel offering according to individual preferences. The following studies have reported findings related to the *preferences* of avitourists.

- Kim, Keuning, Robertson and Kleindorfer (2010) explored the diversity of characteristics of birdwatchers and found significant differences among cluster groups in terms of preferences for destination attributes. Items measuring preferences included presence of endemic birds, presence of a birding trail, good tour guide/interpretation, good food and wine, and accommodation.

- Department of Trade and Industry's (DTI) of South Africa (DTI, 2010) investigated preferences of birders that were measured based on the importance of criteria when selecting a birding destination. The criteria included for example, the importance of overall number of birds, overall diversity of birds, and presence of rear or endemic species.

- As part of a feasibility study, BirdLife® South Africa (BLSA) (2006) conducted a birding route evaluation survey for South Africa to establish birders' habits and preferences when looking for birding opportunities.

- Ellis and Vogelsong (2004) investigated specific attributes and personal preferences of birders through an importance-performance analysis. Respondents rated how important a series of site attributes were to their decision to visit a specific birding destination.

- Scott and Thigpen (2003) explored whether different groups of birders vary in terms of setting preferences and examined the extent to which birder groups express interest in a variety of wildlife (for example, places to observe birds) and non-wildlife (for example, places to shop, dine etc.) destination attributes. The results their study indicate that birder groups do vary in terms of setting preferences for different attributes at the destination.
- Cole and Scott (1999) examined differences in setting preferences between two segments – *casual* wildlife watchers and *serious* birders. Their results indicate that casual wildlife watchers were more likely than serious birders to ascribe importance to sites that provided other interpretive and structured activities, such as visiting historic sites and shopping, than serious birders (Cole & Scott, 1999).

- Martin (1997) identified three categories of wildlife watchers – *novices*, *intermediates* and *specialists* – and reported that the groups differed demographically and in their preferences for wildlife viewing, beliefs about the kinds of information they thought would be most useful for observing wildlife, and preferences for setting attributes.

Table 1 presents a summary of measuring preferences for avitourists identified by various authors (Kim et al., 2010; DTI, 2010; BLSA, 2006; Ellis & Vogelsong, 2004; Scott & Thigpen, 2003; Cole & Scott, 1999; Martin, 1997).

Source: http://s2.hubimg.com/u/4921897_f248.jpg

Source: http://birdingfrontiers.com/2014/03/27/rare-birds-of-north-america-review/

Table 1: A summary of factors measuring preferences of avitourists when visiting a birding destination

Kim, *et al*. (2010)	DTI (2010)	BLSA feasibility study (2006)	Ellis and Vogelsong (2004)	Scott and Thigpen (2003)	Cole and Scott (1999)	Martin (1997)
Importance of: Presence of endemic birds Good tour guide/interpretation Good accommodation Good food and wine The variety of birds Easy access to birding sites The natural environment/ scenery/rainforest Location Presence of a birding trail Relaxation/Peace	***Importance of:*** Overall number of birds Overall diversity of birds Presence of rear or endemic species Presence of proximity of other wildlife, other attractions, things to do Proximity of home or other primary destination Location within a protected area Possibility of birding on foot Availability of people to guide Likelihood of encountering other	***Most important aspect when birding in an area*:** Detailed information and bird lists Walking trails Learning opportunities Accessibility to new and restricted areas Time on boardwalks enjoying views Time in bird hides Professional local guides Boating or game drives Adventure activities ***Complementary activities*:** Butterflies and flowers Game drives Cultural tours Diving/snorkelling and beach activities Crafts and	***Items of high importance*:** Places to view wildlife Variety of wildlife to see and/or hear Clean air Places to go on nature walks Friendly and helpful people in the communities Crime-free communities Scenic beauty along the way Good restaurants Availability of interesting places to visit Ease of parking	***Opportunities to observe flora and fauna*:** Variety of birds to see and/or hear Places to view other wildlife Places to photograph wildlife Places to go on nature walks Places to observe wild flowers ***Escape from urban areas*:** Clean air Crime-free communities Scenic beauty on the way ***Ease of access*:** Good roads Ease of parking Driving	***Opportunities to observe birds*:** A variety of birds A bird that you have never seen before Birds native to the area are plentiful ***Sites have a variety of flora and fauna*:** There are a variety of native plants There is other wildlife besides birds There are several places to view wildlife other than birds The site contains signs identifying plants ***Interpretive and structured activities*:** A variety of	Seeing wildlife at close range, assuming it is safe Opportunity to see rare or endangered species Opportunity to see many different types of wildlife at one location Opportunity to see lots of wildlife, even if they are all the same kind Nature trails Interpretive guide books, maps or brochures Interpretive signs/exhibits A visitor centre Viewing platforms/blinds Guided nature tours

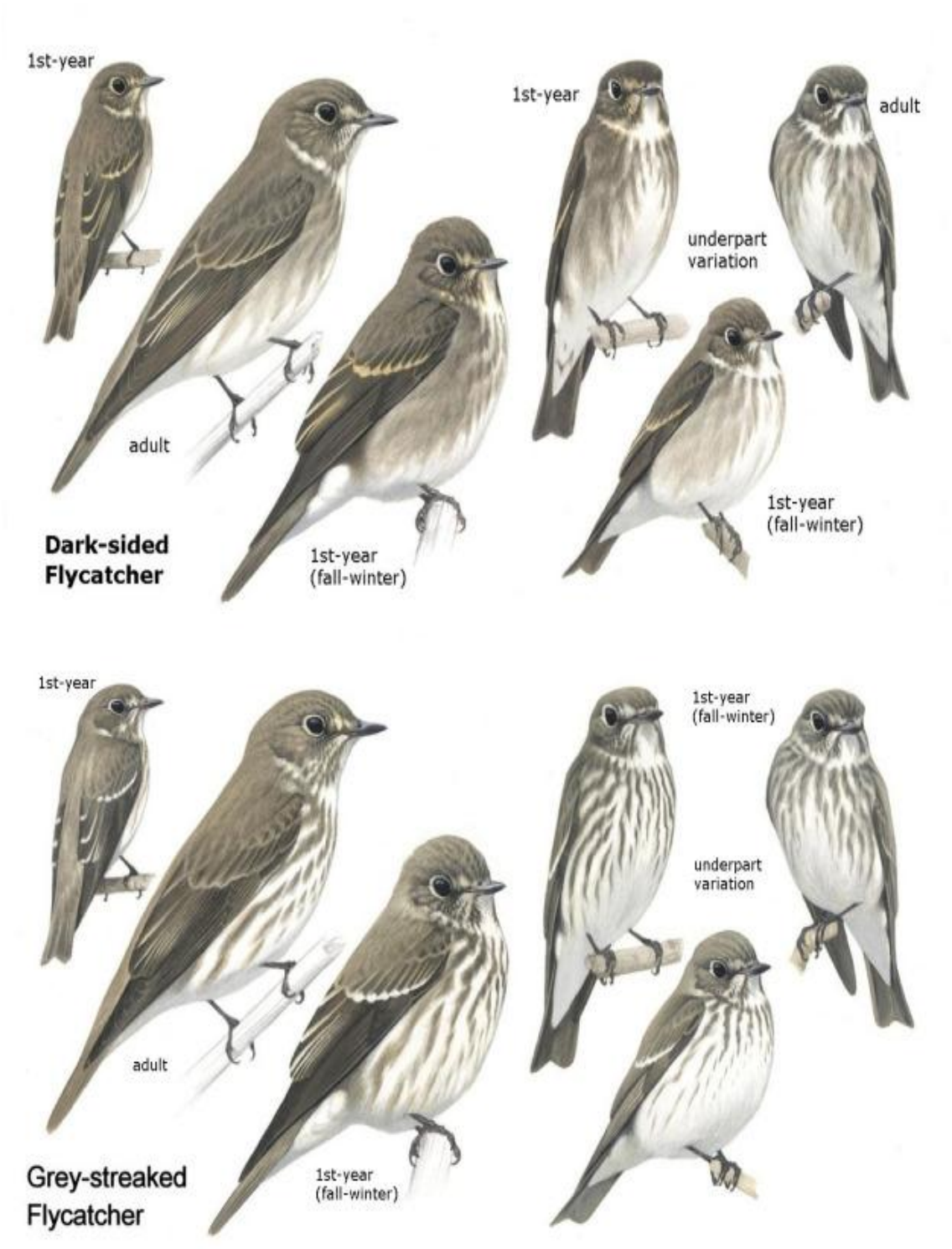
Kim, *et al*. (2010)	**DTI (2010)**	**BLSA feasibility study (2006)**	**Ellis and Vogelsong (2004)**	**Scott and Thigpen (2003)**	**Cole and Scott (1999)**	**Martin (1997)**
	birders	shopping Adventure activities ***Accommodation preferences*:** Basic accommodation or camping Specifically 'birder friendly' accommodation Bed and breakfasts Fully catered (tour operators) All inclusive lodges ***Important requirements*:** Freedom to walk Access to birding areas Information on birding spots	***Items of moderate importance*:** Places to observe wildflowers Close to the water Availability of motels Availability of nature education programmes Good roads Availability of 24-hour medical facilities Quaint small towns Driving time Places to photograph wildlife Availability of historic sites Availability of marine life tours ***Items of***	time ***Availability of heritage recreation activities*:** Interesting places to visit Quaint small towns Availability of historic sites Availability of nature education programmes Availability of local crafts Availability of antique dealers Places to shop ***Availability of comfort amenities*:** Friendly and helpful people Good restaurants Availability of bed and breakfasts Availability of motels Availability of 24-hour	foot trails have been developed A visitor centre that provides information about birds/wildlife You can take a driving tour to see birds/wildlife The site has viewing stands An environmental education centre is nearby Opportunities for a boat tour are available Getting to observation sites requires short walks Guides or rangers are available on-site A community with special events related to wildlife protection is close by A birding festival is nearby	Few people at area Facilities such as picnic tables and restrooms Absence of any facilities Being in an area where vehicles are not allowed Having road access all the way in to the area Campground with hook-ups

Kim, *et al*. (2010)	DTI (2010)	BLSA feasibility study (2006)	Ellis and Vogelsong (2004)	Scott and Thigpen (2003)	Cole and Scott (1999)	Martin (1997)
			***low importance*:** Places to canoe and/or kayak Availability of local crafts Places to shop Availability of 24-hour banking Availability of bed and breakfasts Availability of antique dealers Places to go fishing Availability of recreational vehicle camping Places to golf Availability of primitive camping Places to go hunting	banking ***Access to water recreation*:** Places to go fishing Close to the water Availability of marine life tours ***Availability of outdoor recreation activities*:** Availability of primitive camping Availability of recreational vehicle camping Places to canoe and/or kayak Places to golf	***Availability of complementary activities*:** Historic sites are close by Places to buy local crafts Antique dealers are near the area ***Availability of camping*:** You are allowed to stay overnight on-site Opportunities for tent-only camping are close by Campgrounds for recreation vehicles are close to the area	

Source: Kim et al., 2010:240; DTI, 2010:102; BLSA, 2006:13; Ellis & Vogelsong, 2004:207; Scott & Thigpen, 2003:211; Cole & Scott, 1999:54; Martin, 1997:12.

The research method is discussed next.

ISSN: 2223-814X Copyright: © 2014 AJHTL - Open Access- Online @ http//: www.ajhtl.com



Source: http://birdingfrontiers.com/2014/03/27/rare-birds-of-north-america-review/

ISSN: 2223-814X Copyright: © 2014 AJHTL - Open Access- Online @ http//: www.ajhtl.com

Methodology

In this empirical study a survey was used to collect primary data, therefore the research is quantitative in nature.

Population and sample

The population for this study comprised international birders who attended two international bird fairs, namely the British Birdwatching Fair (2008) in Rutland (England) and the Dutch *Vogelfestival* (2008) in Lelystad (Netherlands). As a sampling frame was not available, the numbers of visitors attending both fairs in 2007 was used as a guideline and the total population (N) was 27 000 bird fair attendees. Guidelines for determining sample size of Cooper and Emory (1995, p. 207) and Krejcie and Morgan (1970, p. 608) were used and for a population N of 30 000 the recommended sample size is 379. The information reported in this research was provided by a total of S = 439 respondents (birders).

A non-probability sampling method, purposive sampling, was used. The British Birdwatching Fair and the Dutch *Vogelfestival* were chosen for the specific purpose of selecting the international birding population that was most likely to be found at these events.

Measuring instrument

Questionnaires that relate to the research objectives were developed. The research objective and the focus of this article were to create a profile of the international avitourist, based on their preferences. The following sections of the questionnaire will be included in the discussion – biographic information, categorisation of avitourists, preferences of the avitourist in terms of attributes at the destination, internet use and accommodation preferences.

The biographic information of birders, included the respondent's origin, age and gender.

In Section A of the questionnaire, respondents were asked to categorise themselves into one of the following three birder types, namely:

- *Casual birders*, who enjoy birds in the garden or during leisure activities
- *Active birders*, who attend bird courses and go on trips primarily to watch birds
- *Committed birders*, who spend most of their spare time birding.

These categories are indictors of avidity with respect to the birding activity. The category names (*casual*, *active* and *committed birders*) were based on the work of Scott *et al*. (2005), Eubanks *et al*. (2004) and Turpie & Ryan (1998), while the definition of each category was taken from Turpie and Ryan (1998). Although the avidity levels of these groups were not measured according to the specialisation framework, and different people might have different ideas of how the categories should be defined, consensus on these categories was obtained by field experts (I.A. Coetzer; M. Crosbie; A.J. Hugo; P. Milstein, personal communication, 2008) and during survey pilot tests.

Section C includes questions on the importance of certain attributes at the birding destination; activities when on a birding trip; and important facilities and infrastructure when on a birding trip. The items derived previous studies, including Ellis and Vogelsong (2004); Scott and Thigpen (2003) and a birding route evaluation survey study conducted in South Africa by BLSA (BLSA, 2006). A *Likert scale* was used, on which the respondents had to indicate how important each attribute was to them on a scale of 1 (irrelevant) to 5 (very important).

Section D focuses on exposure to and availability of technology, such as birders' access to and use of Internet facilities. These questions are regarded as valuable in that they could assist with marketing strategies via the Internet, and they could be used to determine whether birders are comfortable with planning their birding trips online.

ISSN: 2223-814X Copyright: © 2014 AJHTL - Open Access- Online @ http//: www.ajhtl.com

Section E represents questions on accommodation preferences when on a birding trip. The birding route evaluation survey conducted in South Africa by BLSA was used to derive questions in Section E (BLSA, 2006). Accommodation categories used by South African Tourism were also considered in formulating the question (South African Tourism, 2008). Respondents had to indicate a low, medium or high preference for the accommodation category chosen.

Content validity was established in that four academics, who were also avid birdwatchers, examined the questionnaire (Coetzer, 2008; Crosbie, 2008; Hugo, 2008; Milstein, 2008). Minor modifications were implemented based on their recommendations, where after the study was pre-tested. The questionnaires were analysed and minor changes were made.

Data collection procedure

The data was collected by means of self-administered questionnaires that were distributed to birders at the BirdLife® South Africa (BLSA) (conservation and birding non-governmental organisation in South Africa) exhibition at the British Birdwatching Fair and the Dutch Vogelfestival. Bird fair organisers granted permission to distribute questionnaires from the BLSA stand at both these events. Respondents were selected on the basis of passing the stand, irrespective of their intention to visit the stand. Screening questions were used to select the target population. In total, 439 useful responses were obtained, with 304 from the British Birdwatching Fair and 135 from the Dutch Vogelfestival.

Statistical analysis

Once the data was coded, captured and cleaned, it was analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences program (SPSS 17.0). To establish validity with statistical evidence, an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was performed for sections C and E. Furthermore, an item analysis was performed on the questions in sections C and E to determine Cronbach's alpha values in order to test the reliability of the questionnaire.

A profile of the data was obtained through descriptive statistics and graphs. Descriptive statistics are used to describe the characteristics of the sample taken (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010, p. 187). Descriptive statistics are provided in this article. To create a profile of the international avitourists, graphs and tables were generated and are interpreted in in the following section.

Results and discussion: Profiling the international avitourist

This section firstly report on the biographic information of avitourists followed by the categorisation of birder types at the British and Dutch bird fairs. Lastly, descriptive statistics are used to describe the preferences of the international avitourist at the birding destination.

Biographic information of respondents at the British Birdwatching Fair and Dutch *Vogelfestival*

Typical biographic information, such as country of origin, gender and age of respondents, was obtained to characterise and profile the international birders and these results are discussed next.

Origin of respondents at the bird fairs

The respondents in the study participated at one of two international bird fairs, namely the British Birdwatching Fair and the Dutch *Vogelfestival*. Figure 1 indicates the origin of respondents at the British Birdwatching Fair.

ISSN: 2223-814X Copyright: © 2014 AJHTL - Open Access- Online @ http//: www.ajhtl.com

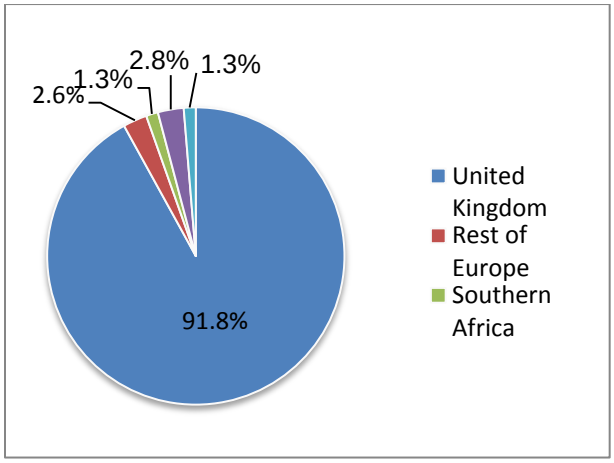


Figure 1: Origin of respondents at the British Birdwatching Fair

A total of 304 (69.2%) respondents completed questionnaires at the British Birdwatching Fair. The overwhelming majority of these birders were from the United Kingdom (279; 91.8%), followed by 2.8% from elsewhere in the world (excluding Europe and southern Africa) and 2.6% from the rest of Europe.

Figure 2 indicates the origin of respondents at the Dutch *Vogelfestival*.

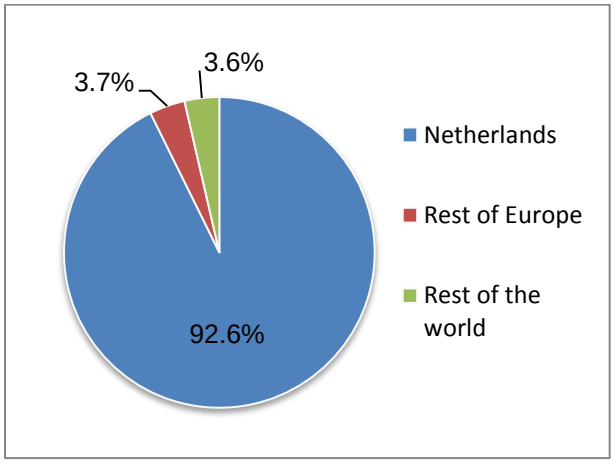


Figure 2: Origin of respondents at the Dutch *Vogelfestival*

A total of 135 questionnaires (30.8%) were received from birders at the Dutch *Vogelfestival*, of whom a majority of 125 (92.6%) originated from the Netherlands, followed by 3.7% from the rest of Europe and 3.6% from elsewhere in the world. Thus, the host community was highly represented at each fair, which is a characteristic of the nature of such fairs, as the community is interested in local events (Getz, 2005:322).

ISSN: 2223-814X Copyright: © 2014 AJHTL - Open Access- Online @ http//: www.ajhtl.com

Gender and age of respondents at the bird fairs

Figure 3 indicates the gender of respondents at both the British and Dutch bird fairs.

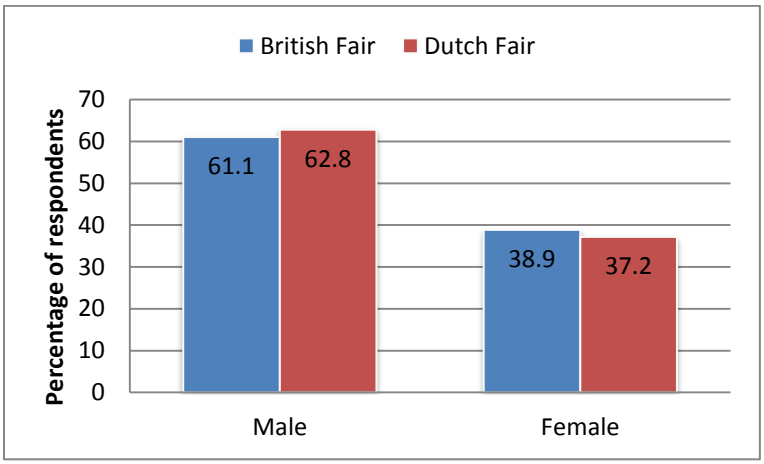


Figure 3: Gender of respondents

Most of the respondents (61.1%) at the British Birdwatching Fair were male, while only 38.9% were female. A comparable gender ratio was observed for respondents attending the Dutch *Vogelfestival*, namely 62.8% male and 37.2% female. At both fairs, significantly more males are noticeable in the sample distribution. Larger proportions of male respondents are consistent with studies conducted at other birding festivals (Eubanks, Stoll & Ditton in Scott & Thigpen, 2003). Figure 4 indicates the age of the respondents at the British and Dutch bird fairs.

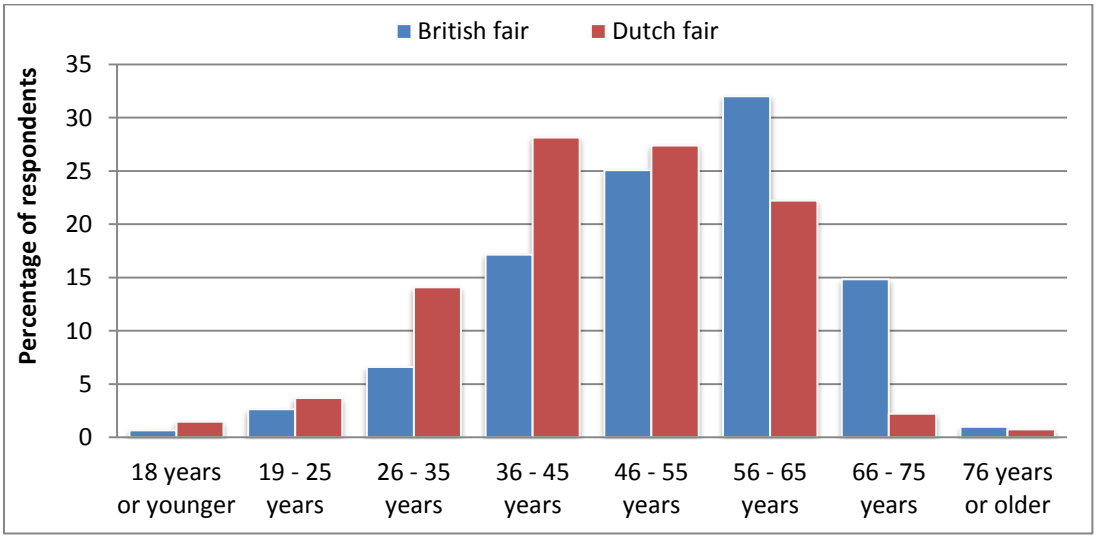


Figure 4: Age of respondents at the British and Dutch bird fairs

Respondents at the British Birdwatching Fair were generally older than those at the Dutch *Vogelfestival*. Respondents at the British Birdwatching Fair were mostly between 56

and 65 years old, followed by 25.1% who were between the ages of 46 and 55 years. Only 0.7% of the respondents were 18 years of age or younger. In comparison, 28.1% of respondents at the Dutch *Vogelfestival* were between 36 and 45 years old, and 27.4% were aged between 46 and 55 years. A very small percentage of the respondents (0.7%) were aged 76 years or older. The majority of birders fall within three age categories, namely, 36–45, 46–55 and 56–65 years. These age categories fall into the productive stage of a working career in the human life-cycle.

The findings of this study are consistent with previous research, which indicates that avitourists tend to be relatively older (DTI, 2010; Eubanks *et al.*, 2004; Hvenegaard & Dearden in Hvenegaard, 2002; Scott & Thigpen, 2003; Turpie & Ryan, 1998; Dickinson & Edmondson, 1996). If demographic trends follow the pattern of aging populations, as evident in the United States of America, the number of birders could be expected to grow rapidly. As the baby boomers (45–64 years) move into middle age and beyond, increasing numbers of them might start to participate in birding as a hobby (Dickinson & Edmondson, 1996). It can be assumed that this growth, might impact on avitourism in South Africa. It would seem that there is growing interest in birding among members of the younger age category of 36–45 years. A classification of birders is explained next.

Categorisation of birders into birder types

In Figure 5, the categorisation of birder types as *casual*, *active* or *committed* is illustrated for respondents at both fairs.

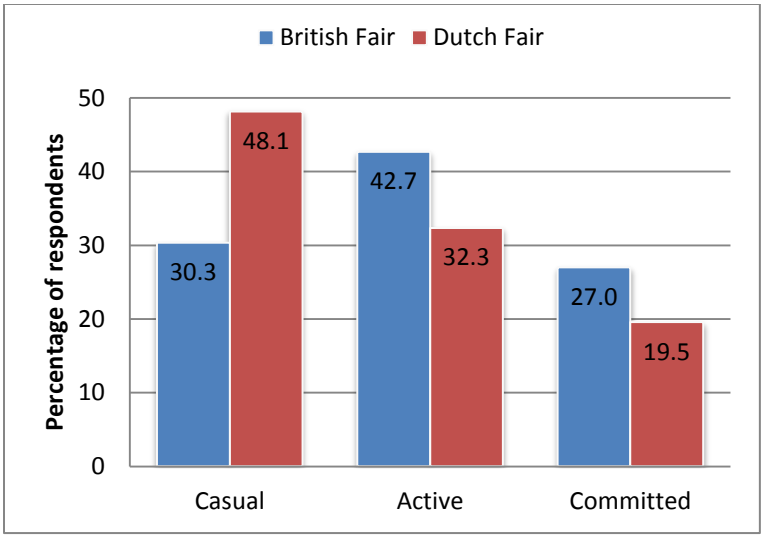


Figure 5: The three birder types among respondents at the British and Dutch bird fairs

Figure 5 provides an interesting contrast between the birder types at the two bird fairs in the study. In this study, birders at the British Birdwatching Fair consisted mostly of *active* birders (42.7%), followed by *casual* birders (30.3%) and lastly, *committed* birders (27.0%). Most of the participants at the Dutch *Vogelfestival* (48.1%) were *casual* birders, while 32.3% were *active* and only 19.5% described themselves as *committed* birders. Interestingly, the respondents at the British fair tended to be more *active* and *committed*, while the respondents at the Dutch fair seemed to be mostly *casual* and *active* birders. Marketing aimed at the British birder should therefore concentrate on more serious birding activities, while marketing

aimed at the Dutch birding community could concentrate more on leisure activities.

Results of international avitourists' preferences of respondents at the British and Dutch bird fairs

The next sections discuss the following issues consecutively: travel preferences when birding; attributes at the birding destination; other activities when on a birding trip; important facilities and infrastructure when on a birding trip; accommodation preferences of avitourists; and birders' access to and use of Internet facilities.

Travel preferences when birding

Birders' travel preferences are discussed in terms of the preferred way of travelling and preferences with respect to group size when on a birding trip. Respondents were asked to indicate whether they prefer to travel independently, or as part of an organised birding tour. The responses are shown in Table 2.

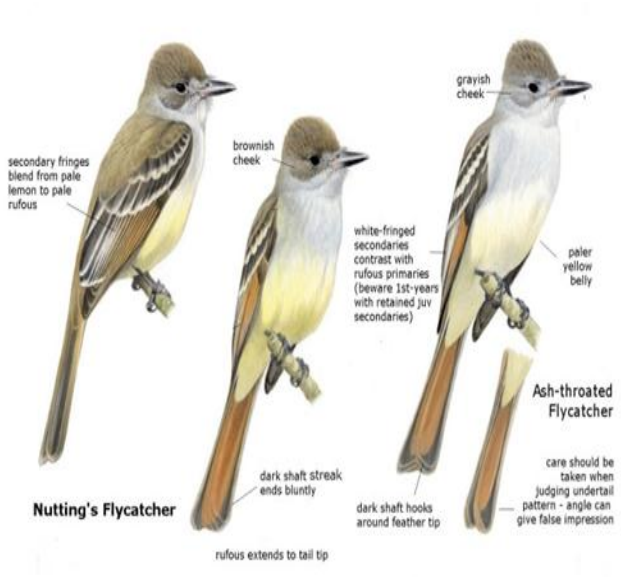
Table 2: Preferred way of travelling when on a birding trip

Travel preference	British fair (%)	Dutch fair (%)
Organised birding tour	32.6	22.7
Independently	67.4	77.3

Most of the birders at the British Birdwatching Fair (67.4%) and the Dutch *Vogelfestival* (77.3%) who participated in the survey would prefer an independent travel programme. Only 32.6% and 22.7% of the respondents at each fair respectively would want to travel with an organised birding tour. These results are consistent with the DTI Avitourism in South Africa study, which found that two-thirds of the international avitourists travels independently, while one-third participate in organised birding tours (DTI, 2010).

According to Buhalis (2001:71), tourism demand is changing towards a new type of activity in which the individuality and independence of the tourist is becoming increasingly important. Provision for independent travel programmes is therefore important to the birding industry in Africa.

Figure 6 shows respondents' preferences with respect to group size when on a birding trip.



ISSN: 2223-814X Copyright: © 2014 AJHTL - Open Access- Online @ http//: www.ajhtl.com

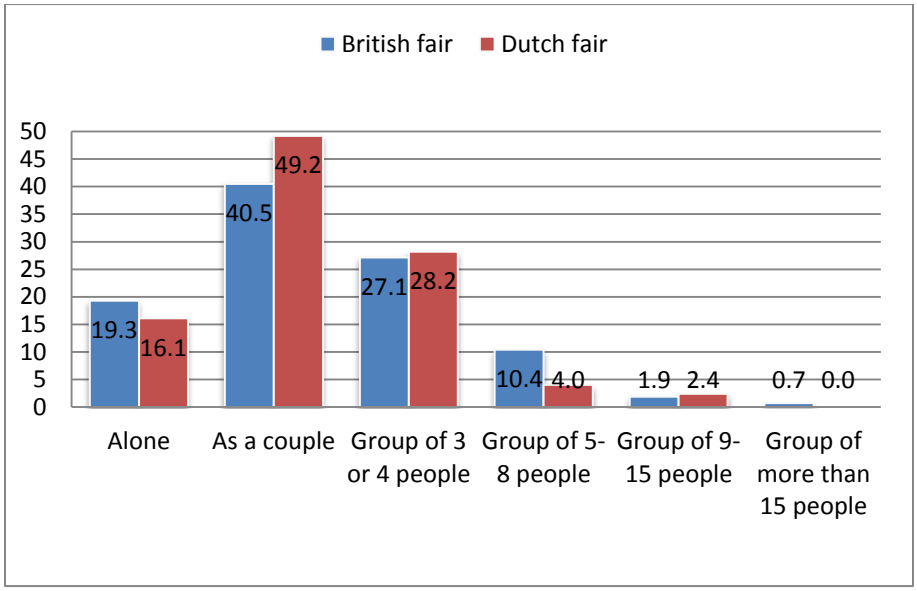


Figure 6: Birder preferences regarding group size when on a birding trip

As Figure 6 indicates, most of the respondents at the British and Dutch Bird fairs (40.5% and 49.2% respectively) prefer to go birding as a couple, and 27.1% of the respondents at the British Birdwatching Fair and 28.2% of participants at the Dutch *Vogelfestival* typically watch birds in a group consisting of 3 or 4 people. Almost 20% of the respondents at the British fair and more than 16% of the participants at the Dutch fair generally go birding on their own. Very few respondents participate in birding in a group of more than 8 people.

On the basis of the sample results, it can be assumed that birders do most of their birding as a couple, in a group consisting of 3 or 4 people, or alone. Birders generally prefer not to travel in larger groups of more than 8 people. This results are consistent with the DTI Avitourism in South Africa study, that suggest that more than half (52%) of their international respondents travel in pairs and only 16% in groups of up to 8 people (DTI, 2010). Results of a study conducted on avitourists in Australia, suggest that the more experienced avitourists preferred to travel in smaller groups (53% for 1-4 people) while casual birders stated that the larger group size (46% for 5-8 people) (Kim *et al*., 2010). This could be an important factor when tour operators conduct birding marketing and plan birding tours.

Attributes at the birding destination

There are certain aspects that are vital in making birding trips a worthwhile experience. Birders at both the British Birdwatching Fair and the Dutch *Vogelfestival* that participated in the survey had to indicate the importance they attach to aspects such as the attributes of the birding destination, activities, facilities, infrastructure and accommodation. This was done by means of a Likert scale of 1 to 5. The mean score of all respondents at each bird fair was calculated for each item in the questionnaire corresponding to the above-mentioned aspects. Figure 7 indicates the importance of various attributes of the birding destination for respondents at the British and Dutch bird fairs.

ISSN: 2223-814X Copyright: © 2014 AJHTL - Open Access- Online @ http//: www.ajhtl.com

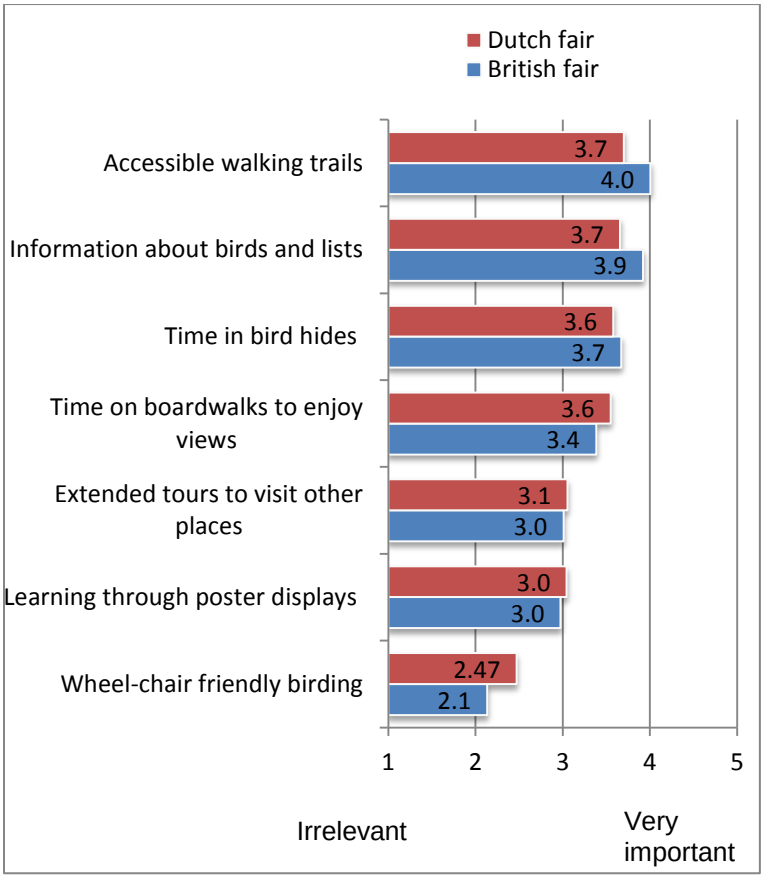


Figure 7: Mean scores of respondents with regard to the importance of various attributes of the birding destination

Figure 7 shows that respondents at both bird fairs indicated that an *accessible walking trail* is the most important attribute at the birding destination (mean scores of 4.0 and 3.7 respectively at the British Birdwatching Fair and the Dutch *Vogelfestival*. Participating birders at the Dutch *Vogelfestival* (3.7), as well as those at the British Birdwatching Fair (3.9), considered *detailed information about birds* common in the area and the availability of bird lists to be the second most important attribute. *To spend time in bird hides* was considered as being the third most important aspect when birding – respondents at both the Dutch *Vogelfestival* (3.6) and British Birdwatching Fair (3.7) indicated a mean score above 3.5.

Participating birders at the Dutch *Vogelfestival* considered it important to *spend time on boardwalks enjoying the view*, while participants at the British Birdwatching Fair were neutral in this regard.

Respondents at both fairs were undecided whether the opportunity of *extended tours to visit other places of interest* was important or not. Respondents also took a neutral stance with regard to *learning opportunities* through poster displays, while *wheel-chair friendly birding opportunities* were rated as unimportant attributes by respondents.

The most important attributes at the birding destination were reported to be *accessible walking trails*, *information about birds and bird lists*, *time in bird hides*, as well as *time on boardwalks to enjoy views*. Avitourism managers could use this information in developing or improving birding product offerings.

ISSN: 2223-814X Copyright: © 2014 AJHTL - Open Access- Online @ http//: www.ajhtl.com

Participation in other activities when on a birding trip

Figure 8 shows these results and indicates the importance of various activities for the three birder types when on a birding trip.

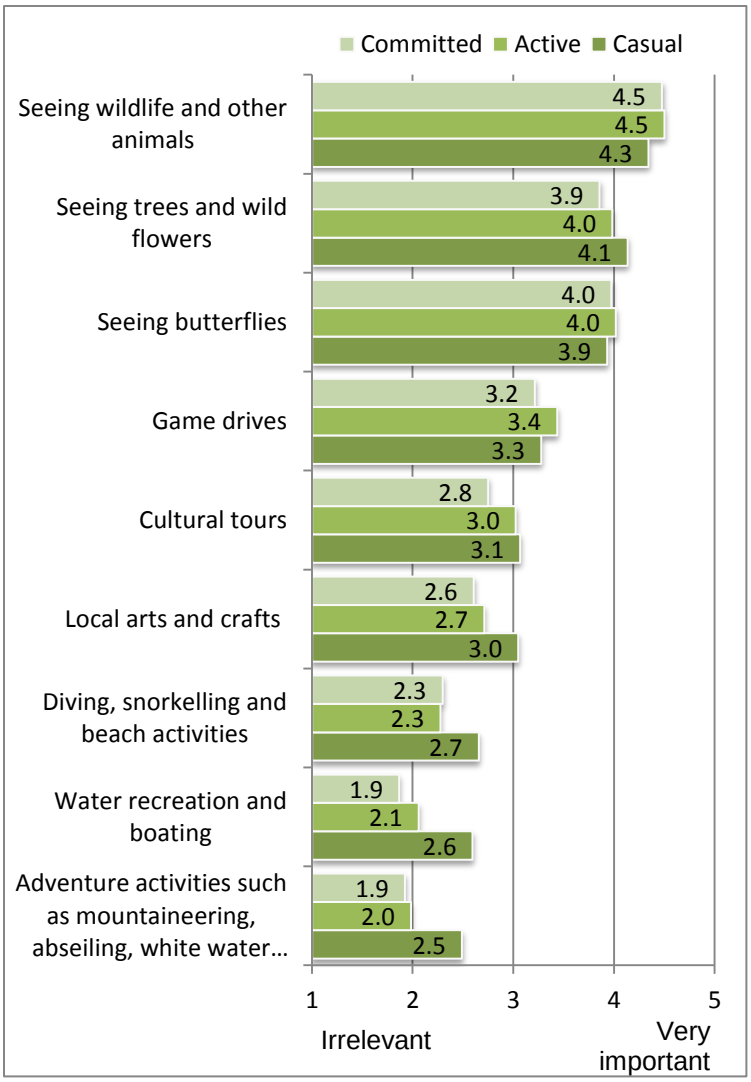


Figure 8: Mean scores for the three birder types with regard to the importance of participation in various other activities when on a birding trip

The most important other activity for *committed* (4.5), *active* (4.5) and *casual* (4.3) birders was seeing wildlife and other animals. Seeing trees and wild flowers, as well as butterflies, was another important activity for all three birder types. All three birder types considered diving, snorkelling and beach activities; water recreation and boating; as well as adventure activities to be unimportant. The research results indicate that it is not particularly important to include other activities, such as cultural tours, in a birding trip. These results are consistent with the DTI Avitourism in South Africa study, as their respondents considered other attractions or activities to be of relative importance (DTI, 2010). It should be noted that these activities are more important to *casual* birders than to *active* and *committed* birders.

Facilities used and infrastructure available when on a birding trip

ISSN: 2223-814X Copyright: © 2014 AJHTL - Open Access- Online @ http//: www.ajhtl.com

Figure 9 presents the mean importance scores of respondents at each of the birding fairs in terms of facilities used and infrastructure available at the birding destination.

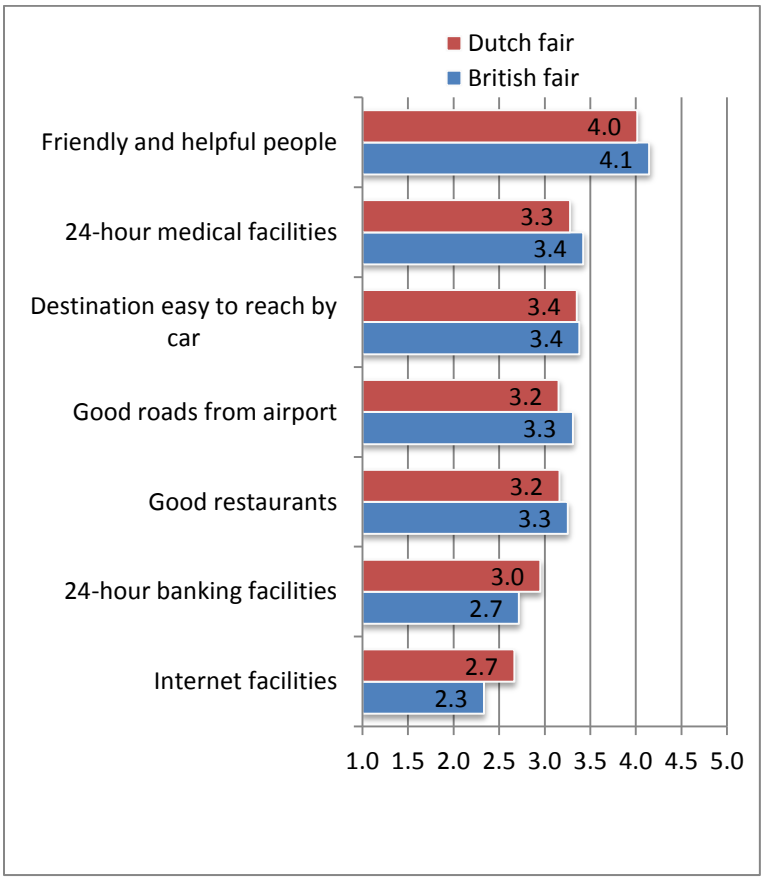


Figure 9: Mean scores of respondents with regard to the importance of various aspects of facilities used and infrastructure available

The mean response scores from both the Dutch *Vogelfestival* (4.0) and the British Birdwatching Fair (4.1) indicate that it is important to birders that people in the community should be friendly and helpful.

The need for 24-hour medical facilities received neutral mean importance scores from respondents at both the Dutch *Vogelfestival* (3.3) and the British Birdwatching Fair (3.4).

Respondents at neither fair considered it particularly important for the destination to be easy to reach by car, giving this a mean score of 3.4. Good roads between the airport and final destination, and good restaurants at the final destination, scored a neutral response from respondents at both fairs, with a score of 3.3 from respondents at the British Birdwatching Fair and 3.2 from respondents at the Dutch *Vogelfestival*.

Birders who participated in the survey also indicated that it is neither important nor unimportant to have 24-hour banking facilities, while Internet facilities were regarded as unimportant by participating birders at the British Birdwatching Fair.

Accommodation preferences of avitourists

Accommodation cost preferences and preferences for different types of accommodation facilities when on a birding trip are discussed in the next sections.

Accommodation cost preferences

In terms of accommodation costs, survey participants had to choose between budget accommodation, mid-range accommodation and luxury accommodation. Figure 10 displays the results in terms of respondents' accommodation cost preferences.

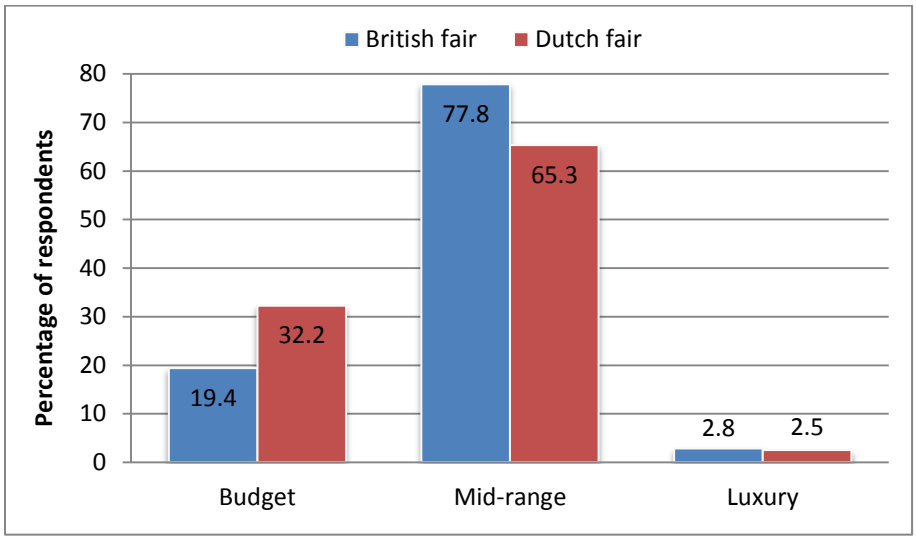


Figure 10: Respondents' accommodation cost preferences

Most of the respondents at the British Birdwatching Fair (77.8%) as well as the Dutch *Vogelfestival* (65.3%) preferred mid-range accommodation. Budget accommodation was the second most popular option, preferred by 19.4% and 32.2% of participants at the British Birdwatching Fair and the Dutch *Vogelfestival* respectively. A small percentage of only 2.8% at the British Birdwatching Fair and 2.5% at the Dutch *Vogelfestival* preferred luxury accommodation.

The sample results therefore indicate that more mid-range accommodation should be available on the birding routes, while luxury accommodation is of less importance. The assumption can be made accommodation is not particularly important because birders spend most of their time outdoors and not in the room.

Preferences for different types of accommodation facilities

Respondent's preferences regarding various accommodation facilities when on a birding trip were indicated on a Likert scale ranging from 0 to 3. The mean response scores in terms of accommodation facility preferences can be seen in Table 3 which indicates respondents' preference, by birder type, for the different types of accommodation facilities when on a birding trip.

Table 3: Respondents' preferences for different types of accommodation facilities when on a birding trip, by birder type

Accommodation preferences	Birder type		
	Casual **(Mean)**	***Active*** **(Mean)**	***Committed*** **(Mean)**
Basic accommodation or camping	1.66	1.56	1.61
Self-catering accommodation	1.94	1.84	1.93
Bed and breakfast establishments	1.98	1.99	2.16
Hotels	1.66	1.93	1.91
Game lodges	1.94	2.01	2.02
Accommodation providers should plan meal times that allow early mornings and late afternoons in the field	2.00	2.46	2.56

The most important preference for all birder types was that accommodation providers should plan meal times that allow for early mornings and late afternoons in the field. This is most important to *committed* birders (2.56), followed by *active* (2.46) and *casual* birders (2.00). *Committed* birders preferred bed and breakfast establishments (2.16), followed by game lodges (2.02). *Active* birders' accommodation facility preferences included game lodges (2.01), bed and breakfast establishments (1.99), as well as hotels (1.93). *Casual* birders preferred bed and breakfast establishments (1.98), followed by game lodges (1.94) and self-catering accommodation (1.94). These results indicate that all birder types preferred bed and breakfast establishments and game lodges to basic accommodation or camping. It is interesting to note that *casual* birders rated basic accommodation or camping (1.66) and self-catering accommodation (1.94) slightly higher than *active* and *committed* birders. In the DTI Avitourism in South Africa study, accommodation preferences were reported as self-catering being the most popular, followed by hotels and game lodges (DTI, 2010).

Birders' access to and use of Internet facilities

Table 4 indicates the birders' responses in terms of access to and comfortable use of the Internet.

Table 4: Percentage of respondent who make use of Internet facilities

Internet usage	British fair (%)	Dutch fair (%)
Access to the Internet	91.2	99.2

Access to e-mail	92.5	99.2
Comfortable with planning your trip on the Internet	81.6	95.3

By far the majority of respondents at the British Birdwatching Fair had access to Internet and e-mail facilities (91.2% and 92.5% respectively), while just over 80% indicated that they were comfortable with planning their trip on the Internet. Almost all the participants at the Dutch *Vogelfestival* had access to both Internet and e-mail, while more than 95% were comfortable with planning their birding trip on the Internet.

These results indicate that birder respondents at both the British and Dutch bird fairs are highly involved in technology. Participating birders had access to the Internet and e-mail and were comfortable with planning their birding trips on the Internet. These results are consistent with the new tourism trends, as increasingly the Internet is turned to as a primary source of information, and Internet bookings are a major factor in the decline of travel agencies (DTI, 2010; Kim et al., 2010; Wheeler, 2008:213). Avitourism managers and marketers should capitalise on this information by conducting above-the-line marketing communication, such as on the World Wide Web, and including booking facilities using the Internet.

Conclusion

Avitourism is recognised as an important niche market with high potential to generate economic, social and conservation benefits for Africa and to contribute to the realisation of the MDGs. Although niche tourism is garnering increasing scholarship, it appears that avitourism as a special interest tourism niche market received less attention within peer reviewed research. The remarkable wealth of birdlife in Africa necessitates an investigation into sustainable development of avitourism in Africa. To unleash this potential and to position Africa as a globally competitive avitourism destination, information is needed from the target market – the international avitourist. The purpose of this article was therefore an attempt to provide answers to some of the questions regarding the profile of the international avitourist that might visit Africa, based on their preferences.

Based on the results obtained from questionnaires completed at the British Birdwatching Fair and the Dutch Vogelfestival, this study provides insight into international avitourist preferences. The results of the analysis suggest the following:

- Biographic information of avitourists: The majority of the respondents at both bird fairs were male, while the ages of birders generally fall into three age categories, namely, 36–45, 46–55 and 56–65 years.
- Classification of birders into different birder types: Respondents at the British fair tend to be more active and committed, while respondents at the Dutch fair seem to be mostly casual and active birders.
- Preferences of avitourists: Birders travel as a couple, in a small group, or alone and prefer independent travel programmes to group travel. The most important attributes at the birding destination are accessible walking trails, information about birds and bird lists, time spent in bird hides, as well as time spent on boardwalks to enjoy views. Seeing wildlife and other animals as well as trees, wild flowers and butterflies are considered as the most important other activities while on a birding trip. Birders prefer mid-range priced accommodation. Birders also have access to the Internet and e-mail and are comfortable with

planning their birding trips on the Internet.

These results were also consistent with other avitourism studies in terms of avitourist gender and age; the fact that avitourists not homogeneous and are categorised as casual, active and committed birders; and in terms of avitourism preferences. Avitourists travel in couples or in small groups and prefer independent travel which is consistent with tourism demand trends related to the individuality and independence of tourists.

It can be recommended that the information on avitourism preferences should be used in product development and marketing to creatively attract avitourists and enhance the avitourist' experience. These should be taken into account in advertising appeals and marketing efforts to enhance the effectiveness of avitourism marketing.

The findings in terms of avitourism preferences may assist avitourism managers in developing avitourism products that will fulfil particular birder needs, planning for a more enjoyable experience at the birding destination, marketing and promoting the birding destination or avitourism product, and assisting in developing approaches to help manage avitourists and the impact of their activities.

In conclusion, international avitourism has the ability to contribute significantly towards growing the tourism sector in terms of increasing the tourist's length of stay, spreading, geographical distribution and volumes; reducing seasonality and reducing unemployment and poverty through employment creation and poverty alleviation. Birding destinations, specifically Africa, could utilise this opportunity to capitalise on their remarkable wealth of birdlife by developing avitourism, while simultaneously improving the economic, social and environmental well-being of the continent.

References

Bennett, J.A., Jooste, C.J. & Strydom, L. (2005). Managing tourism services: a southern African perspective. 3rd ed. Hatfield, Pretoria: Van Schaik.

Biggs, D., Turpie, J., Fabricius, C. & Spenceley, A. (2011). The value of avitourism for conservation and job creation – An analysis from South Africa. Conservation and Society, 9(1): 80–90.

BLSA (BirdLife South Africa) (2006). Feasibility study: Kruger to Canyons birding route and development plan. Unpublished Feasibility Study. Richards Bay: BLSA.

Buhalis, D. (2001). The tourism phenomenon. In: Wahab S, Cooper CP (eds) Tourism in the age of globalisation. London: Routledge.

Christie, I.T. (2008). Research note: Millennium Development Goals – what is tourism's place. Tourism Economics, 14(2): 427–430.

Coetzer, I.A. (2008). Personal communication on 30 June. Pretoria.

Cole, J.S., & Scott, D. (1999). Segmenting participation in wildlife watching: a comparison of casual wildlife watchers and serious birders. Human Dimensions of Wildlife: An International Journal, 4(4): 44–61.

Cooper, C., Fletcher, J., Fyall, A., Gilbert, D., & Wanhill, S. (2008). Tourism: principles and practice. 4th ed. Harlow: Financial Times Prentice Hall.

Cooper, D.R., & Emory, W. (1995). Business research methods. 5th ed. Chicago; London: Irwin.

Crosbie, M. (2008). Personal communication on 23 July. Pretoria.

Decrop, A. (2000). Qualitative research methods for the study of tourist behavior. In: Pizam, A. & Mansfeld, Y. (eds) Consumer behavior in travel and tourism. New York: Haworth Press.

Decrop, A. (2006). Vacation decision making. Wallingford: CABI.

Dickinson, R. & Edmondson, B. (1996). Golden wings. American demographics, 18(12): 47–49.

DoT (Department of Tourism) (2011). Final Draft National Avitourism Strategy of South Africa. Pretoria: DoT.

DTI (Department of Trade and Industry). (2010). Avitourism in South Africa: Research and analysis report. South Africa: Pretoria.

Ellis, C., & Vogelsong, H. (2004). Measuring birdwatcher preferences through importance-performance analysis. In: Murdy, J. (ed.). Proceedings of the 2003 Northeastern Recreation Research Symposium, New York, 6–8 April: 203–210.

Getz, D. (2005). Event management and event tourism. 2nd ed. New York: Cognizant Communication Corporation.

Holloway, J.C. (2006). The business of tourism. 7th ed. Harlow: Financial Times Prentice Hall.

Hugo, A.J. (2008). Personal communication on 15 July. Pretoria.

Hvenegaard, G.T. (2002). Birder specialisation differences in conservation involvement, demographics and motivations. Human Dimensions of Wildlife. 7: 21–36.

Kim, A.K., Keuning, J. Robertson, J., & Kleindorfer, S. (2010). Understanding the birdwatching tourism market in Queensland, Australia. Anatotia: An International Journal of Tourism and
Hospitality Research, 21(2): 227-247. [Online] Available from: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13032917.2010.9687101 [Downloaded: 2012-07-01].

Krejcie, R.V., & Morgan, D.W. (1970). Determining sample size for research activities. Educational and psychological measurement. 30(3): 607–610.
La Rouche, G.P. (2003). Birding in the United States: a demographic and economic analysis. Washington DC: U.S Fish and Wildlife Service.

Leedy, P.D. & Ormrod, J.E. (2010). Practical research: planning and design. 9th ed. Boston: Pearson Education International.

Lindsay, M. (n.d.). The Great Texas Coastal Birding Trail: a tool for avitourism. [Online] Available from: http://www.birds.cornell.edu/pifcapemay/lindsay.htm [Accessed: 2008-06-13].

Martin, S.R. (1997). Specialization and differences in setting preferences among wildlife viewers. Human Dimensions of Wildlife: An International Journal, 2(1): 1–18.

Milstein, P. (2008). Personal communication on 21 July. Pretoria.

Nicolaides, A. (2013). Promoting avitourism as a special niche area of ecotourism in South Africa. African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure, 2(3): 1–16.

Nicolaides, A. (2014). Stakeholders, purposes and responsibilities: Avitourism in South Africa. African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure, 3(2): 1–14.

Page, S. (2007). Tourism management: managing for change. 2nd ed. Amsterdam; London: Butterworth-Heinemann.

Pearce, P.L. (2005). Tourist behaviour: themes and conceptual schemes. Clevedon: Channel View Publications.

Robinson, M., & Novelli, M. (2005). Niche tourism, an introduction. In: Novelli, M. (ed.)

Niche tourism: contemporary issues, trends and cases. Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann.

Rogerson, C.M. (2011). Niche tourism policy and planning: the South African experience. Tourism Review International, 15: 199–211.

Scott, D., Ditton, R.B., Stoll, J.R., & Eubanks, T.L. (2005). Measuring specialization among birders: utility of a self-classification measure. Human Dimensions of Wildlife: An International Journal, 10(1):53.

Scott, D., & Thigpen, J. (2003). Understanding the birder as a tourist: segmenting visitors to the Texas Hummer/Bird Celebration. Human Dimensions of Wildlife, 8(3): 199–218.

Sekercioğlu, C.H. (2002). Impacts of birdwatching on human and avian communities. Environmental Conservation, 29(3): 282–289. [Online] Available from: http://www.stanford.edu/~cagan/SekercioguOrniTourismEnvCons2002.pdf [Downloaded: 2008-02-11].

South African Tourism. (2008). 2007 Annual Report. South Africa: SA Tourism.

Steven, R., Morrison, C. & Castle, J.G. (2014). Birdwatching and avitourism: a global review of research in its participant markets, distribution and impacts, highlighting future research priorities to inform sustainable avitourism management. Journal of Sustainable Tourism, DOI: 10.1080/09669582.2014.924955. [Online] Available from: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2014.924955 [Downloaded: 2014-09-10].

Swarbrooke, J., & Horner, S. (2007). Consumer behaviour in tourism. 2nd ed. Amsterdam; London: Butterworth-Heinemann.

Turpie, J., & Ryan, P.G. (1998). The nature and value of birding in South Africa. Unpublished Report. Cape Town.

Wheeler, T. (2008). Future destinations. In: Conrady R, Buck M (eds) Trends and issues in global tourism 2008. Berlin; Heidelberg: Springer-Verlag.

Winer, R.S. (2007). Marketing management. 3rd ed. New Jersey: Pearson Prentice-Hall.