

## THE ROLE OF NATIONAL PARKS IN TOURISM DEVELOPMENT: A CASE STUDY OF CROSS RIVER NATIONAL PARK

### Abstract

*A lot of papers have been written on National Parks world wide, Africa and Nigeria in particular. National Parks have been defined as natural ecosystem with unique attributes classified in the higher category of protected areas. National Park is an area set aside by a national government for the preservation of the natural environment (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2005). National Parks may also be set aside for the purpose of public recreation and enjoyment. The protection of wildlife began with the creation of Nigeria, soon after the amalgamation of the Northern and Southern parts of the country in 1914 (UNEP/WCMC, 2006). Regional game laws were enacted, initially by eastern Nigeria in 1916 and later by the western and northern regions in 1928 and 1963, respectively. The three categories of protected area recognized within the wildlife sector are strict nature reserve, game reserve and national park, all of which were formerly reserved forests. In the late 1980s the Federal Natural Resources Conservation Council (NRCC) was created. This council was chaired by the president with representatives from a number of ministries such as World Wildlife Fund (WWF), Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), Federal Environmental Protection Agency FEPA), International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) and from the Nigeria conservation Foundation (NCF). This council provided coordination for the conservation of natural resources, developed policies, directed measures to secure the status of species and sites, monitored conservation activities and provided funds for conservation activities and research within the forestry and wildlife sectors. Since the area is open for public visitation, it is a tool for tourism development. This study is primarily aimed at creating awareness on the roles of national parks in tourism development.*

### Introduction

National Parks are now a reality in all corners of the developing world and Nigeria is no exception. Some of these parks and reserves reflect attempts to protect natural landscape and wildlife for conservation and scientific purposes (Olindo 1991; Rovinski 1991; Hitcock 1993: 310 in Thison *et al.* 1999:215.) In other situation, potentially large returns from tourism appear to have influenced their creation (Thison *et al.* 1999:215). Much of the stimulus for this tourist activity comes from worldwide interest in viewing nature and the diversity of animal and bird life to be found in the National Parks. National Parks have also become the most widely used category of protected areas in developing countries including Sub-Saharan Africa (Ite, 1996).

Nigeria has abundant physical attractions namely hills, waterfalls, springs, caves, lakes and mountains across the length and breadth of the country. These fascinating features and beautiful scenes provide interesting sites for leisure, adventure and other tourism related activities. Among them are: the Jos Wildlife Park, National Parks and Obudu, Cattle Ranch (NTDC, 2005).

Six National Parks were in operation in Nigeria until 1999 when two others were created (Aremu, 2001). They are Chad Basin, Cross River, Gashaka Gumti, Kainji Lake, Old Oyo, and Yankari National Park. The later two are Okomu and Kamuku National park. The potentials of these National Parks have been emphasized by Ayodele and Falade (1993). They are very rich in varieties of faunal and floral resources. Tourist activity in a National



Park or any other protected areas can serve as a self-financing mechanism and so as a tool for conservation. This study examines Cross River National Park with a view to assessing its contributions to eco-tourism promotion.

### Statement of problem

Although constant references have been made to National Parks in tourism development in Nigeria, yet wildlife tourism has not been fully developed. This is not due to lack of wildlife resources (Ajayi, 1972), but because tourism as an industry in Nigeria remains largely underdeveloped. Many Nigerians do not know the roles these National parks play in tourism development neither do they know the objectives for which they were established.

There are societies where wilderness is still considered an obstacle to progress and the need for conservation is not universally appreciated (Thison *et al*, 1999). There may well be difficulty in divesting money and manpower to the development and management of parks (Olindo 1991:30 in Thison *et al*, 1999) and a reluctance to take land out of what is considered to be more productive use. Even in situations where the authorities do display enthusiasm and an awareness of the value of parks, obstacles may still surface in translating this into adequate levels of funding and appropriate park management (Rovinski, 1991).

A particular problem occurs in areas of prior human habitation, especially where land is in communal ownership and land use practice, such as shifting agriculture, timber getting and hunting, may destroy the environment. Of concern in these circumstances is the extent to which new or existing National Parks and Nature Reserves may intrude upon the lives of local residents, leading to disruption of established patterns of land use and of the social fabric (Pattulo, 1996:119-20 in Thison *et al*, 1999). Moreover, if the local population can receive some tangible benefits from the establishment of a national park, the people may be more prepared to respect and maintain the integrity of the park environment (Whelan, 1991:8). However, as Hitchcock (1993:314) has demonstrated in one instance, sometimes local residents gain little in economic terms through such tourism development. As Cochrane (1996) has argued, it is extremely difficult to achieve both the aims of ecotourism at once (to conserve nature) and to improve the welfare of local people. Thus, a fine balance needs to be struck. Otherwise, the possibility will remain of resentment and lack of co-operation where a more environmentally compatible, but less rewarding and beneficial type of park system is imposed on local communities (Drake 1991:137; Olindo 1991; Whelan 1991:9 in Thison *et al*, 1999). Boo, (1991) noted that to have a successful ecotourism enterprise and to ensure that local communities benefit from the tourism development, local people should actively participate in tourism planning.

This study hopes to examine the above issues in the study area. It is primarily aimed at creating awareness on the roles of National Parks in tourism development. Apart from the key informant interview; some park workers and villagers were interviewed to elicit information on the contributions of National parks to tourism.



## Theoretical Anchor

The essence of theories is to put ideas together in order to give a good insight into the roles National Parks can play in tourism development with particular reference to Cross River National Park. Development theory was believed by the researcher as an appropriate theory that could be used to explain the topic. Foster-Carter (1986) saw developmental theory in tourism as a process (a system that is still growing; it has not attained equilibrium). Gold Thorpe (1996) says that is the transformation of production that has been associated with the wide and increasing disparity among rich and poor countries, and among rich and poor in the world as a whole. Most literature tends to assume that the current of development is economic, that is usually to increase national output and wealth often by industrialization. Three types of developmental goal can be distinguished. These are social development, political development and cultural development (Foster-Carter, 1986). Social development talks about the immediate fulfillment of basic needs. They encompass food, shelter and clothing, essential services, like drinking water, sanitation health education, transport and job opportunities. Political development can be seen by ideologists according to their own perspectives or preconceptions. In development theories, some scholars have tried to explain contemporary tourism in developing countries from the point of view of dependency and domination, as well as modernization theory. The theories help to explore the interaction between tourists and the people living in tourist destination.

Development theory help the researcher to access the stages of development in tourism and the roles of National Parks in tourism development. Looking at the modernization theory and dependency theory we can foresee the reason why some parks are more developed than others. Modernization theory is a socio-economic theory, sometimes known as development theory, which highlights the positive role played by the developed world in modernizing and facilitating sustainable development in underdeveloped nations (Wikipedia, 2006). For Offiong (2001), modernization theorists emphasize the importance of traditional culture in Third World Poverty.

Dependency theory tries to stress that the third world societies are different in development because of their different historical experiences and the primary obstacles to autonomous development is not internal, but external. Modernization theory makes us believe that before our National Parks could attract tourists they have to be modernized, which means adopting some of the systems of the western countries. The greatest barrier to economic development in the third world is traditionalism, that is national glorification of traditional values and beliefs that are incompatible with modernity. These theories also emphasized the need for the west to help in the economic development of poor countries.

Tourism industry depends on a quality natural environment for continued survival (Igbo and Okpoko, 2006). Environment is cost free, and this can lead to exploitation and degradation. Therefore, nature-based tourism has to be preserved and protected to ensure its sustainability.



### The Environmental Setting and its Resources

Cross River National Park is located on latitude  $5^{\circ}05'$  and  $6^{\circ}29'N$  and Longitude  $8^{\circ}15'$  and  $9^{\circ}30'E$  (CRSG, 2005). The park covers a total area of  $400\text{ km}^2$ , lying south East corner of Nigeria in Cross River state and extending along the Republic of Cameroon border. The Cross River National Park comprises two geographically non-contiguous divisions, the Oban and Okwangwo divisions (Ite, 1997). The Oban division lies within the Cross River loop between longitudes  $8^{\circ}05'E$  and  $8^{\circ}55'E$  and latitudes  $5^{\circ}00'N$  and  $6^{\circ}00'N$  (CRNP, 2005), and covers an area of  $300\text{ km}^2$ . The Okwangwo division lies in the Northern part of Cross River State, with the latitude  $6^{\circ}04'$  and  $6^{\circ}29'N$ ; longitude  $9^{\circ}$  and  $9^{\circ}27'E$  (Obet, 1996). It covers an area of  $1000\text{ km}^2$ ; and ecologically contiguous with Takamanda forest reserve in the republic of Cameroon (Edet, 1996). Oban is ecological contiguous with Korup National Park in the Republic of Cameroon (CRSTB, 2005).

The vegetation of Cross River National Park is that of tropical high forest. A complex network of rivers, streams and rivulets criss-cross the park (Edet, 1996). Specifically, the vegetation of Okwangwo division consists of forest and savannah, and that of Oban division is lowland rainy forest.

The soils of Oban division are ferralitic and sandy and steadily become shallower with increasing elevation (Birdlife International, 2005). Soils of lowland areas of Okwangwo Division are ferralitic and highly susceptible to leaching, while those of the grassland areas are ferruginous and very easily eroded when exposed (Birdlife international, 2005; Obot, 1996b). Generally, the soils of Cross River National Park are sandy, basically less fertile, and shallow.

Cross River National Park is characterized by two distinct tropical moist climates: the rainy and dry season. Rainfall is well over 3,500 mm per annum with peaks in July and September. The dry seasons usually extends from November to February and March (Orhiere, 1996).

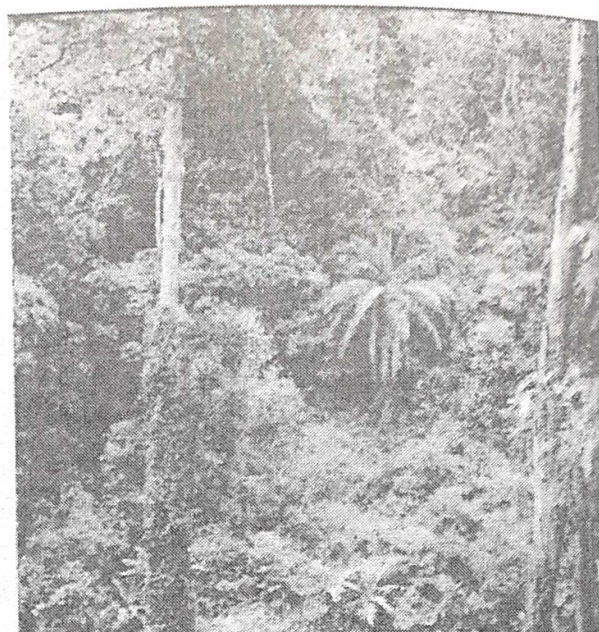
The economy of Okwangwo area as noted by Ite (1995) is largely agrarian with greater importance attached to hunting, taping and collection of non-timber forest products by households. Oban hill is constrained by a number of factors including poor accessibility, vehicular transport and markets.

The religion of the area was steeped in the worshipping of traditional gods. Although with the coming of Christianity, however most households discarded these traditional forms of worship. The Boki and Akamkpa people never had a centralized political authority, what existed then were mini state formations organized at village level (Njama-Abang, 1996).





**Fig 1: Map showing the location of Cross River National Park**



**Plate 1: Vegetation of Cross River National Park**

### ***Tourism Facilities in Cross River National Park***

There are quite a few tourist facilities in and around the park. Among them are simple but comfortable self catering accommodations located in Akamkpa, Butatong and Kanyang for tourists. The catering unit provide both African and continental dishes, all at affordable price. At Akamkpa, a well-furnished accommodation with satellite television is available for visitors. There is also a student hostel. Akamkpa has a good conference hall and eco-tourism centre where tourists can relax. A camping tent is also available for anyone who wants to camp inside the park (forest area). Short treks into the rain forest from the camp can be organized with rangers' escorts and this provides a good chance to view the tropical rainforest through the nature trails. The

12km Erokut jeep track and nature trail at Erokut-Akamkpa have been specially developed for this experience. These offer opportunities for recreation and relaxation, nature study, conservation education and bird watching.

The sport facilities in Akamkpa are still under construction. Sport facilities are also available at the camp near kwa River. At Kanyang camping grounds in the Kanyang field station at Okwangwo division is a four-room accommodation for outdoor camping. There is a Gorilla rock near Mbe mountain, which is a forest camp with tents but there is no electricity. The site will provide a real wilderness experience as a trek through the swimming pool could provide a chance of meeting one of the Gorilla families or any of the 13 other primates found in the study area. Some tourists might also decide to stay at the prime grounds at Agbokim and bar at kwa falls (Luky and Danladi, 1999).



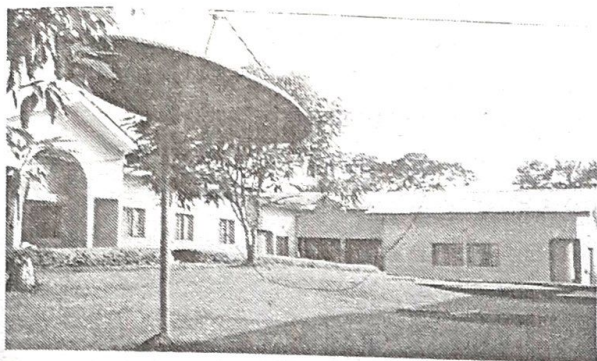


Plate 2: Conference Hall and Eco-Tourism Centre, Akamkpa Office.

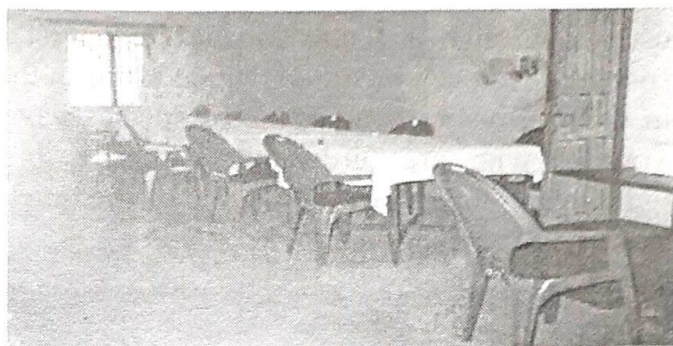


Plate 3: Amini Restaurant at Akamkpa

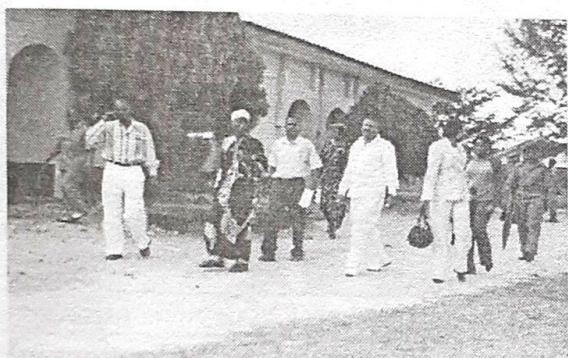


Plate 4: The Guest House CRNP.

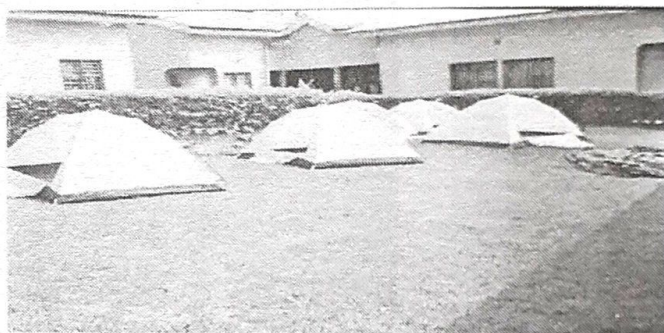


Plate 5: Camping Tents on Display in front of Conference Hall and Eco-tourism Centre, Akamkpa Office.



Plate 6 :CRNP Erokut park entry gate.

### Delimitation of Tourist Attractions in the study area

Two main forms of attractions can be found in the study area. They are natural and cultural attractions. The former is made up of bioresources commonly found in the forest region; while the latter comprises mainly the festivals and cultural features of the host communities. These attractions are discussed below.

#### Natural Attractions

Bird Watching/Birding Section (Oban and Okwangwo Divisions).



Bird watching or birding is the observation and study of birds with the naked eye, or usually through a visual enhancement device, most commonly binoculars. Over 280 bird species have been recorded, which breed in the Mbe Mountains in Okwangwo Division while in Oban Divison over 350 bird species have been recorded (Birdlife International, 2005). Tourists who are birdwatchers pursue this activity for recreational or social reasons (wikipedia, 2007). Birding is one of the quieter and more relaxing outdoor activities offered in Cross River National Park.



**Plate7: Parrot (*Psitacines*) an Endangered Species Protected and Conserved in CRNP for Today and Tomorrow.**

#### Gorilla Viewing Points (Tracking)

The gorilla viewing points contain an array of endangered and endemic species of primates, which are highly priced in the international pet trade markets. In the words of Eniag (2003) “some of these species command great prices in hard currencies. Rare species such as great Apes, which belong to the family of PONGIDAE (Gorillas, Chimperm zees and Bonobos), lowland primates which belong to the family of GERCOPITHECIDAE FAMILY (Mandrills, Drills, Guenons, Mangabeys, Colobus Monkeys, Patas Monkeys and Prosimians) LORISIDEAE FAMILY are found in these areas. From the parks, reception point to where primates (primate camps) are seen is about 32km; and is accessible on foot. One can take a long picturesque walk to the primate camps and observe primates in their natural habitat. Some other primates identified are Patas monkey (*Erythncebus Patas*), Potto (*Perodictieu Potto*) and Pangolin (*Manis Tricuspis*).

#### Butterflies-

There are over 1,000 species of butterfly in Oban hills and Okwangwo divison. These give a higher total than can be found anywhere else in Africa (Lasen, 1994). The park presently conserves 90% of all butterflies known in Nigeria. The rest of Nigeria has the remaining ten percent. Several species new to science are found in the park. Example are



*Tetraphanis Okwangwo*, which belong to the family of *Lycaenidae*, a sub family of *Lipteninae* and tribe *Liptinin* (Lansen, 1995 ).

#### Plant Species in Oban and Okwangwo Divisions

Oban division has 1568 plant species and species endemic to Nigeria (Schmitt, 1998). A total of 1545 plant specimen has so far been collected from Okwangwo division representing 98 plant families. Seven of these plants are new records to Nigeria, while four are probably new to science (Obot, 1996b). There are some economic plants in the park.

#### Some Economic Plants in the Park:

BOTANICAL NAME	TRADE/LOCAL NAME
<i>Afromosaia elata</i>	Afromosia, Shedun Afzelia, Mbokora
<i>Afzelia Africana Chlorophora excelsa</i>	Afzelia, Mbokora Iroko; Usam
<i>Diospyros Spp.</i>	Mbeen
<i>Entandrophragma Spp.</i>	Ebony; Ipin
<i>Levingia Gabonensis, etc.</i>	Mahogany; Akuh Bush mango.
<i>Khaya Spp.</i>	Ogbono Mahogany; Ogbono
<i>Lovoa trichilioides mansonia</i> <i>Altissima</i>	Mahogany; Ogbanwo Africa cedae,
<i>Terminalia ivorensis Triplochiton</i>	Epopo Mansonia; Ofun.
<i>Sclecoxylon Lophiza alata</i>	Black Afra; Afia Eto Obeche; Anere
<i>Funtumia Spp.</i>	Ironwood; Ojingobobo
<i>Cola Spp.</i>	Eyak; Ire
<i>Baphia Spp.</i>	Obi, Dabo
<i>Canthum spp.</i>	
<i>Vitex Spp.</i>	

Source :Field Work

Some useful plants in the parks

Ethnobotanical surveys of the Cross River National Park revealed that 15 seeds, oil seed, 44 fruits; 15 vegetables, 13 spices and 25 mushrooms are collected from the forest for food. About 69 plant species are collected and used for curative therapy. Other plants are used in arts and culture including (music and dancing), religious practices and in basic home construction (Obot and Banker, 1996).

#### Water falls (Okwangwo Division)

Two water falls were identified during the course of the fieldwork. They are located close to the gorilla rock, in between Anape and Bumaje villages. One is located towards the northern axis while the other is located towards the north central. The waterfalls are located some 16 and 17 kilometers respectively from the park's reception point. It is believed that when properly developed they could be large enough to take small parties of run lovers. The freshness of the water is captivating and has an alluring serenity.



Other interesting sites at the parks include the botanical garden/herbarium section, which offers opportunity for environmental educationists and biological researchers to explore the wonders of nature. Tourist can also go on spot fishing within the park, located at Nsofang. This is a kind of activity where by tourists pay to catch fish after which the fish are freed back into the water. Tourists who have never experienced fishing activities avail themselves of such opportunities. Other natural attractions includes boat cruising on the Cross River with the park's motor boat; the Ifumskpa cave/Rock shelter in Akamkpa Local Government Area; the Bashu Picathates Nesting site in Bashu, Boki east of Okwangwo division among others.

#### Cultural Attractions (CRNP)

The cultural attractions within CRNP are German fort and the host communities cultural activities.

##### German Fort:

This is an old German prison wall and forestry camp at Bashu, Boki east of Okwangwo division. The fort was once part of the German colony before the allied forces over ran (defeated) it during the Second World War. The distance of the fort from the park's reception point is about 6km. The German fort is an interesting cultural attraction for tourists who want a flashback on the memories of World War II.

##### Host Communities Cultural Activities

The culture of the people of Akamkpa, Etung (Oban Divison), Boki and Obalinku (Okwangwo division) local government areas is expressed in their various languages, dances and festivals. Each festival and dance communicates and teaches something and these help to reinforce the values that keep the communities together while proudly celebrating their identity. Crafts are important to the people of Akamkpa, Etung, Boki and Obaliku local government areas and skills such as wood carving, basket making, cane crafts, mat and raffia weaving, calabash carving and brass work are still taught and handed down to the younger generations (Dept. of Tourism Calabar, 2003). The products of these craftsmen will serve as souvenirs for tourists while generating revenue for the local economy.

#### Conservation practices and methods in CRNP

National parks and reserves cannot be managed properly without adequate knowledge of what are to be conserved (Aremu, 2001). An evaluation and assessment of conservation practices and methods in CRNP revealed the following features:

- The forest management committee (FMC)
- The park guard/ranges and,
- Boundary demarcations

##### The Forest Management Committee (FMC)

The general aim of any FMC is to improve the quality of life of community members by making them derive maximum benefit from the forest resources. In CRNP, the FMC is the major conservator of the site. The conservation functions of the committee are active in our study area and they have made several reserve regulations guiding tourists in Oban and



Okwangwo divisions. They also under-take community forest (CF) boundary clearing and demarcation in collaboratin with Forestry Commission Technical Assistance (FCTA) (FMC unit, GRNP. 2006). Thier funtions include-

- To set up groups that undertakes arrest.
- Erect check gates where possible.
- Check all ilegal activities in forest reserves and community forest and
- To make bye laws to guide its operational activities in line with the forest law and regulation; these shall include laws relating to protestion, records, punishment and eco-tourism.

Thus, visitors are:

- Expected to enter the Oban and/ or Okwangwo division in the copany of official of the reserves.
- Stay strictly on the main trails when walking in the reserves
- To keep noise levels down in other not to scare away appreciable games
- Expect not to bring into the reserves any pet , plant or other life form among others.

#### The Park Guards/Rangers

The park guards and rangers have received modern training in paramilitary technique as well as in survival strategies, which enable them to protect the area against undue human interference. This new development has led to more efficient means of conservation in our study area; as the guides/rangers often remind tourists of the reserves regulations.

Other functions of the uniform park guards, rangers and chief park rangers are:

- Patrol of the park area in order to protect it from encroachment, illegal hunting or poaching;
- Checking of licenses or permits;
- Ensuring that there is no pollution in aquatic ecosystem and;
- Participating in conservation education, among others.



**Plate 8: Park Rangers that Police the Park**

**Boundary Demarcation:** Boudary demarcation is to mark or establish limits. Some park areas were defined or separated with barbed wires and fences. The bird watching/birding section, the botanic garden/herbarium section and the gorilla-viewing axis were clearly marked with boundary



demarcation. Areas that have been fenced with blocks are the park's administrative and accommodation sections. In some less restricted areas outside the main center of the Park (such as the water falls in Okwangwo Division), tree plantation was used as boundary demarcations. These conservation measures is to prevent any community members from claiming ignorance of the area under conservation as an excuse for poaching and farming within the conserved areas.

### ANALYSIS OF DATA FROM CRNP

Here the researcher presents some of the data collected from the study area in statistical form.

Table 1: Tariffs of CRNP Services

S/No	Description Park Entry	Nigerian	Foreigners
1	Adult	₦200.00	₦500.00
2	Students/children	₦100.00	₦250.00
3	Guide fees	₦500.00	₦1,000.00
4	Hire of still camera	₦1,000.00	₦2,000.00
5	Hire of video camera	₦5,000.00	₦10,000.00
6	Hire of tent and camping space	₦600.00	₦1,500.00

Source field work 2006

Table 1 reveals that the total amount to be generated if a domestic tourist spends a day at the park is ₦7, 400 while that of a foreigner will be ₦15, 250. Thus, the average amount to be spent by the Nigerian will be ₦7, 400 while that of a foreigner is ₦15, 250. The total amount generated by the park in one day (with reference to the Nigerian and foreigner's visitors) will be ₦22, 650.

### Table 2 Hire of Equipment

		Residents	Non-residents
1	Camping tents	₦ 50	₦ 80
2	Binocular	₦ 30	₦ 50
3	Cooking utensils	₦ 100	₦ 200
4	Sporting facilities	₦ 30	₦ 50

Table 3: Statistics of Tourist at CRNP  
(January-August 2006)

S/No	Months	No of rooms	No of pervious
1	January	91	129
2	February	116	152
3	March	262	358
4	April	93	151
5	May	66	128
6	June	54	85
7	July	84	135
8	August	116	216
Total	-	879	1354



Table 3 reveals that the month of March has the highest number of visitors to the park with a total number of 262 rooms for 358 persons. The month of March is regarded as the peak period of the business in the park's accommodation units, followed by February and August, which are the non-peak periods. From May to the middle of August (ie before August break) there use to be continuous rainfall, this explains the low turn-up of visitors at the park.

Table 4 Revenue generated in Accommodation section at Butatlong

S/No	Description of Rooms	Amount per day (Nigeria)	Amount per day (Foreigners)
1	Executive room	₦1,000.00	₦2000.00
2	VIP room	₦800.00	₦1,600.00
3	General suit	₦600.00	₦1,200.00

Table 5: Revenue Generated From Meal Services

S/No	Types of Meals	Prices per plate
	Break fast (bread & coffee)	₦100.00
1	Boiled plantain/beans	₦100.00
	Boiled yam/beans	₦100.00
	Plantain porridge	₦100.00
	Lunch/Dinner	
2	Rice	₦160.00
	Pounded yam	₦150.00
	Garri	₦100.00

Table 5: Revenue Generated from park attractions

S/No	Description of Attractions	Description of people	Amount per visit
	Bird watching/Bird Section	- President Adult	₦30.00
1		- No president	₦50.00
		- Resident student/children	₦15.00
		- No-resident student/children	₦30.00
2	Gorilla viewing point (tracking)	Same as above	Same as above
3	Water falls	Same as above	Same as above
4	Botanic Garden/Herbariums section	Same as above	Same as above
5	Bashu Ricathates Nesting site	Same as above	Same as above
6	Sport fishing	Same as above	Same as above



Table 4 indicated that if at least the park receives three visitors (Nigerians) spreading across the three categories of room available within the park, they will make ₦2, 400 while that of foreigners will be ₦4, 800. Table 5 reveals that at least if three visitors' camps at the park for one night, the revenue generated from Breakfast, lunch and Dinner will be either ₦900 or ₦1200 depending on the type of meals ordered.

The above analysis indicates that if the park is properly managed, it will be self-sustaining with enough capital to invest in other related business. The researcher is therefore of the view that management and /or poor administrative strategies could be the reason for the present poor condition of CRNP.

### **Summary, Recommendation and Conclusion**

**Summary:** Protected areas tourism is a large and growing part of the economy of many countries. For example protected area tourism in the USA and Canada in 1996 had an economic impact of between US\$236 billion and US\$370 billion (Eagles, *et al.*, 2002). Tourism in protected area enhances economic opportunity, protects natural and cultural heritage and promotes the quality of life. This section summarizes the findings of our study pointing out that the study area has contributed to the development of tourism in the state in particular, and Nigeria at large. The study area was conceived to protect and conserve the last vestige of the rainforest ecosystem and to promote eco-tourism in the state as well as the nation in general. Thus, the study examined Cross River National Park with a view to assessing its contributions to eco-tourism promotion in Nigeria. It has also been noted that the link between protected areas and tourism is as old as the history of protected areas; thus, protected areas need tourism, and tourism needs protected areas.

This paper has successfully identified the various facilities and attractions in Cross River National Park as well as its management practices and methods. It is argued that protected area planners and managers can do much to build a more constructive relationship with the tourism sector, if they operate within the legal, political, economic and cultural contexts that greatly limit their freedom. It is noteworthy that "tourism itself is driven by many forces that are beyond the influences of National Park managers (Eagles, *et al.* 2002).

**Recommendations:** Having examined the management practices in our study area, this paper advocates that the management plans for protected areas such as Cross River National Park should seek to maintain a balance between the interests of conservation officials and those of the local communities living in the area. They should, as far as possible, minimize the potentials for conflict between local communities, for who protected area designation almost always implies some loss of access or alteration to existing resources usage; and park authorities who are responsible for implementing the plan. Presently, there is no 'ideal' management plan in our study area that reflects the environmental, economic, political and social contexts. However, in order to best reconcile opposing interests and meet the needs of the large range of stakeholders involved, this paper recommends that Cross River National Parks management plans should incorporate the following guidelines:

1. A clearly stated set of conservation objectives in order to justify the park's existence and how these will be met.



2. A zoning system, clearly understood by all stakeholders, minimizes the potential for conflict between conservation and other resource uses and incorporates recognizable boundaries on the ground.
3. A mechanism for addressing the interest of all stakeholders (e.g. local communities, scientists, conservationists and government)
4. Identify areas in need of environmental restoration and provide information on how this may be achieved.
5. Include provisions for regular monitoring and research in order to evaluate the success or otherwise of management activities.
6. Tourism activities proposed in the plan must be based upon sustainable use of the environmental, economic and cultural resources of the region.
7. Economic benefits associated with tourism should be maximized and equally distributed amongst local communities.
8. Alternative income-generating activities should be promoted and sustained within local communities to reduce reliance upon extractive activities carried out for commercial purpose, such as logging, poaching, fishing, etc.
9. Traditional methods of conservation should be integrated into the present management practices obtainable in our study area as recommended by Okpoko and Okonkwo (2005) in their study on Obudu Cattle Ranch and Sukur kingdom, Nigeria.

Wildlife conservation projects with special reference to tourism can hardly succeed except through:

- a. Active participation of rural communities in planning, organizing and execution of such projects.
  - b. Integration of modern knowledge with ecological knowledge in biotic resources management.
  - c. Continuous research into and systematic recording of data in traditional ecological knowledge for present and future uses.
  - d. Application of economic incentive to those who suffer losses.
  - e. Enactment of conservation regulations and mode of enforcement and monitoring.
  - f. Building of necessary facilities that can keep the tourist after viewing the park area.
- There is also need to initiate some management policies or techniques that will

protect the parks from fire. Among them are:

1. Fire tracing: This is a technique that involves clearing and removal of combustible materials along park boundaries during the early part of the dry season in order to prevent fire from nearby forest into the park area.
2. Anti-bush burning legislation has become imperative people who are found setting fire, carelessly, should be made to pay a fine or serve terms of imprisonment for the offence.
3. There is a great need to intensify public enlightenment campaigns against bush burning and its effects through radio and television programmes.
4. Park guards and Rangers should intensify their patrols to ensure enforcement of the anti bush burning legislation.



If wildlife based tourism is to be encouraged and developed, infrastructural facilities must also be provided such as good roads, telephone, fax, effective postal service, hotels, water and other facilities that will make visitors comfortable, therefore developing the rural areas. It will also create job opportunities for rural people.

Poaching has been a major threat to the National Park. To eradicate poaching in protected areas, conservation education should be incorporated in the curriculum of our primary and secondary schools so that the younger generations will have the ethics. There should be working groups of antipoaching patrols and campaigns that should constitute nearly all the heads of settlements at the periphery of the parks. The landowners should also be compensated from the gains received from conversation areas.

The extension units of wildlife conservation should be extended to the grassroots (local governments). Extension workers should live with the people, educate them and understand their feelings and aspirations towards conservation projects. Extension services should also utilize programmes on televisions, seminars, workshops, leaflets, posters, and stickers etc as avenues of reaching the people more adequately.

There is need to direct attention towards identifying the best means of meeting the demands of tourists, while maintaining the integrity of the park environment and its people. Participation by the local communities around the park, the managers of the National park, and those with an interest and involvement in tourism is necessary in setting out appropriate strategies for tourism development in the Cross River National Park.

Conclusion: Cross River National Park is a popular park for adventurous tourists wishing to explore natural and cultural environments and remote corners of Nigeria. The park is located in the extreme southeastern corner of the country and is situated in Cross River State. The accessibility of this tourist center is appreciable as tourists have options to visit the park either through the Calabar or Port Harcourt routes. The park has two sections, the southern Oban division near Calabar and the Northern Okwangwo near Obudu.

The Park facilities are interestingly adequate (but need to be up-graded) and can make tourists visit or stay worthwhile. The management and staff of Cross River National Park and indeed, the National Park services are committed to the protection and conservation of these potentially viable protected areas and will put in all its energy to ensure their sustainability and to empower the local communities, all Cross Riverians, Nigerians and indeed all generations.

## References

- Ajayi, S. S. "Wildlife and Tourism in Tanzania: Possibilities in Nigeria". *The Nigeria Journal of Forestry*, vol. 2, No. 1, 1972.
- Aremu D. A. *Cultural and Eco-Tourism in Development in Nigeria: The Role of the Three Tiers of Government and the Private Sector*. D. A. Aremu. (ed.) Hope Publication, Ibadan, Nigeria, 2001, pp 29 – 30.



- Ayodele, I. A. and Falade, G. O. Some Aspects of the Tourism Potentials of Nigeria National Parks. In Chokor, B. O. (ed.) *Environment and Tourism in Nigeria*, Environment and Behaviour Association of Nigeria, University of Lagos, Lagos. 1989, pp 211 – 218.
- Birdlife International Cross River National Park. Okwangwo/Oban Division. Birdlife's online World Bird Database. Cambridge, UK. Birdlife International, 2005. Available on: <http://www.birdlife.org> (Accessed 23/2/2006).
- Boo, E. "Making Ecotourism Sustainable Recommendations for Planning Development and Management, in Whelan, T. (ed.) *Nature Tourism: Managing for the Environment*. Washington DC: Island Press. 1991.
- Cochrane, J. The Sustainability of Ecotourism in Indonesia. Fact and Fiction, in M. Parnwell and R. Bryant (eds.) *Environmental Change in South-East Asia. People, Politics and Sustainable Development*, London and New York: Routledge, 1996, pp. 237 – 59.
- CRSG (Cross River State Government) Cross River National Park, 2005. Available at: <http://www.crossriverstate.com> (Accessed 23/2/2006).
- CRSTB (Cross River State Tourism Bureau) Wildlife: Cross River National Park, 2005. Available at: <http://www.crstb.com/travelinfo.asp> (Accessed on 23/2/2006).
- Department of tourism, Cross River State "Cross River State, Nigeria: The Land of Natural Beauty", Dept. of Tourism Press: 2003, pp. 17 – 27.
- Drake, S. Local Participation in Ecotourism Projects, in T. Whelan (ed.) *Nature Tourism: Managing for the environment*; Washington DC. Island Press, 1991, p. 132.
- Eagles, P. F; McCool, S. F. and Hayness, C. *Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas*. Adrian Philips (ed.) Best Practice Protected Areas Guidelines series, No. 8, 2002.
- Edet, C. Preliminary Observations on the Gorilla (*G. gorilla*) populations in Okwangwo Division of Cross River National Park. In Obot, E. and Barker, J. (eds.) *Essential Partnership: The Forest and the People*. Proceedings of Workshop on the Rain Forest of South Eastern Nigeria and South Western Cameroon. Obudu Cattle Ranch and Resort Obanliku Local Government Area. 20 – 24<sup>th</sup> October 1996. Calabar: Cross River State Nigeria Jamestown Surplus Limited.
- Encyclopedia Britannica National park, 2005. Available at: <http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-9077809> (Accessed on 20/6/2007).
- Eniang, A. E. Bush Meat Trade and Private Conservation Around Cross River Parks. *The Gorilla Journal*. Vol. 23. Dec. 2003, pp. 65-84.
- Foster-Canter, A.) *The Sociology of Development*. Lancashire: Causeway Press Limited, 1986.



- Gill, I. "Tourism and Entertainment Services in Local Government" in Benington, J. and White J. (eds). *The Future of Leisure Services*; England: Longman Group U.K. Limited, 1988, pp 155 – 177.
- Goldthorpe, J. E. *The Sociology of Post Colonial Societies: Economic Disparity, Cultural and Development*. Cambridge: University Press, 1996.
- Hitchcock, M.) 'Dragon Tourism in Komodo, Eastern Indonesia, in M. Hitchcock, V. King, and M. Pamwell (eds.) *Tourism South East Asia*, London and New York: Routledge, 1993, pp. 303-16.
- Igbo, E. U. M. and Okpoko, P.U. *Theoretical Considerations in Tourism Planning and Development in Okpoko P. U. (ed.) Issues in Tourism Planning and Development*. Nsukka: Afro Orbis Publishing Co. Ltd, 2006
- Ite, U. E. (1995) *Agriculture and Tropical Forest Conservation in Southeast Nigeria*. United Kingdom Unpublished Ph. D Dissertation, University of Cambridge.
- Ite, U.E. (1996) Community Perception of Cross River National Park, Nigeria vol. 23, no. 4., Available at: [http://www.csa.com/discovery\\_guides](http://www.csa.com/discovery_guides) Accessed (12/2/2006) pp. 351 – 357.
- Ite, U.E. (1997) Small farmers and forest loss in Cross River National Park, Nigeria, *The Geographical Journal* 163(1) Available at <http://www.questia.com/pm.qst?a=obd=> 6683 (Accessed on 20/11/2005).
- Larsen, T. B. (1994) Butterfly Biodiversity and Conservation in the Afro Tropical Region, in Pullin, A. S. (ed.) *Ecology and Conservation of Butterflies*. Chapman and Hall. UK: 290-303.
- Larsen, T. B. (1995) Provisional Check List of Butterflies of Nigeria and of Oban Hills and Okwangwo National Park. *Report to Cross River National Park Oban Hills Division*, March.
- Lucky, G. and Danladi, U. Supplement on the Nigerian National Parks with Special focus on Cross River National Park, Yankari National Park and Old Oyo National Park. In *Travel and Tourism International Cross River National Park*. Vol. No. 2. April 3<sup>rd</sup> and April 24 1999.
- Njama-Abang, F. O. The History and Culture of Boki People. In Obot, E. and Barker, J. (eds.) *Essentials Partnership: The Forest and the People*. Proceedings of Workshop on the Rain Forest of South Eastern Nigerian and South Western Cameroon. Obudu Cattle Ranch and Resort Obalinku Local Government Area 20-24<sup>th</sup> October 1996, Calabar Jamestown Surplus Limited.
- NTDC (Nigerian, Tourism Development Corporation) National Park: 2005. Available at: <http://www.nigeriatourism.net/nepark/html> (Accesses on 21/2/2006).
- Obot, E and Barker, J *Essentials Partnership: The Forest and the People*. In Obot, E. and Barker, J. (eds.) Proceedings of Workshop on the Rain Forest of South Eastern Nigeria and South



- Western Cameroon. Obudu Cattle Ranch and Resort Obalinku Local Government Area 20-24<sup>th</sup> October, 1996, Calabar. Jamestown Surplus Limited.
- Obot, E. A. Flora and Vegetation of Okwangwo Division, Cross River National Park. In Obot, E. and Barker, J. (eds.) *Essentials Partnership: The Forest and the People*. Proceedings of Workshop on the Rain Forest of South eastern Nigeria and South Western Cameroon. Obudu Cattle Ranch and Resort Obalinku Local Government Area 20-24<sup>th</sup> October, 1996, Calabar. Jamestown Surplus Limited.
- Offiong, D. A. Globalization, Post Neodependency and Poverty in Africa. Uk. Clark Atlantic University Fourth Dimension publication, 2001. Available online: <http://www.felbooks> (Accessed 23/2/2006).
- Okpoko, P. U. and Ezeh, P.J. *Methods in Qualitative Research*, Okpoko P. U. and Ezeh. P. J. (ed.) Nsukka: Great AP Express Publishers Limited. 2005, P. 67.
- Okpoko, P. U. and Okonkwo, E. E. Heritage Management and Tourism in the Obudu Cattle Ranch and Sukur Kingdom, Nigeria. In CRM: *Journal of Heritage Stewardship*. Vol. 2, No. 2, 2005.
- Olindo, P. The Old Man of Nature Tourism: Kenya, in T. Whelan (ed) *Nature Tourism: Managing for the Environment*, Washington DC: Island Press, 1991, pp. 3 – 22.
- Orhiere, S. S. Managing the Rain Forest, Community Participation and Biodiversity Conservation. In Obot, E and Barker, J. (eds.) *Essentials Partnership: The Forest and the People*. Proceedings of Workshop on the Rain Forest of South Eastern Nigeria and South Western Cameroon. Obudu Cattle Ranch and Resort Obalinku Local Government Area 20-24<sup>th</sup> October, 1996, Calabar. Jamestown Surplus Limited.
- Pattulo, P. Last Resorts: The Lost of Tourism in the Caribbean, London Cassell, 1996.
- Rovinski, Y.: Pirate Reserve, Parks and Ecotourism in Costa Rica; in T. Whelan (ed.) *Nature Tourism Managing for the Environment*; Washington DC: Island Press, 1991 pp 39 – 57.
- Schmitt The Sustainability of Ecotourism in Indonesia. Fact and Fiction. In M. Parnwell and R. Bryant (eds) *Environmental Change in South East Asia; People, Politics and Sustainable Development*, London and New York. Routledge, 1998, pp 237 – 59.
- Thi Son *et al* Tourism Development and National Parks in the Developing World Cut Ba Island National Park, Veitnam, 1999.
- UNEP/WCMC: Parks, Reserves and other Protected Areas in Nigeria: 2008. Available online at <http://www.parks.it/Eindex.html>. (Accessed on 15/1/2008)
- Whelan, T. "Ecotourism and its Role in Sustainable Development; In T. Whelan (ed.) *Nature Tourism: Managing for the Environment* Washington DC Island press pp 3-22, 1991.



White, D. Okwangwo Division Species lists. Appendix 9 in Caldecoth, J. O. Oates, J. F. and Ruitenbeeck, H. J. (eds) Cross River National Park (Okwangwo Division): *Plan for Developing the Park and its Support Zone*. Godalming: WWF-UK, 1990.

Wikipedia Modernization Theory, 2006. Available online: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/modernization\\_theory](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/modernization_theory). (Accessed on (15/11/2006)).

Wikipedia) Birdwatching, 2007. Available at: [www.wikipedia.com](http://www.wikipedia.com). (Accessed on 1/2/2007).

World Tourism Organization Tourism Satellite Account: The Conceptual Framework. World Tourism Organization, Maldrid, Spain, 1999.