ICELANDIC TOURISM
RESEARCH CENTRE

Tourist background and local acceptance

A case study of tourists in Northern Iceland

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Title: Tourist background and local acceptance –
A case study of tourists in Northern Iceland
Authors: Per Åke Nilsson

Cover: Ásprent-Stíll and the ITRC
Printing: Stell (www.stell.is)

Number: RMF-S-02-2012
ISBN: 978-9935-437-06-8
ISSN: 1670-8857

Cover picture: Marine wildlife viewing facility at Illugastaðir, Vatnsnes.
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TOURIST BACKGROUND AND LOCAL ACCEPTANCE

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Introduction

Tourism is a growing industry, commonly recognised as the fastest growing sector of the world economy (UNWTO 2010). The truth of that is disputed (e.g. Uriely 2005; Ioannides & Timothy 2010). But as ill-founded as it may be, the tourism industry is embraced by e.g. local politicians as it is labour intensive, offering a number of jobs for a low-skilled labour force fresh from other branches of industry, and it facilitates inward investment (see e.g. Holloway 2006). Tourism has undisputed local impacts on both the environment and the economy, and not least the local residents at a destination where a tourism product is consumed. Tourism, to live up to its regional development potential inevitably intrudes in areas where people live and by that causes impact, often in a perceived negative way, on the social life and the environment of inhabitants. De Kadt underlined already in 1979 this bipolar character of tourism as both something potentially beneficial and destroying. In the most extreme of tourism development examples Hall, Mitchell & Roberts (2003) state that "...few rural dwellers...would wish to change dramatically the physical character and ethos of their landscape encouraging the siting of a gambling casino, prison or nuclear power station" (p. 5). In most places in the Northern periphery of Europe however, plans are usually not that grand scale for tourism, although exceptions do exist. Nonetheless, the seemingly passive recreation of wildlife watching or enjoying nature, which is the most common attraction of the region, does entail access for non-residents which in many cases is apprehended as an intrusion (Nilsson 2003).

Studies of tourism in the Northern periphery in general have on the one hand focused upon benefits for destinations, economically, socially and culturally and on the other hand upon several barriers of local character, like local understanding and preparedness, which might hinder or facilitate commercial development, including tourism (Johnston 1995; Hinch 2001; Grenier & Müller, 2011). Bærenholdt & Aarsæther (1998) recommend a reflexive process where globalized processes, such as tourism and free capital movements, are to be met by a local adaption process where local processes and ways of being form the backbone of any development initiative of a destination, whilst simultaneously and reflexively adapted to processes of globalized reach and duration.

To provide one example of a globalised process impacting destinations in the Northern periphery, issues of climate change have recently been high on the agenda. Issues and controversies surrounding climate change have added a fourth dimension to the sensibilities

any sustainable tourism development initiative needs to heed. The role the tourism industry at peripheral destinations has in coping with impacts on the society, economy and environment in a local context is indeed a global phenomenon, with visitors from all over the world coming in ever increasing number. Climate change however, adds to the global perspective and outlook of any tourist destination. It necessitates thinking environmental, economic and social impact of travel on a global scale through its contribution to climate change and its unfolding discussion on the global political arena. A key issue at the peripheral destination is thus to balance the need for sustainable use of nature in the widest sense by an ever more voracious tourism industry.

This report is set within one such Northern peripheral destination where the number of visitors in past years has multiplied. In Iceland, about 80% of international visitors stated that nature viewing was a recreational option for them and 39% pointed especially to whale watching (Icelandic Tourist Board 2012). Focusing especially on marine wildlife viewing, the report deals with how local residents can balance environmental protection and traditional ways of life for the benefit of future generations, whilst coping with tourism as an identified means of regional development (Brouder & Lundmark 2011).

Communing or communicating

As stated above, tourism impacts the relation between local residents and the occasional visitors in the form of a coerced interaction between the private life of the former and the experiences and expectations of the latter. This interaction, between the tourist as an outsider and the local resident as an insider can, however also, as Backhaus (2008) claims, result in an incremental process where the "live-process" of the outsider can become "sympathetic to the insider´s perspective and... develop to an insider's perspective" (p. 26). To facilitate this Nilsson (2008) stresses that a desired tourism development should strive for a mental or written contract between tourists and local residents parallel to the formal contract between tour operators and tourism entrepreneurs, as a way to know what development tools will be proper to meet with different needs. As an example of this interaction between tourists and locals Pedregal (1996) finds that growing local awareness of resources or a kind of local self-consciousness can result from tourist arrivals, where the tourists identify a local attraction they want to be developed, hitherto regarded as uninteresting by locals.

Developing sympathies and some forms of mental contracts to facilitate mutual recognition between tourist and locals have their ideological pretext. Special forms of tourism developed after the Great War aimed to transform coercion and hostility to something wishful in its aftermath, with the motto never-more-war (Nilsson 2002). Germans should visit France and Frenchmen Germany to realize that they both are alike. These trips were launched as the 'true' and non-commercial form of tourism. Reisinger (1994) summed up the ideas behind this type of tourism in what is called the *contact hypothesis.* That hypothesis, originally launched by Allport (1954) in another context, stipulated that contact between different cultures should pave the way for a mutual understanding and thereby diminish the risk of prejudices, conflicts and tensions between groups unfamiliar. In 2004, Steiner & Reisinger followed up this hypothesis by proposing the concept of *communing*, meaning efforts to find a common ground or understanding, as an integral or assumed part of communication. The authors claim that *communing*, if assumed as the goal of communication entrenches the differences between cultures when people with different backgrounds meet each other. Such a meeting where the aim is to establish common ground, will force all communication onto a trajectory that will inevitably end up as superficial and in the worst cases cause outright hostility. Instead, accepted problems inherent in intercultural communication may after a while disappear if both host and guest realise and respect them and give way for enrichment for both parts. Steiner & Reisinger (2004) claim, that experiencing cultural differences is one of the most fundamental motivators for travel and for opening host communities to international tourists. Open communication about these built on mutual respect should thus be an enriching part of the tourist experience. However not all tourist seek such experiences (Swarbrooke and Horner 2006).

One of the earliest ways to characterise these different types of tourists was done by Stanley Plog in the early 1970s (for later elaborations see: Smith 1990, Plog 1990, Nickerson 1991, Griffith 1996, Plog 2001, 2002, Litvin 2006). Plog's model is based on a Gaussian curve for normalized distribution of characteristics showing what he terms 'psychocentrics' on the one side and 'allocentrics' on the other side with a bulk of 'midcentric' people in the middle. Plog's model thus delineates travellers' personality types along a continuum that approximates a normally distributed curve, but divisible into five segments. At one extreme, there are the psychocentric travellers, described by Plog as self-inhibited, nervous, and non-adventuresome, preferring the familiar in vacation and travel destinations. At the other end, there are the outgoing and self-confident allocentrics, who want to see and do new things, to

explore the world, closely fitting in with the Steiner & Reisinger (2004) concept for a tourist for whom communication is more apt than communing. In between, we find the majority of tourists, the midcentrics, with a mixture of behaviours. Along with them are near-psychocentric and near-allocentric travellers. Those with near allocentric tendencies are among the first major wave of adopters, after a destination has been found by the allocentrics, while the near psychocentrics are most likely to try a destination after it has been well travelled, developed, marketed and communicated. In short, the psychocentric tourist is the classic charter tourist and the allocentric is the typical backpacker tourist. The psychocentric does not want unexpected things to happen and the allocentric seeks the unexpected and different (table 1).

Table 1: Psychocentric and allocentric tourists
Source: Plog, 1974

Psychocentric	*Allocentrics*
Intellectually restricted	Intellectually curious
Low risk-taking	Moderate risk-taking
Withhold income	Use disposable income
Free-floating anxiety	Relatively anxiety free
Non-active	Interested/involved
Prefer sun'n'fun spots	Prefer novel and different destinations
Wants standard accommodation	Seek off-the-beaten-paths
Buys souvenirs	Buys native arts/crafts
Enjoy crowds	Prefers small numbers of people

Although the majority of the tourists are midcentric, the tendency has been to label all tourists either psychocentric or allocentric (Plog 1974). Seemingly alluring, the allocentric might be the travelling types likely to facilitate Steiner & Reisinger's (2004) communication. However, in a later article Plog (1994) identifies problems with the allocentric type of tourists, entailing physical deterioration of destination facilities, destruction of the environment and destruction of local cultures.

Aim

The aim of this report is to analyse descriptive statistics that establish the background of tourists visiting marine and wildlife viewing sites in Iceland, during the summer of 2010 and 2011. The aim is not to make it easier for the tourism industry to "target" them for tailored marketing, but to find out how far statistical descriptors can take us on the route to identifying traveller types that could form a base for communication without assuming

communing. That may, according to the contact hypothesis, add to the interaction between local residents and visitors, thus creating values beyond the monetary or those set under the terms of a commercial exchange.

Methodology

This study is based on two distinct investigations in Iceland and focuses on the background of tourists coming especially for marine or other wildlife watching in the Iceland. The former investigation was a questionnaire survey done during the summer of 2010 and 2011. International tourists visiting the Seal Museum at Hvammstangi in Iceland were asked to fill in the questionnaire to be seen in appendix 1. In total 216 responded to questions about demographic status, their background, expectations and experiences during the stay at the destination, length of stay and forms of accommodation. The questionnaire also queried them on how they arrived, their motives for travel, if they had been before, activities they were interested in, with special focus on wild life watching and angling, and lastly where they learned about the country and how satisfied with their trip they were.

In addition to this survey, interviews were conducted at several locations where wild animals can be observed in Iceland at destinations that have been partially or fully developed for those purposes. In addition to some basic variables on themselves, similar to the demographic ones in the former survey, the respondents had to relate to 14 statements in a questionnaire (Appendix 2) about interacting with wild life on a five point Likert scale. The statements were structured in a way that minimized anticipated and expected "politically correctness". The statements were also chosen to fit in with four attitude concepts; utilitarianism, humanism, mysticism, and bio-centrism. Questions 2, 9 and 10 reflected a *utilitarian* attitude, questions 1, 5, 6, 7, 11 reflected a *humanistic* attitude, questions 12, 13 reflected a *mystic* attitude and the questions 3, 4, 8, 14 reflected a *biocentric* attitude. These four attitudes are elaborated on in table 2:

Table 2: Four attitudes to wilderness areas
Source: Hall, Müller, & Saarinen 2009, p. 136

	Objective	***Justification***	***Wilderness image***
Utilitarianism	High standards of social and human wellbeing by increasing production	Unrestricted right of man to exploit wilderness areas to promote his well-being and production	A source of raw materials and fuel
Humanism	Human perfection and mental balance	Unrestricted right of man to exploit wilderness areas to promote his/her perfection	A valuable opportunity that people should develop through their own actions
Mysticism	Unity of man and nature	The highest value of human life is to aim at the sacred state embodied in un-spoilt nature	Basically a large spiritual entity
Biocentrism	Safeguarding the inherent value and functions of wilderness areas	All species are equally valuable – man has no special position	A total ecological system with an inherent value of its own

Following the statements fitting the attitude concepts in table 2, there was a question about satisfaction of the experience during the seal watching.

These structured interviews were conducted at the Seal watching site Illugastaðir (with 61 respondents), on the seal watching by boat at Hvammstangi (with 24 respondents), at the Húsavík whale watching site (with 41 respondents), and at the Súðavík Artic Fox Centre (with 20 respondents) in total 146 were interviewed using the questionnaire found in appendix 2. Due to the nature of the statements a pilot study was conducted in 2009 to test the questionnaire and it was found that the statements had to be written not only in English but also in German and French. The French visitors were rather unwilling to answer a questionnaire in English, primarily due to difficulties in understanding the statements, as these were rather intricate. The Germans had no comments on the language but when they got the questionnaire in German in the final survey they expressed gratitude.

In total, 362 tourists responded to the two questionnaires. Not all respondents answered all questions so the number (N) varies. The total number of respondents is 362. Thereof 216 responded to the museum survey (appendix 1) and 146 to the questionnaire for structured interviews (appendix 2).

Basic findings in the first survey

In the first part of this section the demographic variables from both the survey and the structured interviews are summarised focusing on nationality, age, gender and education.

Nationality

Among the international tourists, Germany (25%) dominated as country of origin followed by France (17%), and then Switzerland/Austria (16%) (Fig. 1).

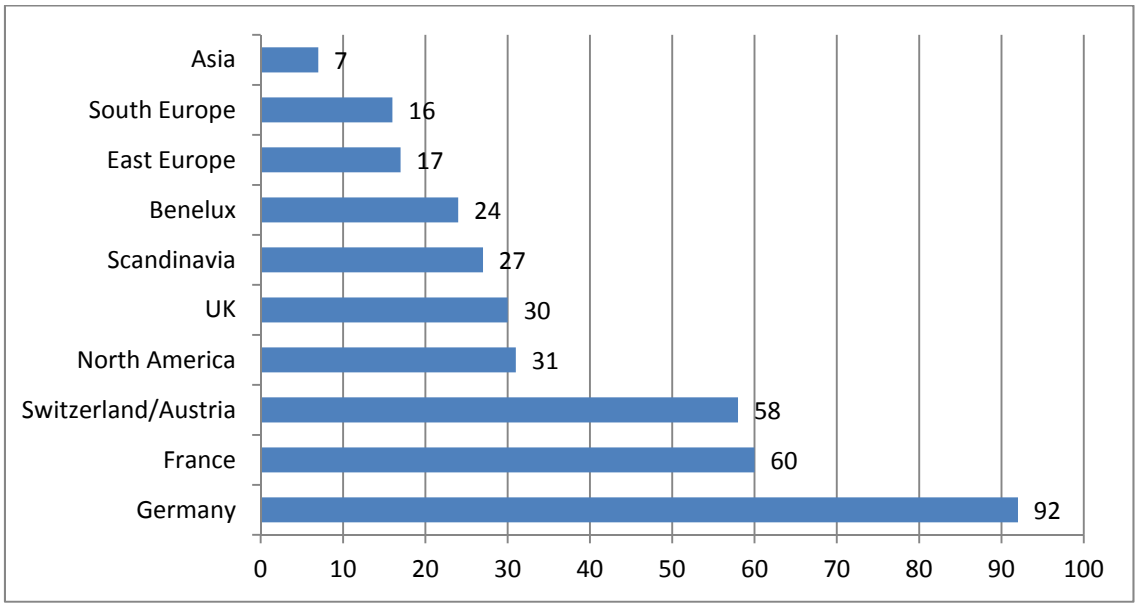

Figure 1: Nationality. N=362.

Striking is the dominance of Central Europeans with 41% of all respondents coming from there, and inversely the lack of visitors from the neighbouring countries (Scandinavia and North America) with only 16% (including UK 24%) (Fig. 2). This is striking as it does not reflect the overall visitation pattern observed in border surveys of the Icelandic Tourist Board (2012) at Keflavík International Airport, where 9 out of every ten visitors to the country passes through. According to these border surveys, visitors from Scandinavia are the most numerous, followed closely by UK and US citizens.

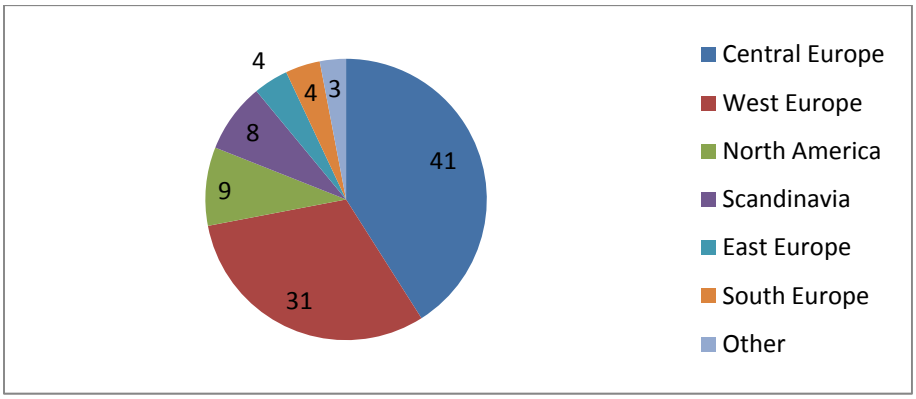

Figure 2: Nationality after Icelandic marketing regions, %. N=362

Age and gender

The average age for men is 46 years and for women 54 years. The gap between the genders is 8 years. Visitors from the Benelux countries had the least gender gap of the respondents (0 years), followed by Scandinavia (2 years) and Switzerland/Austria (3 years). This may probably be a result of the respondents travelling as couples. However the respondents were not asked about their family status. But since they are registered in sequence according to when they were surveyed or interviewed, there are indications that many are couples (man after woman or vice versa, same age). Visitors from France and the UK showed the biggest differences in age distribution between the genders, 11 and 7 respectively (Fig. 3).

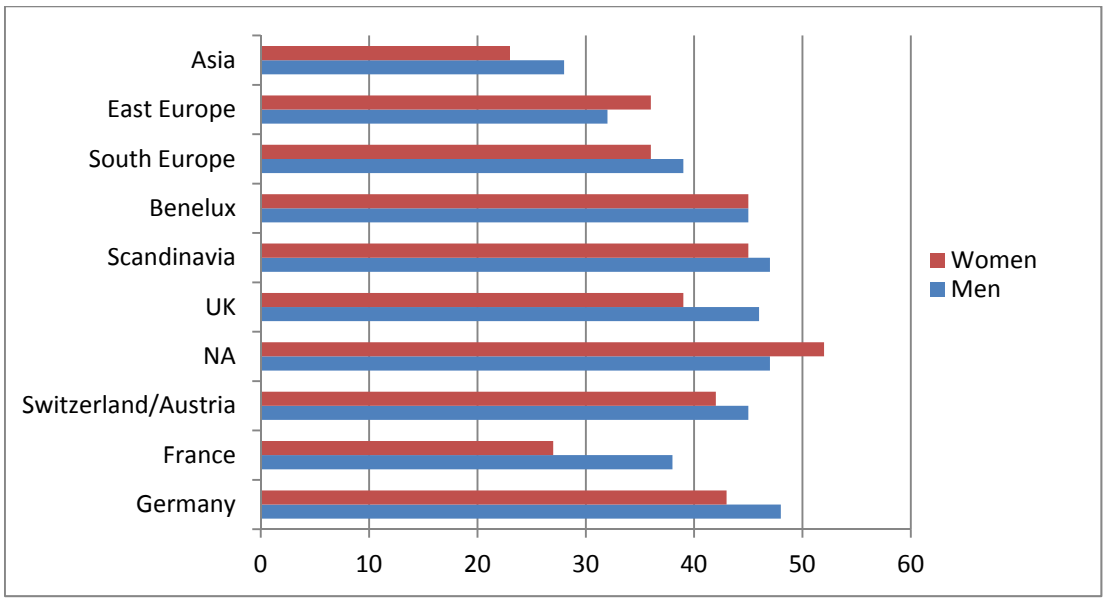

Figure 3: Gender after nationality and age, %. N=362

Education

The average education level amongst all respondents is Bachelor (44%). PhD level has been acquired by 19% of the respondents. France has the highest level of PhDs (40%). None of the visitors from Asia or East Europe held a PhD degree (Fig. 4), however the figures for Asia are too small to be presented.

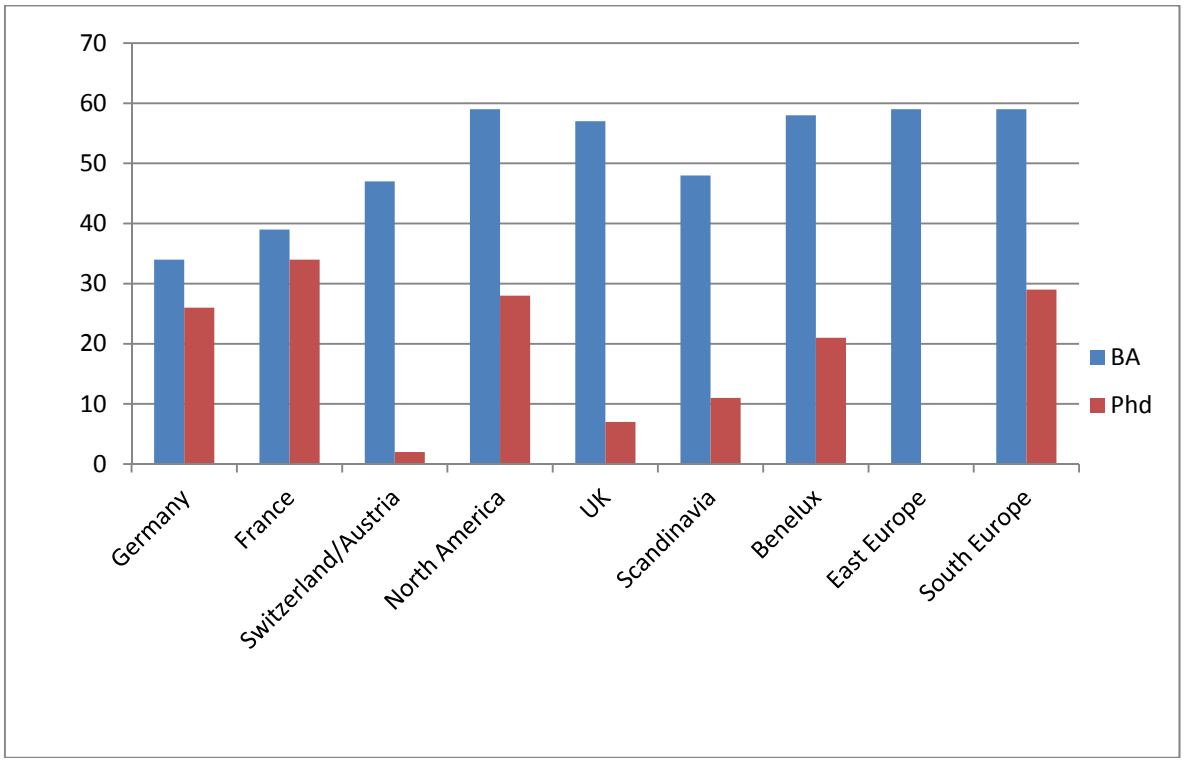

Figure 4: Education level after nationality, %. N=362

Below the second part deals with those surveyed and interviewed in terms of their nationality.

Visitors analysed by nationality

In this section, building on the total number of respondents by nationality; the average age, sex, gender gap, nationality, and education is summarised with data from both the survey (appendix 1) and interviews (appendix 2). The other variables presented in tables 3-12 represent the length of stay, motives for trips, transport means, if they would consider coming back and accommodation forms. These stem only from the survey (appendix 1).

German visitors (25% of the interviewed), N= 92.

The average age of a German visitor is 45 years. The typical German is a woman (61%) 43 years old. The median age is 41 and the typical ages are 30 and 42. Most are found in their 30s and 40s, only four in their 60s and three in their 70s. The German visitor is likely to hold a Bachelor degree (34%) or a PhD (26%) (Table 3).

The German man is 48 years old, median age is 45 and the typical age 45, most are in their 40s. The typical German man has a Bachelor degree (44%) or a PhD (27%) which means that the German man has a higher education level than the German woman. The average age for a German woman with a PhD is 38 years and for the man 42 years.

The visitor from Germany stayed for two (28%) or three weeks (29%). Those who stayed for two weeks were on average 43 years old and those staying for three weeks were a bit older, 47 years. There were 15% staying less than two weeks, no one shorter than 10 days. Those who stayed longer did so for a very long period, from 40 days to half a year and even more than a year (8%, either over 70 or under 30 years of age). Around half of the Germans would consider coming back. One in ten came to Iceland by ferry.

The main reason for visiting the North Atlantic was wild life or nature (89%). Slightly fewer came for culture (82%) and of these, 64% were women.

Table 3: The German visitor. N=92

Gender gap years	Age ♂	Age ♀	BA %	PhD %	1 w %	2 ws %	3 ws %	4 ws> %	By air %	W. life %	Culture %
5	48	43	39	27	15	28	29	28	90	89	82

French visitors (17% of the interviewed), N=60).

The average age of a French visitor is 38 years. The typical French visitor is a man (54%) and 38 years old. The median age is 38 and the typical age is 33. Most are found in their 30s, only 1 in their 60s. He is likely to have a Bachelor degree (39%) or a PhD (34%) (Table 4).

The French woman is 38 years old, median age is 37 and the typical age 37, most are found in their 30s. She has a Bachelor degree (42%) or a PhD (28%) which means that the educational level is high for both men and women among the French visitors. The figures for the women are 42% (BA) and 28% (PhD). Only one French visitor came to Iceland by ferry and he stayed for three months.

The average visitor from France stayed for two (49%) or three weeks (37%). Only 6% stayed for one week. Those, who stayed for two weeks, were on average 42 years old and those staying three weeks 41 years. More than eight out of 10 (83%) of the French visitors would consider coming back.

The main reason for visiting the North Atlantic was wild life or nature (97%). Fewer came for culture (63%) and of these, 57% were men.

Table 4: The French visitor. N=58

Gender gap years	Age ♂	Age ♀	BA %	PhD %	1 w %	2 ws %	3 ws %	4 ws> %	By air %	W. life %	Culture %
1	38	38	41	31	6	49	37	8	99	97	63

Swiss/Austrian visitors (16% of the interviewed), N=58.

The average age for Swiss/Austrian visitors is 42 years and the gender proportion of respondents was: women 52% and men 48%. The median age is 44 and the typical ages are 40 and 45. Most are found in their 40s, only 1 in their 60s. He/she has a Bachelor degree (47%) or secondary education (37%) (Table 5).

The average visitor from Swiss/Austria stayed for two (40%) or three weeks (33%). No one stayed for one week. Those, who stayed for two weeks, were on average 43 years old and those staying three weeks also 43 years and those staying four weeks slightly older, or 46 years. Almost three out of four (73%) of the Swiss/Austrian visitors would consider coming back. No Swiss/Austrian visitor came to Iceland by ferry.

The main reason for visiting the North Atlantic was wild life or nature (100%). Slightly fewer came for culture (80%) and of these, 67 % were women.

Table 5: Swiss/Austrian visitor. N=58

Gender gap years	Age ♂	Age ♀	BA %	PhD %	1 w %	2 ws %	3 ws %	4 ws> %	By air%	Wild life%	Culture %
3	44	42	31	5	0	40	33	27	100	100	80

North American visitor (9% of the interviewed), N=31.

The North American visitors is 47 years old on average. The gender proportion of respondents was women 53% and men 49%. The median age is 54 and the typical ages are 28 and 61. Most are found in their 60s. He/she has a Bachelor degree (61%) or a PhD (29%) (Table 6).

The average visitor from North America stayed for one week (36%) or two weeks (30%). Those, who stayed for one week were on average 57 years old and those staying two weeks 47 years of age. Almost half (46%) of the North American visitors would not consider coming back. No N. American visitor came to Iceland by ferry.

The main reason for visiting the North Atlantic was wild life or nature (99%) and almost the same number of N. American respondents came for culture (98%).

Table 6: The North American visitor. N=31

Gender gap years	Age ♂	Age ♀	BA %	PhD %	1 w %	2 ws %	3 ws %	4ws> %	By air %	Wild life%	Culture %
4	53	49	61	29	36	30	16	18	100	99	98

British visitors (7% of the interviewed), N=30.

The average age for British visitors is 43 years. The typical British visitor is a man (59%) and 47 years old. The median age is 51 and a typical age is not to be identified. He has a Bachelor degree (26%) or a PhD (4%). The visiting British woman is 39 years with a Bachelor degree (30%) or a PhD (4%) (Table 7).

The average visitor from Britain stayed for two weeks (57%) and was on average 47 years old. Almost nine out of 10 (86%) of the British visitors would consider coming back. Very few British visitors came to Iceland by ferry (14%).

The main reason for visiting the North Atlantic was wild life or nature (87%). Slightly fewer came for culture (71%) and of these, a majority were men (80%).

Table 7: The British visitor. N=30.

Gender gap years	Age ♂	Age ♀	BA %	PhD %	1 w %	2 ws %	3 ws %	4 ws> %	By air %	Wild life%	Culture %
8	47	39	63	7	4	57	32	7	86	87	71

Scandinavian visitors (7% of the interviewed), N=27.

The average age for the Scandinavian visitor is 46 years. The typical Scandinavian visitor is a woman (58%), 45 years old. The median age is 37 and a typical age is not to be identified. She has a Bachelor degree (50%) or a PhD (4%). The average Scandinavian man visiting is 47 years and half holds a Bachelor degree (50%) but no one has a PhD (Table 8).

The average visitor from Scandinavia stayed for two weeks (63%). All (100%) of the Scandinavian visitors would consider coming back. Half of the Scandinavian visitors came to Iceland by ferry.

The main reason for visiting the North Atlantic was wild life or nature (88%). Slightly fewer came for culture (62%).

Table 8: The Scandinavian visitor. N=27.

Gender gap years	Age ♂	Age ♀	BA %	PhD %	1 w %	2 ws %	3 ws %	4 ws> %	By air %	W. life %	Culture %
2	47	45	74	11		63	30	7	50	88	62

Benelux visitors (7% of the interviewed), N=24.

The average age for the Benelux visitor is 45 years and the gender proportion of respondents was the same. The median age is 43 and the typical age is 50. He/she has a Bachelor degree (74 %) or a PhD (13%) (Table 9).

The average visitor from the Benelux countries stayed for two (45%) or three weeks (42%). More than half (55%) of the Benelux visitors can think of coming back.

The main reason for visiting the North Atlantic was wild life or nature (89%). Slightly fewer came for culture (78%).

Table 9: The Benelux visitor. N=24.

Gender gap years	Age ♂	Age ♀	BA %	PhD %	1 w %	2 ws %	3 ws %	4 ws> %	By air %	Wild life%	Culture %
0	45	45	58	21	0	45	42	13	66	89	78

East European visitors (5% of the interviewed), N=17

The average age for East European visitors is 33 years. The typical East European visitor is a man (71%), 32 years old. The median age is 33 and the typical age is not to be identified. Most of the respondents from East Europe are in their 30s. He has a Bachelor degree (71%). The average female respondent from East Europe is 36 years with a Bachelor degree, no one has a PhD. The median age is 32 (Table 10).

The average visitor from Eastern Europe stayed for two (45%) and three weeks (45%). More than one in five (22%) of the East European visitors would consider coming back.

The main reason for visiting the North Atlantic was wild life (100%). Fewer came for culture (55%).

Table 10: The East European visitor. N=17.

Gender gap years	Age ♂	Age ♀	BA %	PhD %	1 w %	2 ws %	3 ws %	4ws> %	By air %	Wild life%	Culture %
4	32	36	59	0	0	45	45	10	100	100	55

South European visitors (4% of the interviewed), N=16.

The average age for South European visitors is 38 years and the gender proportion of respondents was the same. He/she has a Bachelor degree (77%). The median age is 40 and no typical age can be identified (Table 11).

The average South European visitor stayed for three weeks (50%). Six out of 10 (60%) of the South European visitors would consider coming back. All came by air.

The main reason for visiting the North Atlantic was wild life (100%). Few came or wild life or nature (33%).

Table 11: The South European visitor. N=16.

Gender gap years	Age ♂	Age ♀	BA %	PhD %	1 w %	2 ws %	3 ws %	4 ws> %	By air %	Wild life%	Culture %
0	38	38	63	19	0	19	50	31	100	100	33

Asian visitors (2% of the interviewed), N=7

The average age for an Asian visitor is 25 years. The typical Asian visitor is a woman (57%), 23 years old and with a Bachelor degree (67%) or a PhD (16%). The median age is 21 and 21 is also the typical age. The average age for men is 28 years (Table 12).
The average visitor from Asia stayed for two weeks (75%). All came by air.

The main reason for visiting the North Atlantic was wild life (100%) and 50% came for wild life or nature.

Table 12: The Asian visitor. N=7.

Gender gap years	Age ♂	Age ♀	BA %	PhD %	1 w %	2 ws %	3 ws %	4 ws> %	By air %	Wild life%	Culture %
5	28	23	67	33	0	75	25	0	100	100	50

Discussion of first survey

The length of stay was only queried in the summer surveys of 2010 and 2011 (appendix 1). According to their respondents, almost half (49%) of the tourists stayed for one or two weeks but 28% stayed for three weeks and 23% stay longer than three weeks (Fig. 5).

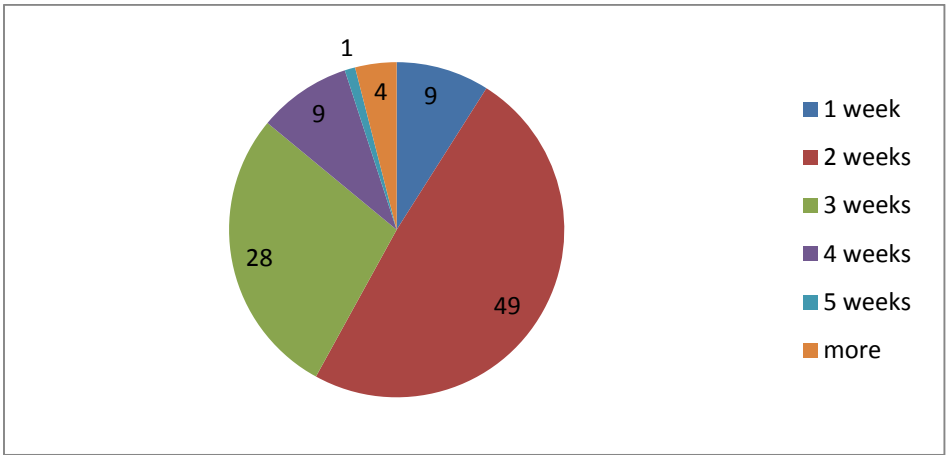

Figure 5: Length of stay, %. N=216

In terms of nationality, visitors from Scandinavia and the Alpine regions stay all more than one week, for Scandinavians probably due to better accessibility to ferry tours. Only figures for Germany, France and Switzerland/Austria are significant (Fig. 6).

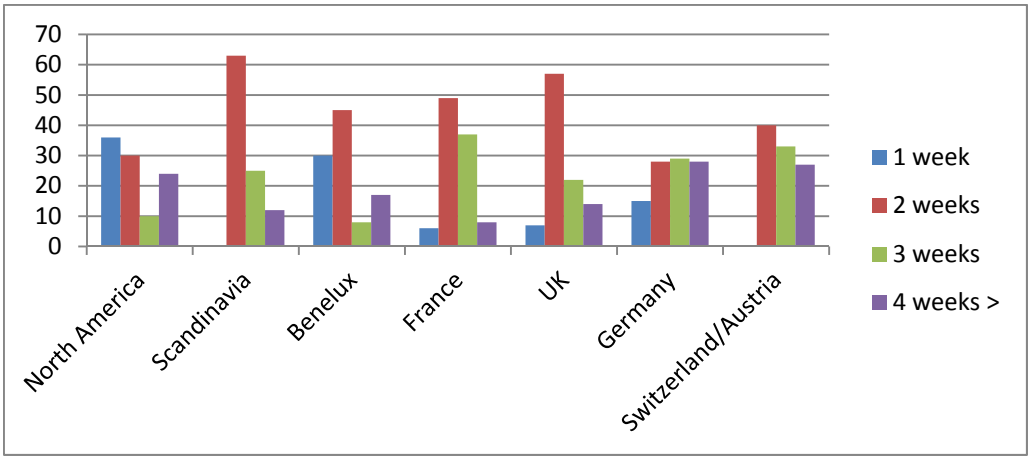

Figure 6: Length of stay after nationality, %. N=216

Most people come to Iceland with flights from either mainland N. America or Europe to the only all year round international airport, near the capital Reykjavík (Keflavík international). The only alternate means of transport to the island, apart from the occasional direct flights by low budget airlines to e.g. Akureyri, or charter flights, is a ferry that berths at the East coast

port of Seyðisfjörður. The ferry, sailing from Denmark (Jutland) to the Faroe Islands and then to Iceland, entails a trip of over three days, but on it people from Europe have the option of taking along their own car (Fig. 7).

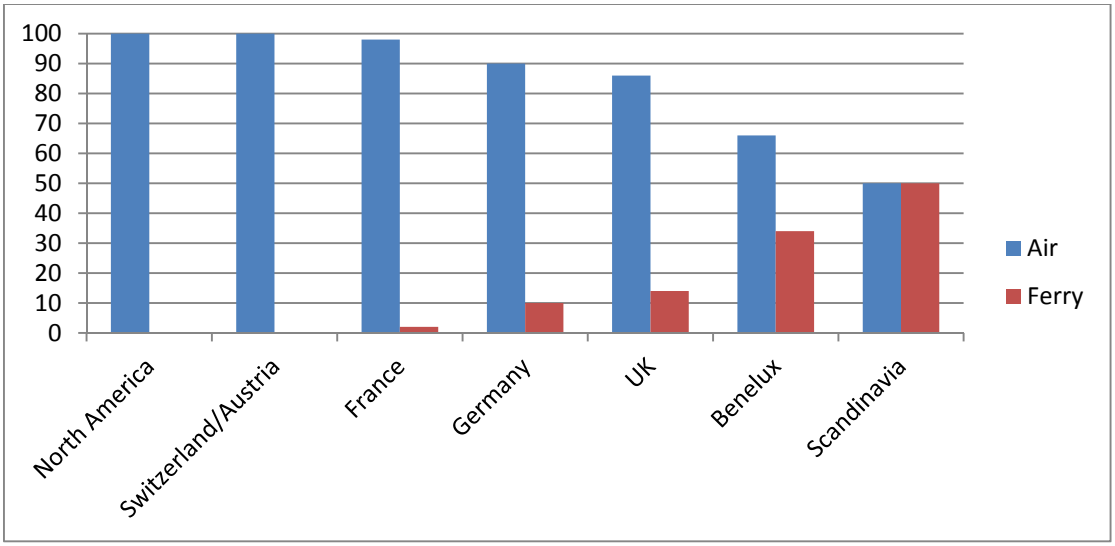

Figure 7: Transport means for visit, %. N=216

The form of accommodation was also queried from the 216 respondents of the Hvammstangi survey and 212 responded. More than half of those used only one accommodation form (59%). Especially visitors from Benelux (100%), Scandinavia (100%), North America (77%) and France (63%) used only one form of accommodation. The most popular form of accommodation was in guest houses, chosen by 102 visitors (48%). The runner up was the hotel which almost a third of the respondents chose (34%). Striking is the amount of Beneluxians opting for campsites (Fig. 8).

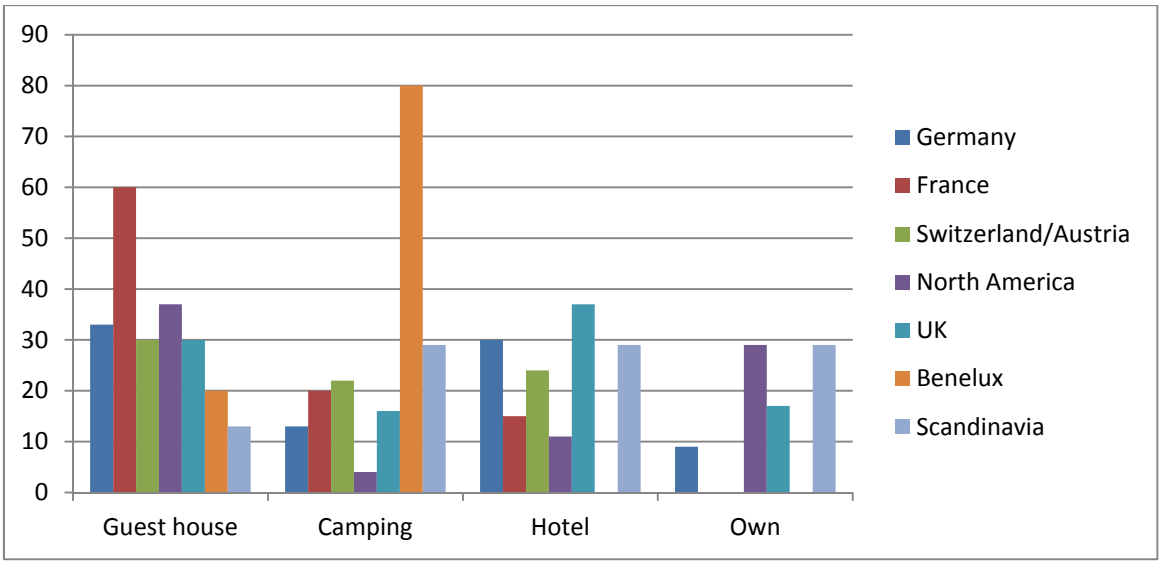

Figure 8: Accommodation forms, %. N=212.

The survey respondents also had the opportunity to comment on what they thought about wild life watching, in this case mostly seal watching (appendix 1). From their comments, it was possible to draw three different views: unique experience or a must do (*not possible to watch them at home*), anthropomorphic or even disneyfied views (*they are cute, human looking*) and biological or life sciences curiosity (*general interest for wild life*) (Fig. 9).

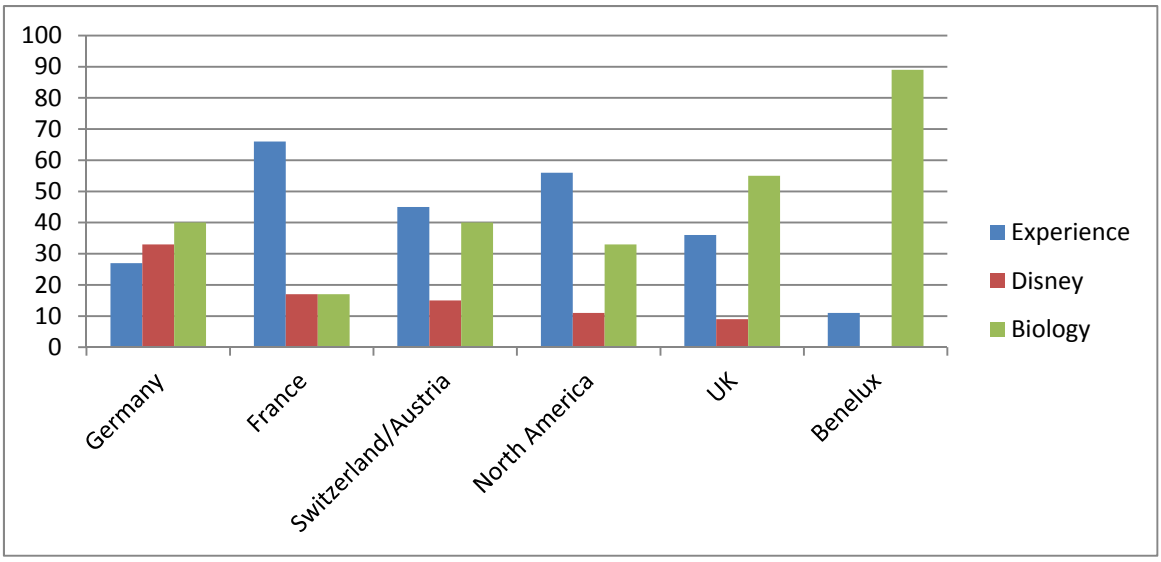

Figure 9: Views on wild life, %. N=110.

In sum, what can be gleaned from the above summary of responses from visitors to places of wild life viewing in N. Iceland is that the tourists fulfil most of the requisites for being allocentric tourists: they come mostly by car in small groups of mostly two and they do not hesitate to stay at a campsite, a guest house or a farm even if some prefer hotel. Their education level is high as is the average age and they express clear interest in wildlife mostly from scientific or secondly experiential curiosity.

Basic findings in the structured interviews

The inspiration for the structured interviews draws on literature on codes of conduct in tourism. These are codes which establish a link between the tourism industry, visitor needs and ecological protection. Latent to these are a number of key values like justice, integrity, competence and utility, aiming to make the tourism industry aware of the fact that it is based on a limited resource (Fennell 2007). Codes of conduct imply behaviour of entrepreneurs and tourists towards wildlife that is sensitive to their different body languages, an animal language and a visitor language. Interpretation of these two languages is needed for establishing a link between the two and if this interpretation is appropriate, it gives a potential to enhance both to the experience of the visitor and the dignity of the animal (Cole 2007; Hall, Mitchell & Roberts 2003, p. 97; Granquist & Nilsson 2011; Nilsson 2011). Concordance between different scientific disciplines on how to approach this has not always been at hand. Wildlife biologists often put focus on how to minimize potential negative effect on animals by, for example, establishing sanctuaries for animals or strict recommendations and codes of conducts with guidelines on how tourists and companies should behave in the presence of wildlife. Often, such codes of conducts are built entirely on results from biological studies with scientifically proved negative impact of tourism on the ecology and behaviour of wild animals. The resulting codes are mostly *ontological*, i.e. in terms of banning wrong behaviour without explaining why (Mason 1997). Use of ontological codes may lead to confusion among tourists since they do not give a possibility for the tourist to understand why they must act restrictively. Popular cultural representations of animals has made many people believe that animals respond to stimuli in the same way as humans do and do not understand restrictions based on animal conditions (see e.g. Lawrence and Philips 2004). As opposed to there are *teleological* codes, where the background and aim with the rules presented are stressed.

The 14 statements in the structured interviews (appendix 2) were set up according to a Likert scale with a rating from 1-5 of whether the respondents agreed with them or not and to what extent. One (1) represented the strongest agreement and five (5) represented the least agreement with the statement. The statements were to mirror the two different codes, *ontological* or *teleological*.

The statements respondents were asked to mark their agreement with were:

1. Education is the most appropriate way to manage the behaviour of people taking part in recreational activities in a wildlife area
2. I have been well informed about the regulations that protect wildlife from human disturbance in a wildlife area
3. There should be more guides present to educate people taking part in recreational activities in a wildlife area
4. Encouraging people to go on guided tours would reduce incidents of wildlife disturbance
5. Some animals in a wildlife area are used to people which are allowed to get closer for a better view or to take pictures
6. I know how to recreate responsibly in a wildlife area without requiring additional information from any other source
7. Having enforcement officers present in recreational areas could be intimidating and put people off visiting
8. Many people who visit a wildlife area have no idea how to behave around wild animals
9. There are already too many rules and regulations regarding recreational activities in a wildlife area
10. Humans have the right to alter nature to satisfy their wants and desires
11. Maintaining economic growth in a wildlife area is important and should not be held back by further regulating activities
12. Humans should adapt to nature rather than modifying it to suit their needs
13. Satisfaction and quality of life are more important than wealth and material considerations
14. People who disturb wildlife are committing a serious crime and should be fined

Statements 1-11 deal with ethical attitudes behaviour of the tourists according to the ontological codes and contain two different sets of statements. These are to be seen in statements 1-4 displaying a positive attitude towards following the rules and in statements number 5-11 displaying a negative attitude towards following the rules and guidelines set. Statements number 12-14 represent a more teleological adjusted code based on reasons behind and consequences of a certain behaviour.

The results are shown in table 13 and figure 10.

Table 13: Average attitude towards statement. N=144.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	∑∑
144	144	143	144	140	141	139	144	143	144	144	143	143	136	1992
1,6	2,6	2,4	2,5	3,1	2,7	3,1	2,1	3,6	4,3	3,6	2,0	2,0	2,6	2,7

Figure 10 shows the distribution of responses to each statement.

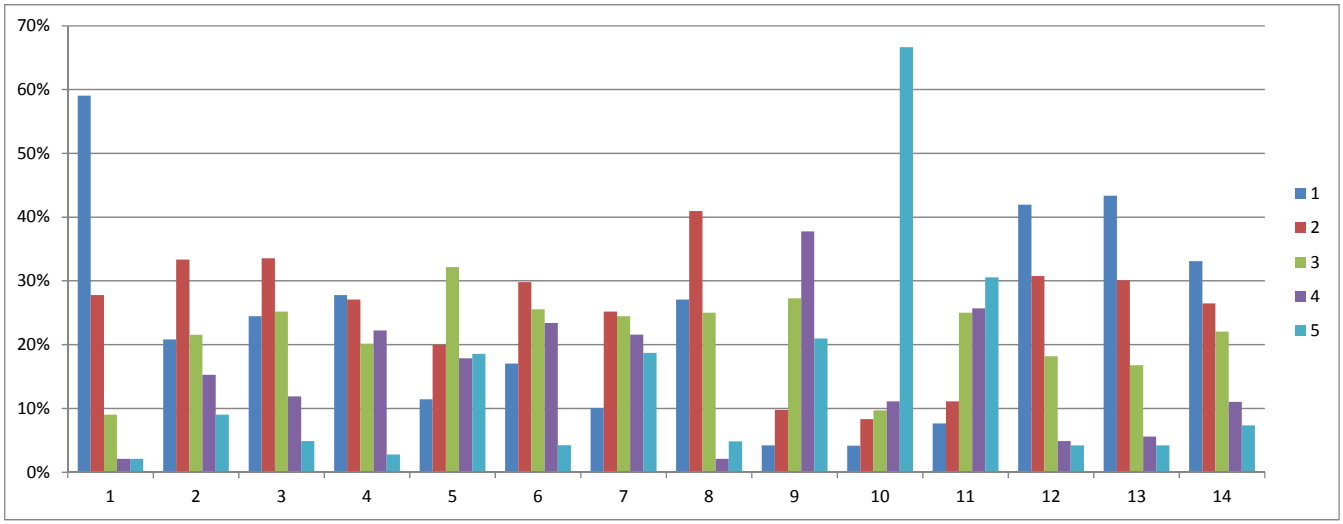

Figure 10: Frequency of responses to each statement, %.

Statements which are clear

Figure 10 shows two statements which a clear stance is taken towards by the respondents. One is clearly rejected, being the only one with an average above 4,0, whilst one is clearly agreed upon, being the only one with an average under 2,0.

The most clear is the rejection of statement number 10 saying that *humans should have the right to alter nature to satisfy their wants and desires* with an average rejection rate of 4,3.

The most accepted is statement 1 saying that *education is the most appropriate way to manage the behaviour of people taking part in recreational activities in a wildlife area* with an average acceptance rate of 1,6.

Statements which are ambiguous

Statements around three are considered unclear. There are two statements qualifying for being ambiguous.

Statement 5 saying that *Some animals in a wildlife area are used to people which are allowed to get closer for a better view or to take pictures* and statement 7 saying that *Having enforcement officers present in recreational areas could be intimidating and put people off visiting* have both a rejection rate of 3,1.

Statements fitting in with the four attitude concepts

The statements are also chosen to fit in with the four attitude concepts connected to utilitarianism, humanism, mysticism, and bio-centrism (See Table 1). Statements 2, 9, 10 are supposed to display a *utilitarian* attitude, statements 1, 5, 6, 7, 11 a *humanistic* attitude, statements number 12 and 13 a *mystic* attitude and statements 3, 4, 8, 14 a *biocentric* attitude.

Utilitarian

The respondents strongly reject the most fundamental statement for a utilitarian attitude, number 10 saying that *humans should have the right to alter nature to satisfy their wants and desires* with an average of 4,3. Statement number 9 can be considered rather ambiguous. This is a kind of corner stone for a utilitarian attitude saying that *there are already too many rules and regulations regarding recreational activities in a wildlife area* with an average of 3,6. It is clear that the respondents do not have a chiselled out utilitarian attitude towards wild life.

Humanistic

The results shows that respondents are very certain about statement 1 saying that *education is a good way to improve behaviour*, which displays a clear humanistic point of view with an average of 1,6. However the respondents remains similarity ambiguous to statement 11 as toward statement 9 with an average of 3,6. Statement 11 says that *maintaining economic growth in a wildlife area is important and should not be held back by further regulating activities*. It is clear that the respondents do not have a chiselled out humanistic attitude towards wild life.

Mystic

The results show that respondents strongly agree to statement 12 saying that *humans should adapt to nature rather than modifying it to suit their needs* with an average of 2,0. This can be regarded as a mystic attitude.

Bio-centric

The results shows that respondents are somewhat clear about statement 3 saying that there should be more guides present to educate people taking part in recreational activities in a wildlife area with an average of 2,4. This reveals a bio-centric attitude. Similarly respondents are somewhat clear about statement 14 saying that people who disturb wildlife are committing a serious crime and should be fined with an average of 2,6. This may indicate a rather bio-centric attitude, with a clear preference for educating people rather than to fining them. Respondents agree with statement 8 saying that many people who visit wildlife area have no idea how to behave with an average of 2,1. They agree somewhat to statement 4 saying that encouraging people to go on guided tours which would reduce incidents of wildlife disturbance with an average of 2,5. This acceptance reveals a bio-centric attitude.

To sum up. The results of the structured interviews (appendix 2) on the attitude towards wildlife indicate several things about the visitors and their views on wild life watching sites in Northern Iceland. Firstly, there is accordance with the statement that humans have no right to alter nature for their own benefits. Second, lifestyle questions are important, like the priority of quality of life over material considerations. Third, there is a considerable ambiguity about most of the other statements, although people do agree to statements 9 and 11 showing what would seem a tug of war between humanistic and utilitarian attitudes towards wildlife. However, moving further with the data, the bio-centric attitude seems to emerge rather strongly. What that means according to Hall, Müller & Saarinen (2009) (Table 2) is that visitors to North Iceland wildlife viewing places are keen on safeguarding the inherent value and functions of wilderness areas, viewing all as species equally valuable and granting the ecosystem inherent value.

These results indicate that much more effort must be put on information if consensus on environmental codes of conduct is to be achieved. Above all, teleological rules and codes, where the background and aim with the regulations are stressed, should be used in codes of conduct. These rules should not be assumed on behalf of the viewer.

Conclusions

An aim of this report was to outline the basic demographic variables characterising tourists visiting wild life viewing sites in peripheral locations in Iceland. This was done in order to reveal different traits in stated tourist preferences in order to facilitate tourists' and local residents' interaction where communication without *communing* is the founding principle. The tourists' background and expectations are therefore essential to chisel out a proper platform for a meeting.

The findings show a great diversity of backgrounds. Respondents from South and East Europe and Asia are excluded due to not significant figures. Most respondents are in their 40s. Those in the 30s are from France and from South and East Europe. The North Americans are in the 50s and the Asians in their 20s (Fig. 3). The educational level is high with North Americas on top in terms of undergraduate University level education (BA) and the French topping the PhD level of university education (Fig. 4). The demographic diversities in age are however, not remarkable, it is therefore not necessary to chisel out special forms of a communicative platforms in those respects. But there are other traits that discriminate.

Germans prefer guest houses to a certain degree but also hotels. They are not very fond of camping and they rarely stay with relatives and friends. The French instead use mostly one accommodation form preferring guest houses. Almost all North Americans stay at only two forms of accommodation preferring guest houses and on their own. Visitors from Benelux prefer one form of accommodation during their stay, camping (Fig. 8).

The way the visitors come to Iceland differs also. Most are coming by air which means that they normally rent a car and drive around but some come by ferry and in that case with own car, sometimes specially prepared for off-road travel but also equipped with special facilities for wild life studies, like 4 wheel drive cars, advanced photo equipment and survival kits. The distance to Jutland in Denmark seems to have significance since half of the Scandinavians use ferry but also visitors from Benelux and UK use it to some extent. The closeness to Denmark does obviously not have a greater importance for the Germans even if 10% use the ferry.

Apart from demographic characteristics, accommodation habits and transportation modes, the structured interviews show differences in value scales among the respondents, especially concerning their views on nature.

The results of *ontological* codes indicate that much more effort must be put into providing information if consensus on environmental codes of conduct between visitors and tourism entrepreneurs is to be reached. Above all, *teleological* rules and codes, where the background and aim with the regulations are stressed, should be used in codes, not ontological where the rules stand for themselves, unexplained.

Visitors display a *mystic* attitude to animal watching with traits of disneyfication, turning animals into something cute and cuddly to be adored informed by popular cultural discourse. The *utilitarian* and *humanistic* attitudes towards wildlife seem to be in a tug of war, as respondents agreed to key statements in each, yet remained similarly ambiguous towards other two corner stone statements in each. This ambiguity notwithstanding, what emerges clearly is a *biocentric* attitude. Coupled with the necessity of information provision it would seem that visitors to North Iceland are allocentric tourists and not mass tourists, who can be serviced through providing quality information on wildlife.

This type of tourist is more likely to have their visits potentially more spread over time and density which can be regarded by locals as positive even if mass tourists are predictable and by that easier to accommodate to for the residents. The understanding of the "other", based on allocentric behaviour is essential for a communication process. The similarities and diversities found in this statistical material may enable local authorities, entrepreneurs and local residents to use such a communication process based on cultural differences instead of a *communing* process based on the erasing of cultural differences. Predicted scenarios of climate change with increased access possibilities giving tour operators more opportunities to sell ever remoter places in the near-Artic rim, e.g. Northern Iceland, to both allocentric and psychocentric tourists, will also reveal the different outcomes of communication versus communing processes.

This report is meant as just an example of how to investigate tourist background and behaviour for the benefit of a sustainable destination development where tourists and local residents are meant to benefit from each other. Studies of economic impact on destinations by

tourism and of attitudes among local residents are numerous but a sustainable destination requires an understanding of the simple fact that tourism should be a trade between visitors and local residents in a win-win situation where other cultural backgrounds are looked upon as fundamental motivators for travel, resulting in sympathy to the insider's perspective and an experience from the outsider's perspective

The figures used in this report are limited in many ways and can therefore only indicate a possible way to make deeper investigations. To achieve that, an effort to make different in-depth local investigations with a limited number of respondents must be built upon compatible questionnaires so allocated results can be achieved with statistical significance. The background discrepancy or lack of it displayed in this study with focus upon facilitating sustainable destination development based on understanding between hosts and guests will in that case be necessary and hopefully inspire further investigations.

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Appendix 1

Visitor Survey Vatnsnes – Summer 2010 and 2011

1. Nationality _____

2. Age _____

3. Gender Male Female

4. Occupation (tick one)
   Entrepreneur
   Management
   Administration
   Specialist
   Manual work
   Retired
   Student
   Other

5. Education
   Elementary school
   High school
   Vocational
   Academic (graduate level)
   Academic (postgraduate level)

7. Did you arrive in Iceland by: __ air? ___ ferry?

8. The motive for your visit
   Work
   Leisure
   Visiting relatives and friends
   Other motive

9. Is this your first trip to Iceland? ___ yes ___ no

10. How long are you staying in Iceland? _____ days

11. What activities are you interested in? (check all that apply)
    hiking
    cultural attractions, museums
    wild life
    photography
    angling
    other

12. If you are interested in wild life, does that include
    Whale watching
    Seal watching
    Bird watching
    Arctic fox watching

13. If you are interested in angling, does that mean
    Sea angling
    River angling

14. If you are interested in seal watching, please explain in a few word why:

---

15. Would you like to come again in winter? __yes ___ no

16. Where did you learn about Iceland (check all that apply)
    Friends and relatives
    Travel agent
    Earlier visit
    Guide book
    Internet
    Media e.g. TV, newspapers, radio
    Other:

    …….

17. What kind of accommodation are you staying in?
    Hotel
    Camping
    Guesthouse
    Farm stay
    Own
    Other:

    ……..

18. How satisfied are you with your trip to Iceland? (circle one)

Very satisfied		Satisfied		Not Satisfied
5	4	3	2	1

Comments:

Appendix 2

Per Åke Nilsson
Holar University College and the Icelandic Seal Centre

QUESTIONNAIRE
Please indicate your degree of agreement or disagreement with the following statements using a 1-5 scale, where **1** is strongly **agree** and **5** is strongly **disagree**.

1 2 3 4 5

☐☐☐☐☐ 1. Education is the most appropriate way to manage the behaviour of people taking part in recreational activities in a wildlife area

☐☐☐☐☐ 2. I have been well informed about the regulations that protect wildlife from human disturbance in a wildlife area

☐☐☐☐☐ 3. There should be more guides present to educate people taking part in recreational activities in a wildlife area

☐☐☐☐☐ 4. Encouraging people to go on guided tours would reduce incidents of wildlife disturbance

☐☐☐☐☐ 5. Some animals in a wildlife area are used to people which are allowed to get closer for a better view or to take pictures

☐☐☐☐☐ 6. I know how to recreate responsibly in a wildlife area without requiring additional information from any other source

☐☐☐☐☐ 7. Having enforcement officers present in recreational areas could

☐☐☐☐☐ 8. Many people who visit a wildlife area have no idea how to behave around wild animals

☐☐☐☐☐ 9. There are already too many rules and regulations regarding recreational activities in a wildlife area

☐☐☐☐☐ 10 Humans have the right to alter nature to satisfy their wants and desires

☐☐☐☐☐ 11 Maintaining economic growth in a wildlife area is important and should not be held back by further regulating activities

☐☐☐☐☐ 12 Humans should adapt to nature rather than modifying it to suit their needs

☐☐☐☐☐ 13. Satisfaction and quality of life are more important than wealth and material considerations

☐☐☐☐☐ 14. People who disturb wildlife are committing a serious crime and should be fined

Please write down what type of information you miss at this destination ……

……

……

In the tables below please indicate the most important factor in contributing to your satisfaction with your tour.

Getting close to wildlife	Seeing wild animals	Quality information by a guide	Responsible approach to wildlife by tour operator	Fun & relaxation	Safety on the trip

Additional information.

Gender ……

Year of Birth ……

Nationality ……

Home town ……

Level of Education ……

Occupation ……

Further comments

ICELANDIC TOURISM
RESEARCH CENTRE

October 2012