



www.asiantourism.org

Autumn / 2018

Monthly Newsletter

Hello AEN fans!

There are many exciting ecotourism and sustainable tourism news stories to share in the region.

Message from the chair

Sustainable Destinations Training Course

From June 19 to 22, Green Destinations (GD), a GSTC-accredited certifying body based in the Netherlands, and an international team of trainers in the field of destination sustainability invited destination managers and professionals, participants from the tourism business sector, and destination management experts to register for this course held at Songdo Convensia, Incheon, South Korea. From AEN, Dr. Mihee Kang from South Korea, Masaru Takayama from Japan, and Dr. Alan Wong from Hong Kong China, participated as the trainers along with the GD president Drs. Albert Salman and our colleague Mrs. Monique Chen from Taiwan. As participants we had AEN board members of Ms. Supaporn Prach-Umpai (Thailand), Johnny Orn (Cambodia), Victor Yu (Taiwan), and Kazu Arai (Japan).

The training course comprised topics on GSTC's objectives and standards, Green Destinations and its approach to destination development and management, Destination Assessment and Certification, Marketing sustainable destinations, and other relevant matters with a number of interactive role-play working sessions in groups that helped participants realize what should be done on the ground once they are home. The field trip was also a superb relationship-building and networking exercise.

We are seeing that with time, more and more people are aware and engaging with the sustainable tourism standards. This is a good trend that we must welcome, we must also realize that many other countries and regions are still unaware of the importance of managing tourism over the long term; meeting the triple bottom line, people, planet and profits.

To note, we were also happy to meet with Mr. Rod Hillman, the Chief Executive of Ecotourism Australia (EA), to share our challenges and opportunities in Asia. AEN continuously seek bi-lateral partnership and joint projects in the future with EA.



Message from the chair

Asian Ecotourism Standard



AEN has been talking with ASEAN governments and secretariat to work together in collaboration to re-visit the ecotourism standards once developed for ASEAN countries. It is said, often more challenging to implement and monitor the effectiveness of the application of the standards than just creating them to celebrate ecotourism. We will keep you posted on the progress though it may take time. It is a good time to review the Pakse Declaration on ASEAN Roadmap for Strategic Development of Ecotourism Clusters and Tourism Corridors (2016). <http://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/PAKSE-DECLARATION.pdf>

AEN is also working to revise the ecotourism standard for accommodation, which was once property of the Japan Ecotourism Association. A number of AEN board members have worked to alter the minimum standard workable in all Asian countries. We are working to submit to GSTC by the end of 2018 to continue enjoying the recognition complying with the global sustainable tourism standards. The meeting took place over two separate sittings in both Bangkok and Incheon.



Message from AEN activity in Europe

AEN is a part of the Green Destinations TOP100 program. We feel strongly that Asian tourism destinations are able to demonstrate their good practices on the global initiative like this one. The first 60 green destinations out of 100 were announced on September 27 at Nijmegen, the European Green Capital City 2018. Among others, Kamaishi from Japan, Lio Estate from El Nido Philippines, Northeast and Yilan Coast National Scenic Area from Taiwan were selected in Asia. The rest of the destinations will be announced in ITB-Berlin on March 6, 2019. The application is open until October 15, 2018. The tourism management is essential to make tourism sustainable, and without saying, ecotourism must also be managed to realize conservation and tourism successful with benefits that bring to the communities.

More information at;

<http://greendestinationsday.org/>



<http://greendestinations.org/>

Countries And Provinces

Member News

PETALING JAYA: Terengganu took a major step in protecting the state's natural heritage by gazetting two new state parks in the Kenyir and Setiu areas.

Terengganu declares two state parks at Setiu and Kenyir

Mentri Besar Dr Ahmad Samsuri Mokhtar said the move will help protect vital catchment areas and ensure a sustainable supply of water for electricity and drinking. The areas to become state parks involve 10,386 hectares at Lawit-Cenana in Kenyir and 432 hectares at the Setiu Wetlands (another 1,088 hectares will be gazetted in phase two).

"These state parks are also identified as an important refuge for flora and fauna with several threatened species," said Dr Ahmad.

These are the Asian Elephant, Malayan Tapir and the critically endangered Malayan Tiger at Kenyir and the Green Turtle and the critically endangered Painted Terrapin at the Setiu Wetlands.

Dr Ahmad said these parks lie in areas designated as an Important Bird Area (IBA) by Birdlife International.

"Scientists have recorded more than 291 bird species within its perimeters," he said in a press statement on Wednesday (Aug 15).

"In fact, an incredible nine out of the 10 species of hornbills that exist in Malaysia can be found in the Lawit-Cenana State Park alone."

Dr Ahmad Samsuri added that the move constitutes "significant progress on Terengganu's commitments regarding the protection of the state's natural heritage".

The parks will be managed by a management council, he said, which will include members from respective federal and state government agencies.

"This council will be responsible to control and manage the state parks and also to ensure that all stakeholders in this eco-tourism industry will be looked after, especially the local residents," he said.



Source: [The Star Online](http://www.thestar.com.my)

Member News

Countries And Provinces

Ukraine to learn from Sabah's eco-tourism

Penampang: Ukraine wants to learn from Sabah's best practices in developing its eco-tourism products and attracting foreign tourists in huge numbers.

Being a country known for its Unesco World Heritage Sites, Ukraine aims to take its tourism industry to greater heights and believes it is possible by learning how Sabah has done it.

"This is one area that we can learn from Sabah because it has been very successful in attracting foreign tourists," said the country's Ambassador to Malaysia, Olexander Nechyaylo.

Olexander was in the State with his wife, Triana, to experience the State level Harvest Festival celebration at Hongkod Koisaan for the first time just recently. The couple attended both the opening and closing ceremonies of the annual celebration held at the Kadazan Dusun Cultural Centre.

He had scheduled to meet Sabah Chief Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Shafie Apdal.

"Our country looks forward to building a new chapter of relationship with the State Government.

For me, I look forward to meeting the new Chief Minister to congratulate him on his appointment," said Nechyaylo, who made his first visit to the State last year.

He believes that the relationship between Ukraine and Malaysia will be further strengthened under the leadership of Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

"Mahathir made an official visit to Ukraine in July 2003. So, we look forward to continuing this friendly relationship," he said.

Diplomatic relations between the two countries was established on March 3, 1992, and Malaysia was among the first countries to recognise the independence of Ukraine.

He pointed out that Malaysia is fast becoming one of the countries that more Ukrainians would want to visit, with the numbers growing between 10 to 15 per cent in recent years.

Last year, he said more than 15,000 of his countrymen visited Malaysia.

At the same time, he hopes more Malaysians would visit Ukraine, an East European country, which offers many exciting places.

"During the recent European Championship final held in Kiev, we had a group of 50 Malaysian soccer fans coming to see the match. Most of them were Liverpool supporters," he said.

Other than tourism, Nechyaylo also hopes to see a revival of cooperation in the area of education.

In a previous interview with him, Nechyaylo had said that Ukraine has so much to offer, particularly in the fields of engineering, aerospace, medical science and Information Technology.

He said Ukraine was part of the Bologna Process, which is a series of ministerial meetings and agreements between European countries to ensure comparability in the standards and quality of higher-education qualifications. - Leonard Alaza



Olexander Nechyaylo (centre) and wife Triana (second from right) during the Harvest Festival celebration in Sabah.

Source: [Daily Express](#)

Countries And Provinces

Member News

The Kamikawa Ainu and Daisetsuzan Mountain Range have been recognized as Japanese Heritage

The Agency for Cultural Affairs in Japan has certified Ainu cultures around the Daisetsuzan mountain range as Japanese Heritage. Ainu are the indigenous people of Hokkaido.

The Japan Heritage is a certification system through which the Japanese government certifies cultural heritage in terms of both theme and area. It can be tangible or intangible cultural property, and the aim is to recognize the story, tradition, or history, rather than recognizing property itself. This certification system was started in 2015, and this is the 4th year. Presently there are 3 recognized aspects of heritage in Hokkaido and 67 in Japan.

The title of the submission is “Kamikawa Ainu living with Kamuy (the gods); The God’s World handed on to the next generation in the Daisetsuzan Mountain Range”. The landscape of the Daisetsuzan and the Ainu ceremonies and traditional dances are submitted as a whole, representing their cultural importance. The reviewing committee evaluated that Ainu traditional embroidery, ceremonies, and cooking programs are concretely designed for experiential education or tours.



Daisetsuzan Mountain Range



Ainu People

The story is that the Daisetsuzan Mountain Range is beautiful but severe. The Ainu have recognized Kamuy (Gods) and have been living in harmony with them by showing them respect in their daily lives.

They have a legend of a fight between a genie and a hero at the gorge with strange rocks and white water. Now, this is a sacred place for the Kamikawa Ainu. The tribe has built a Kotan (village) with bamboo grass houses so they can continuously pray for the gods.

Ainu see rivers as a living thing that swims up to a mountain, and the Daisetsuzan Mountain Range as the upper reach that is closest to the gods’ world. The Daisetsuzan confers nature’s blessing to people, so the Ainu worship the Daisetsuzan and call it Kamuy Mimntar, which means ‘playground of gods’.

We would like to share Ainu culture and traditions as well as the landscape of volcanic mountains and alpine environment.

Japan Heritage <http://www.bunka.go.jp/english/index.html>

Member News

***The most intelligent bird
in the World***



Tourism Operators fight for the Kea

[ZIPTREK ECOTOURS](#) from Queenstown New Zealand says it “works with the forest”, and it means it!

For the recent New Zealand Conservation Week it takes on an increased environmental focus. Ziptrek has used its eight years in business to educate and inspire others towards long-term environmental and sustainable practices. This year’s activities include planting 150 native trees on the zipline course, clearing wilding pines from Bob’s Peak and volunteering at the local Kiwi Birdlife Park to help plant 5,000 native trees. It will also be hoping to add to its current ‘kill count’ of the introduced predators, stoats, rats and possums in the traps they set and monitor on course to rid the area of predators which eat native plants and ground-loving birds. The kill count sits at more than 120 so far.

And it’s supporting the world’s only mountain parrot, the highly-intelligent Kea (*Nestor notabilis*). Ziptrek Ecotours has formed a partnership with the Kea Conservation Trust where throughout September, its guests have been encouraged to add a \$2 donation to the trust when they book. This is not an isolated case of private commercial tourism operators standing up for the environment, working with their own resources to assist the public and government efforts to care for the natural inhabitants of the landscape. [NZSki](#), the largest Ski resort company in New Zealand used Conservation Week to launch a new five-year commitment to spend more than \$250,000 helping protect birds native to the alpine



Kea:

areas it works across, spearheaded by \$50,000 worth of funds and donation support in partnership with the Kea Conservation Trust. It already operates environmental programmes at its Southern Alps locations; The Remarkables, Coronet Peak and Mount Hutt.

The [Kea Conservation Trust](#) will be able to utilise this support to great effect in its various programmes to keep the Kea population safe and healthy. This trust, created and managed by volunteers to protect native species are but one of many publicly run organisations that work within New Zealand to safeguard our species. Consequently, over the last decade in New Zealand we are seeing more and more private tourism operators becoming strongly focussed on supporting the effort of conservation in New Zealand, they realise that our tourism industry relies on having the beauty and natural environments of this country preserved for all to see and enjoy!

Countries And Provinces

***New Zealand Conservation Week
inspires Tourism Operators***

David Attenborough calls them “The most intelligent bird in the World” the ‘Kea’

The Kea is an endemic parrot that lives only on the South Island of New Zealand and is the only alpine parrot in the world. They are an incredibly curious bird and it’s very common to see and experience them up very close in the wild. The call of ‘ke-aa’ ringing through the air is deeply evocative of New Zealand’s Southern Alps and the Kea (*Nestor notabilis*) are parrots that have adapted well to life in the mountains. Their intelligent curiosity equips them well for the harsh conditions in which they live but also means they are easily affected by humans and the modifications they have made upon the landscape and ecosystem.

Humans have only lived on the land of New Zealand for 800 years, that’s the blink of an eye for human existence but for species that took millions of years to evolve the human impact upon them has been swift and intense, seeing many extinctions happen over that 800 year period.

Countries And Provinces

Member News

PETALING JAYA: News about the Kedah government's decision to put an end to logging activities in the Ulu Muda forest comes as 'music to the ears' of those who have been fighting to preserve it.

One of them is Hymeir Kamaruddin, who operates the Ulu Muda Field Research Centre located within the lush rainforest.

"I'm glad that it didn't take too much convincing by the NGOs and other concerned parties for the state and federal governments to do the right thing and stop the destruction of this important water catchment forest and an area of high biodiversity," he said.

Water, Land and Natural Resources Minister Xavier Jayakumar recently disclosed that Kedah Menteri Besar Mukhriz Mahathir had told him the state was revoking logging permits for the forest and suspending the issuance of new ones.

The move is apparently aimed at preventing the pollution of water catchment areas. Hymeir told FMT he hoped the protection would not be for just the Muda Lake catchment but also for the Ahning and Pedu lake catchments. He said all three were important for the supply of water for irrigation.

He urged the government to gazette the 163,000ha area as a state or national park, saying this would facilitate its management as an important resource.

Twice the size of Singapore, the Ulu Muda forest serves as an essential catchment area for northern Malaysia. It also helps prevent flooding in the plains of Kedah, Perak and Penang.

Kedah, however, needs the RM40 million in forest premiums it derives from the issuance of logging permits. Penang, which gets 80% of its water supply from Sungai Muda, has repeatedly called on the federal government to compensate Kedah for protecting the forest.

Andrew Sebastian, the CEO and co-founder of the Ecotourism & Conservation Society Malaysia, also hailed the Kedah move.

He expressed hope that any decision to gazette protection of the forest would cover the entire river basin of Ulu Muda and would be accompanied by an enhancement of the state's enforcement arm.

"It is our hope that campaigns to make people aware of the importance of protecting water catchments will be carried out as well," he said. He suggested that the state hold discussions on improving the ecotourism products of Ulu Muda and showcase the area to the world as a new ecotourism spot.

Ulu Muda is the largest natural habitat for wildlife and indigenous plants in the northern part of the country. Animals that live there include the rare clouded leopard, Asian elephant, Malayan tapir, Malayan Sun Bear and 10 species of hornbills. The forest reserve is the largest carbon sink in the region, with millions of plants absorbing carbon dioxide and releasing oxygen into the air daily.

Forest lovers hail move to ban logging at Ulu Muda



Visitors take pictures with a 'Save Ulu Muda' poster at an event in Penang earlier this year. The Ulu Muda forest serves as an essential catchment area for northern Malaysia. (Bernama pic)

Source: FreeMalaysia-Today.com

Member News**Chinese tourist arrivals increase by 44.2pc**

Kuala Lumpur: Tourist arrivals from China to Sabah has increased by 44.2 per cent to 300,103 visitors in the first six months this year compared to the same period last year.

This is followed by a 17.2 per cent growth or 162,276 arrivals from South Korea whereas Taiwanese tourists have dropped 11.9 per cent to 26,250 persons from January to June this year.

The Minister of Tourism, Arts and Culture, Mohamaddin bin Ketapi, said in response to Senator Datuk Yong Wui Chung's questions in the latter's winding up speech during the Dewan Negara sitting, here, recently.

According to Sabah Tourism Board's (STB) statistics last year, he said the Tunku Abdul Rahman Marine Park was the most visited destination among China, Taiwanese and South Korean tourists with 564,330 visitors recorded.

Poring Hot Spring was ranked the second most visited attraction (416,572 visitors), followed by Kinabalu National Park (304,905), Tun Sakaran Marine Park (163,183), Lok Kawi Wildlife Park (142,519), Sepilok Orang Utan Sanctuary (120,529) and Sipadan Island (43,717).

Mohamaddin said his Ministry has been working with STB to organise various programmes to promote our State's tourism. He said tourism events were packaged to cater for charter flights from East Asia.

"Charter flights are popular in Sabah. From January to June this year, Sabah has received 151 charter flights carrying 20,532 tourists from China and one charter flight from Japan. Tourist arrivals from China, South Korea, Taiwan and Japan via charter flights have increased by 273 per cent to 20,652 persons this year compared to 5,504 persons for the same period last year."

Other programmes undertaken include participating in tourism exhibitions such as the International Tourism Bourse (ITB)-Berlin, World Travel Mart (WTM)-London, Destination Show-London, Vakantiebeurs-Amsterdam, Matka-Helsinki, Sabah Roadshow-Australia; organizing Mega Familiarization trips for media and industry players to introduce the attractions in Sabah; advertising campaigns for the domestic and international markets; and overall promotion of inbound tourism.

He added that the advertising budget for promoting Malaysia tourism was RM 110 million for 2018. To another question, Mohamaddin said his ministry has identified eight ecotourism clusters in Sabah under the National Ecotourism Plan (NEP) 2016-2025, namely Kota Kinabalu-Papar-Beaufort-Klias-Kuala Penyu-Menumbok-Sipitang-Long Pasia; Sandakan-Kinabatangan; Kota Kinabalu-Kota Belud-Kota Marudu-Kudat; Kota Kinabalu-Tambunan-Crocker Range Park-Keningau-Tenom; Kota Kinabalu-Tamparuli-Kundasang-Ranau; Maliau Basin-Imbak Canyon; Danum Valley-Tabin (Lahad Datu); and Tawau-Semporna-Mabul-Sipadan-Kunak.

He said the community-based tourism (CBT) in these ecotourism clusters focused on homestay programmes, which could be further developed and promoted holistically.



Kinabalu Park And Poring Hot Spring

Countries And Provinces

Member News

Service Learning in Yunnan, China

10-23 July 2018

Dr. Alan Wong

I have been teaching a subject in The Hong Kong Polytechnic University named "Ecotourism in rural and developing regions", as a Service Learning elective for the fifth year, since 2014.



The key objective of this subject is to provide some basic ecotourism knowledge/concepts and the idea of service learning to students for one semester. Then, take them to deliver service to a local community. This year, I took a group of 23 students from our university and 33 students from Fudan University China to help few local communities in Yong Ping, a rural town in Dali, Yunnan, China. Students were grouped into different teams, which were working respectively in the itinerary, home-stay, farming, oral history, publicity and tea farming. During the 14-day trip in Yunnan, students spent around a total of 8 days in the service-delivering site in Yong Ping. Each group worked on and stayed in four different sites including Guan Zhuang village, Qu Dong village, Hua Qiao village, and Da Ping Tan for 5 days.

Overall, this is a beautiful place with rich cultural and natural resources, which have the potential to develop ecotourism. Students enjoyed their stay and the learning experience. At the end, each group presented their outcomes and hard work to the local government. The different communities appreciated our efforts and local officials were happy to what we have done to help them to promote the place and make suggestions to develop the site in a sustainable manner. Perhaps, it would be useful to share our experiences of interactions with the local officers in China. First, it takes time and patience to communicate with them. Second, you need to be culturally sensitive and politically correct. One example is that, our students showed one picture in their presentation of suggested itinerary regarding the latest local mosque. However, the local official expressed that we need to remove it from showing in any social media in China. The reason is that it would cause trouble to show others for a developing area there to have such a building looking luxury or expensive. Anyway, good cross-cultural communication skill is the key to work in China.

If you are interested in what we have done, you may click the following link. I am sorry that the information only in Chinese. The local officials thought that they do not expect too many foreign visitors yet. They would like us to spend our resources and time to develop a Chinese website for them first. However, with the pictures and videos, you could still get a taste of it!



<https://yunnansl2018.wixsite.com/yongpingtravel>

<https://www.facebook.com/alan.wong.5851127/>

Member News

Community-based tourism -
success story from Thailand

The community-based tourism management of the Buddhist community in Khlong Daen, Songkhla province, was chosen by the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) as a case study for building a community structure (Khlong Daen Model). It is targeted as a role model for other communities to create constructive and sustainable tourism, new quality tourist attractions, as well as, adjusting the country's position to become a "Preferred Destination" in accordance with TAT's vision.

At the Global Eco Asia-Pacific Tourism Conference this November, we are pleased to have Mr. Nithee Seeprae from the TAT who will be providing us with more insights to this successful community tourism project.

Mr. Nithee Seeprae is the Executive Director of Product Promotion Department for the Tourism Authority of Thailand. He has a background as a policies maker and experience with strategy plans to promote tourism product and developing tourism attractions and services to support those plans and policies.

For full program and to register please visit our website: <https://globaleco.com.au/2018/program>.

Nithee Seeprae

Executive Director of Product Promotion
Department Tourism Authority of Thailand



AEN Thailand



AEN head office:

Asian Ecotourism Network (AEN) Founder and Chair

594/6 Asoke Dindaeng Road, Dindaeng, Bangkok 10400 Thailand

Tel: +6626416063-5

<https://www.asianecotourism.org/>

Email: asianecotourismnetwork@gmail.com