

## **Indigenous Ecotourism**

**Sustainable Development and Management**

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## DEDICATION

To my father – Mervin Vernon Zeppel  
(13 July 1922–26 September 2005)

and for S.T.M.  
(for your Cree and Ojibway heart)

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# Indigenous Ecotourism

Sustainable Development and Management

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**Heather D. Zeppel**

*James Cook University  
Cairns, Australia*



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CABI Head Office  
Nosworthy Way  
Wallingford  
Oxfordshire OX10 8DE  
UK

CABI North American Office  
875 Massachusetts Avenue  
7th Floor  
Cambridge, MA 02139  
USA

Tel: +44 (0)1491 832111  
Fax: +44 (0)1491 833508  
E-mail: [cabi@cabi.org](mailto:cabi@cabi.org)  
Website: [www.cabi.org](http://www.cabi.org)

Tel: +1 617 395 4056  
Fax: +1 617 354 6875  
E-mail: [cabi-nao@cabi.org](mailto:cabi-nao@cabi.org)

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## About the Author

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Heather Zeppel is Senior Lecturer in Tourism in the Tourism Program, School of Business at James Cook University Cairns in Queensland, Australia. She has an Associate Diploma (Wildlife and Park Management), BSc, Graduate Certificate of Education, Graduate Diploma (Museum Curatorship) and PhD (Tourism/Material Culture).

Heather lectures on Tourism Issues in Developing Countries, Tourism and the Environment, Tourism Analysis, Australian Ecotourism and Wildlife Tourism Management and Regional Tourism Planning and Foundations of Conference and Event Management.

Her research interests include Indigenous tourism, cultural interpretation, ecotourism, wildlife tourism and sustainable tourism development. Heather's research articles and notes on Indigenous tourism have been published in the *Journal of Travel Research*, *Pacific Tourism Review*, *Tourism, Culture & Communication* and *Tourism Management*. She has also written ten book chapters on cultural tourism or Aboriginal tourism and other research reports on *Aboriginal Tourism in Australia* (Zeppel, 1999) and *Indigenous Wildlife Tourism in Australia* (Muloin, Zeppel and Higginbottom, 2001). Her current research examines Aboriginal tourism issues in the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area of Queensland.

## Preface

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This book had its genesis in the author's previous employment (1981–1984) as a park ranger at Uluru-Katajuta National Park in the Northern Territory of Australia. This involved working with Anangu Aboriginal people on cultural interpretation and land management issues. Uluru (Ayers Rock) is a major tourism icon and culturally significant area, handed back to Anangu Aboriginal people in 1985.

Starting at Uluru, this interest in conservation and Indigenous cultures continued through to a doctoral study of Iban longhouse tourism in Sarawak, Borneo (1991–1994) and postdoctoral research on Indigenous cultural tourism in Australia, New Zealand and Canada (1996–2000). The initial academic studies of Indigenous tourism in the mid-1990s have now emerged into a major theme or focus at recent tourism or ecotourism conferences in Australia, New Zealand, USA, Canada, Africa and Asia.

This cross-disciplinary research on Indigenous tourism involves tourism, business, geography, anthropology and other areas, along with varied Indigenous groups.

This specific book emerged from an invitation by Professor David Weaver, editor of the CABI Ecotourism Series, to develop a book proposal that focused on Indigenous ecotourism. The subsequent acceptance of this book proposal by CABI indicates a broadening of the academic coverage of ecotourism from certification, policy and management to local communities and Indigenous peoples.

The commissioning editors at CABI, Rebecca Stubbs and Claire Parfitt, helped bring this book to fruition. The author thanks the three reviewers of the original CABI book proposal for their insightful comments and specific suggestions on further topics and issues to cover in a book of this type. In particular, Professor David Weaver provided useful editorial comments throughout the writing of this book. These prompted more in-depth examination of conservation and tourism issues and their impact on Indigenous peoples. Dr Sue Muloin also critically reviewed the first and last chapters of this book. Jenny Thorp and Sue Saunders provided further editorial corrections. The research and writing of this book was assisted by study leave during August 2004 to January 2005. The author thanks the School of Business, James Cook University for this time granted as leave.

The issues pertaining to Indigenous peoples, cultures, land rights, resource use and tourism continue to receive attention from academic researchers, government agencies, NGOs and the private sector.

Recent media coverage of some Indigenous issues that affect tourism include Maori claims to the foreshore, beaches and coastal waters of New Zealand in 2004, and Aboriginal groups in

Northern Australia lobbying for limited trophy hunting of saltwater crocodiles on Aboriginal lands in 2005. Both of these Indigenous claims to lands and use of natural resources are still pending final outcomes, although the Australian government continued to ban the commercial sport hunting of native wildlife.

At the international level, Indigenous groups are pressing for full legal recognition of their claims to traditional territories, biological diversity, cultural resources and traditional knowledge. This book on Indigenous ecotourism links biodiversity conservation and Indigenous rights with global growth in tourism.

The UN Decade of the World's Indigenous Peoples was declared from 1995 to 2004. The research and writing of this book during 2004/05 provided an effective overview of key developments in conservation and ecotourism as they affected Indigenous peoples during this previous decade. Hence, this book provides a summation and appraisal of what has been achieved with Indigenous groups involved in conservation and ecotourism projects on their traditional territories and tribal lands. It also suggests key topics that need further research and critical investigation in this emerging area of Indigenous ecotourism. While the author is non-Indigenous, every effort was made to incorporate Indigenous perspectives on ecotourism as reported in the published literature and case studies. Any errors made in the presentation and interpretation of these case studies about Indigenous ecotourism are inadvertent. The author welcomes feedback or further information about the topics in this book.

Heather Zeppel  
Cairns, North Queensland  
Australia  
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