THE POTENTIAL AND PROMOTION OF ENTOTOURISM IN GUNUNG LEDANG, JOHOR, MALAYSIA

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ABSTRACT

This research tries to provide the scientific evidence that insect tourism or entotourism has potential and is viable. This is achieved through two methods – field observation and data collection, and through questionnaire surveys on tourist perceptions on insects and entotourism. Gunung Ledang was chosen as the research site for several reasons including the easy access to tourist respondents. Surveys showed that tourists are interested in insect. Supported by field observations and data collection, insects have potential to be excellent nature tourism product. Closer examination pointed out that insect groups that are reliable and visible are ants, butterflies, termites, dragonflies, moths, beetles, cicadas and damselflies. Field trials indicated that these insects were viable attractions as they are readily visible, safe, easily recognizable, with some having linkage to local culture. Regardless of the different environmental ambience, time of observation (except early mornings) and seasons, insect were always present. The tendency is there however, that particular environment such as water body (pool/waterfall) would attract certain insects such as odonates. Further surveys on tourists’ perception indicated that they supported entotourism and were willing to participate in one. As Gunung Ledang is a national and state park under the jurisdiction of the Perbadanan Taman Negara Johor (PTNJ), their staff would likely be the candidates as entotourism operators. Thus, this research also gauged the present level of understanding and knowledge on insects by PTNJ staff, supplemented by a training course. Statistically, there is significant increase in the understanding and knowledge of insects after the training. A small booklet was developed based on collections of insects from Gunung Ledang and used during the training. Although, much of the research is about evaluating the potential and viability of insects as tourism product, to diversify tourism products, in line with the Malaysia Government’s agenda, it also pointed out the need to conserve Gunung Ledang (watershed with high ecological values and with cultural heritage).
ABSTRAK

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CoR-SUNR - Centre of Research on Sustainable Uses of Natural Resources
MNS - Malaysian Nature Society
MOCAT - Ministry of Culture, Arts and Tourism
MOTOUR - Ministry of Tourism, Malaysia
NKEA - National Key Economics Areas
PTNJ - Perbadanan Taman Negara Johor
SPSS - Statistical Package for Social Science
UKM - Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia
IUCN - International Union for Conservation of Nature
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Malaysia is one of the world’s richest in biodiversity of flora and fauna and this has enabled the country to excel in nature based tourism. One of the ecosystems that harbour this rich biodiversity is the tropical rainforest a typical of Malaysia’s forest.

Malaysia’s forest is one of oldest in the world, for example, a rock from Endau Rompin National Park has been carbon dated to about 240 million years old (MPN, 2006). Another example is Langkawi Island, Many of the forests and mineral deposits here are more than 500 million years old (Hughes, et al., 2010).

A total of 45% land area in Peninsular Malaysia is still forested (MTC, 2007). In addition, according to Forestry Statistics 2012, the land area of peninsular Malaysia is about 13.18 million hectares, and the forested area covers about 5.79 million hectares while the non-forested area covers of 7.39 million hectares (Forestry Department Peninsular Malaysia, 2012).

Insect is the most diverse organism in the world. For example, there are estimated 100,000 species of beetles (Thiessen, 2012), 28,000 species of butterflies (Islam, et al., 2011), 3,000 species of phasmids (Australian Museum, 2013), 2,500
species of cicadas (Sueur, Windmill and Robert, 2009), 5,500 species of dragonflies (Abbott, 2005), 2,600 species of termites (Ahmed, et al., 2011), and more than 12,000 species of ants are reported worldwide with further expected numbers of species up to 22,000 (Umair, et al., 2012). For Malaysia, in an assessment made by MONRE 2007, invertebrates that have been identified are about 150,000, most of them are insects. With this, insect is not only species rich but is generally abundant and a potential conspicuous tourism product.

This thesis endeavours to introduce insects as a tourism product. Its viability was studied indicating groups that are visible and recognizable by practitioners and tourists. This work was carried out in Gunung Ledang National Park a renowned tourist destination in Johor. To support the continuous promotions of insects as a tourism product a training course was carried out among staff of Perbadanan Taman Negara Johor (PTNJ) who are responsible in managing the Park.

As more people get to know nature tourism products of Malaysia it is good to introduce new products and diversify. An example of new nature tourism product is the frog. Frog tourism or anuran tourism is popular in Sabah, showcasing about 63 anuran species recorded at Crocker Range Park, 33 and seven species are endemic to Borneo and Sabah (Kueh, et al., 2006). Anurans in Crocker Range Park fulfil the seven criteria to measure the potential of Anurans or Frog Tourism which are endemism, rarity, reliability of sightings, morphological attractiveness, behavioural enticement, safety and linkage to local cultures (Kueh, et al., 2006) This proves that anurans really possess big potential as nature tourism product and subsequently, substantiate anurans tourism (Kueh, 2004).

As Malaysia is biodiversity rich it is good to look around and promote other organisms for tourism. Among the biodiversity being species rich abundant and closely associated with people yet no much information is known to the common people, insects hold potential. Information obtained through research at universities could be translated to further develop entotourism.

Entotourism is not a totally new idea. As example, there are several butterfly farms around the country, including Kuala Lumpur, Penang, Sabah, and the Cameron Highlands, which is known as the butterfly capital of Malaysia (Eliot and
Bickersteth, 2002). For the record, there are more than 6,000 species of butterflies and moths in Malaysia (Lee and Krishnapillay, 2004).

1.2 Potential and Promotion of Insect in Tourism

Insects have a long history in Asia. They had been part of recreation and tourism activities, and some species reared as pets, such as the rhinoceros beetles (Geoff, 2011). While the role of insects in recreation and tourism (i.e. dragonfly gatherings, and educational outings) is slightly modest in some parts of the world like in North America, Europe, Australia and Japan, some of these activities are increasing in popularity (Lemelin, 2009).

Given the vast forest of Malaysia, the country is home to countless population of insect species (Eliot and Bickersteth, 2002).

Another interesting insect species unique to Malaysia are fireflies (Lampyridae). Fireflies are commonly found in mangrove areas, and some of the popular places for fireflies tourism are Kuala Selangor and Leban River (both in Peninsular Malaysia) and the Garama River in Sabah.

Insect resources have showed their potentials in industry, agriculture and ecological environment, and also have been considered important resources to solve the problem for food shortage (Chuanhui, et al., 2010). People used to think that silkworm and bees are the few insects that could benefit human being whilst most bring disadvantages and even considered distasteful by mankind (Chuanhui, et al., 2010). In addition, because of their harmful despite small bodies and unappealing appearances many people are not fond of insects. However, the advantages that insects brought to people are far more than the disadvantages. In order to improve the utilization of insect-resources, people should be educated and people’s traditional mind set and perception towards insects should be changed (Chuanhui, et al., 2010).

Malaysia is one of the leading countries in terms of nature tourism. It can be attributed to its rich biodiversity. Being in the tropics, Malaysia is endowed with a diverse flora and fauna both in terrestrial and marine ecosystems. Currently, Malaysia has designated 24 national parks and Gunung Ledang is one of them.
In some countries insect has been successfully packaged as nature tourism product particularly for the dragonfly, order Odonata. In some regions of China, Odonata are sold for their colours, while in other Chinese provinces and some Asian countries like Malaysia, Thailand, Laos, and Bali, dragonflies serve a culinary purpose (Lemelin, 2009). Odonata are also found in Japanese leisure activities where they serve as pets and as inspirations for various art forms including Haiku poetry (Lemelin, 2009).

1.3 Research Questions

This research study was engaged to answer the following questions.

1. What kinds of insects are suitable to be promoted as nature tourism product?
2. What insects are viable as tourism product?
3. What is the potential of Entotourism in Gunung Ledang, Johor?

1.4 Aim and Objectives of the Study

This study introduces the importance and evaluates the potential of insects as nature tourism product. Efforts to promote insects in tourism and increase awareness of society to the conservation of biodiversity of insects were done.

The aim of this study is to promote another potential nature tourism product the insect; thus provide diversification for the tourism industry in Malaysia in line with the National Key Economic Areas (NKEA) of the Malaysian government.

The study has the following objectives:

1. To investigate the kinds of insect that have potential to be promoted as nature tourism product in Gunung Ledang, Johor
2. To determine the viability of insect as nature tourism product in Ledang, Johor
3. To assess the potential of Entotourism in Ledang Johor
1.5 **Significance of the Study**

This study will enable nature tourism practitioner to present another viable natural product that will be based on its constant visibility and occurrence. This would add value to the value if insect to form another basis for its conservation.

Entotourism initiated in Gunung Ledang will promote further nature tourism in the State of Johor. This can then be used as a model for other tourist destinations in Johor and elsewhere.

Gunung Ledang has been chosen as the study area because it is one of the National Parks in Johor whose insects have not been completely studied by researchers, despite being considered as one of the popular areas among the local people and foreigners. Moreover, Gunung Ledang is a popular destination for local and international nature-lover tourists.

1.6 **Scope**

The scope of the study is focused on the entotourism potential in Gunung Ledang National Park, Johor, Malaysia. It explores the commonly found insect groups that have the potential for tourism and why promote insects in nature-based tourism. Furthermore, this study will enhance the economic value of insect in our ecosystem.

The study was conducted in two trails (Trail A- most visited trail and Trail B – less visited trail) that are commonly trekked by tourists visiting Gunung Ledang. The study focuses on eight commonly found insect groups: ants (Hymenoptera), butterflies (Lepidoptera: Rhopalocera), Termites (Isoptera), Dragonflies (Odonata: Anisoptera), Moth (Lepidoptera: Heterocera), beetles (Coleoptera), cicadas (Homoptera) and damselflies (Odonata: Zygoptera). Observation and collections of insects were conducted at the time tourists are practically exploring Gunung Ledang (8:00am to 12:30pm and from 1:00pm to 5:30pm).

This is to provide realistic accounts of what tourists can actually encounter upon visiting Gunung Ledang. Finally, to be able to determine the viability of running entotourism in Gunung Ledang tourists as well as staff of PTNJ were given a structured questionnaire to determine their perception of entotourism.
CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Malaysia is located in Southeast Asia, and made up of two separate land masses, hence two distinct geographical regions: East Malaysia (comprised of the states of Sabah and Sarawak on the island of Borneo) and Peninsular Malaysia or west Malaysia. Altogether, there are 13 states (Perlis, Kedah, Perak, Penang, Kelantan, Trengganu, Pahang, Selangor, Negeri Sembilan, Malacca, Johor, Sabah and Sarawak) and three federal territories (Kuala Lumpur, Putrajaya and Labuan). In Malaysia, there are 62 National Parks (Appendix F) including the five National Parks in Johor such as: Pulau Kukup, Tanjung Piai-Johor, Endau-Rompin, Johor National Park, Mersing group of islands and Gunung Ledang.

Gunung Ledang National Parks is under the jurisdiction of Johor National Parks Corporation (JNPC). Gunung Ledang is popular to tourist exploring nature and a place for scientific expeditions, among others (Johor National Parks Corporation, 2012).
Johor enjoys its position as one of the main tourist destinations in Malaysia. This can be attributed to its strategic location as a gateway to southern Peninsular Malaysia and Singapore. Some major attractions in Johor are ancient tropical rainforests, pristine islands, beaches, hills, mosques, and museums (Tourism Malaysia, 2012) (Table 2.1). This is even boosted by the development of the Legoland and Johor Premium Outlets within the Iskandar Region.

Table 2.1: Some interesting places in Johor (Tourism Malaysia, 2012)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interesting places in Johor</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>Endau-Rompin national park</td>
<td>Rich in flora and fauna, this lowland dipterocarp forest shelters wildlife such as the endangered Sumatran Rhinoceros, elephants, tapirs, wild boars, deer, monkeys, gibbons, etc. and <em>binturong</em> as well as the rare fan-palm (<em>livistona endauensis</em>). Endau-Rompin National park straddles across two states, on the south of Pahang and north of Johor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sibu Group of Island</td>
<td>One of the best places for relaxing. Spend a relaxing day by the seaside or take part in watersports activities like sailin, kayaking, windsurfing, and snorkeling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gunung Ledang or Mount Ophir</td>
<td>One of the national parks in Johor which is also known as a legendary park. People will enjoy the picnic by cascading waterfalls and flowering streams.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Danga Bay</td>
<td>The ideal destination for youth groups, couples and families as well as businessmen and corporate executives. It offers an amazing variety of attractions as well as a 150-berth marina, making many visit a memorable experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pasir Gudang Kite Museum</td>
<td>The first of its kind in Malaysia, the museum is dedicated to the traditional Malay kite known as the <em>wau</em>. In this museum people can view a more than 200 traditional and modern kites in various colours and designs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sungai Lebam firefly</td>
<td>A firefly watching that located in Kota Tinggi. People will enjoy these unique creatures feed and live on the <em>berembang</em> trees that grow by river banks, its like Christmas tree.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desaru</td>
<td>Desaru is located in the district of Kota Tinggi, the southeastern corner of Johor. It is also a perfect place for a relaxing swim, canoeing, water-skiing and catamaran sailing.</td>
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<th>Interesting places in Johor</th>
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<td>Desaru fruit farm</td>
<td>The fruit orchard that has over 100 varieties of tropical fruits and 10 plant species are cultivated at the 100-acre Desaru fruit farm. Savour delicious seasonal and unseasonal fruits.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puteri Harbour Nusajaya</td>
<td>Puteri Harbour is the jewel of Nusajaya, Southeast Asia’s largest integrated urban development, which covers 24,000 acres. This waterfront precinct is an integrated waterfront and marina development that spans 688 acres, offering a panoramic view of the Straits of Johor. Located adjacent to Kota Iskandar, Puteri Harbour offers the experience of exceptional waterfront living, dining, entertainment as well as the arts and culture in a natural setting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hutan Bandar MBJB Johor Bahru</td>
<td>This verdant 20-hectare park is located in Johor Bahru, a mere distance of 20km from the city centre. Its creationsl facilities blend with the natural surroundings, offering urban dwellers a tranquil sanctuary to indulge in outdoor pursuits. Attractions in the park include the Jazz Corner at the Tembusu Courtyard, Orchid Garden, Seven Lakes and the Ecology Park.</td>
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### 2.2 Gunung Ledang – A Tourist Attraction

Gunung Ledang or Mount Ophir (as it was called by the British), is partly in Malacca but its peak stands is in Johor. Scaling the peak is not possible in one day, but it is worth following the steep tracks some of the way. The mountain is a popular spot for picnic and camping, with weekenders flocking to the Puteri Falls. The primary forest that blankets the mountain is especially rich in fauna and flora (Alexander, 2006).

The Gunung Ledang vegetation can be classified into four zones which are: lowland dipterocarp, hill dipterocarp, lower montane and montane ericaceous forest (Mohamad Fizl and Madinah, 2012).

On the most visited part of Gunung Ledang, two trails have been established by PTNJ. The highest elevation of Trail A is 170 meter a.s.l with the GPS coordinates of (N2°20.598”, E103°37.082”) while the Trail B is 151 meter a.s.l with the GPS coordinates of (N2°20.634”, E103°37.120”).
In terms of water bodies, Gunung Ledang River is important for the northwest region of Johor. Being situated near the interstate boundary, Gunung Ledang provides water to the neighbouring northern state of Malacca, creating an interstate cooperation between the two states in Peninsular Malaysia. The water provided by Gunung Ledang for Malacca and the North West region of Johor is for domestic as well as agricultural uses. Since there are no major waterways and no major highlands, Gunung Ledang could be seen as the only water source for these areas.

There are various kinds of activities in Gunung Ledang that people enjoy such as bird-watching, camping, swimming, biking and walking through the jungle, picnic by cascading waterfalls and flowing streams (Asean Biodiversity, 2008). It is also a place where people can learn about flora (plants) and fauna (wildlife and...
insects). A night walk is another favourite activity, where people can have a chance to see nocturnal species. Gunung Ledang is also an ideal venue for team-building activities. Nature photography enthusiasts could find a number of ideal subjects (e.g. flora and fauna) and scenic views (Table 2.2; Asean Biodiversity, 2008). In addition, Gunung Ledang is a place for scientific expeditions where people come from different institutions to study the biodiversity and conserve the ecosystem.

Table 2.2: The species records in Gunung Ledang and from Malaysia

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANIMALS</th>
<th>LEDANG/MALAYSIA (% in Ledang)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mammals</td>
<td>34¹ species/286² (12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amphibian</td>
<td>9¹ species/158³ (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reptiles</td>
<td>10¹ species/268² (4.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birds</td>
<td>204¹ species/736² (28)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fish</td>
<td>9¹ species/449² (2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ Information provided by staff of Gunung Ledang Park  
² MONRE, 2007

Compared to the current status of biodiversity in Malaysia, there is higher representation of birds (28%) in Gunung Ledang followed by mammals (12%) while fish is only 2%. For a relatively small area with restricting environment (being a highland) Gunung Ledang has something to offer for nature-interested tourist. Although, from the MONRE (2007) record there is about 150,000 species of invertebrates including insects (the world has about 1 million species), at the present moment there is lacking published record of insects from Gunung Ledang. While the presence of insects is apparent, it is surprising not to find published records of them, except for certain groups like cicadas (29 species) and ants (47 morphospecies) from a recent seminar presentation during the 2nd September 2013, Seminar on Scientific Expedition of Gunung Ledang (Abstract book on: An Expose of Biodiversity, 2013).

Insect tourism or entotourism is introducing or promoting one type of tourism that has potential to be promoted in Gunung Ledang. However, there is no insect checklist made for Gunung Ledang, hence, the number of insects species that still exist in the area is still unknown. This study is important in bringing information
to Gunung Ledang as a guideline for entotourism, education as well as conservation management.

2.3 Tourism

Tourism is the fastest growing industry in Malaysia with the record of 25 million tourist arrivals in 2012, an impressive overall tourism growth. Tourist arrivals rose to 25,032,708 compared to 24,714,324 in 2011 and receipts climbed to RM60.6 billion compared to RM58.3 billion the previous year (Tourism Malaysia, 2013).

Tourism has been identified as the fifth in the 12 enlisted National Key Economic Areas (Tenth Malaysia Plan 2011-2015, 2010). Of the six strategies outlined, the third strategy stated the need to develop new iconic tourism products. Thus, we see many different types of tourism products that had been introduced and developed.

Whether domestic or international, tourism in Malaysia is allocated a high priority by the government because of its actual and possible contribution to income and employment. The industry is the most lucrative of all services and hailed as a key engine of development and as a means of diversifying the economy (Henderson, 2009).

According to Gunung Ledang record (2012), Figure 2.2 shows the statistics for number of tourists of Malaysian and Non-Malaysian origin visiting Gunung Ledang. Gunung Ledang started operation from 2003 until present time. The graph shows that from the year 2003 until May 2012 the number of tourists visiting Gunung Ledang fluctuated.
2.3.1 Types of Tourism

Tourism is important in the economic and social development of a country because it is one of the fastest growing industries in the world (CBD, 2011). It is also one of the largest industries of the world’s economy and associated with many of the prime sectors (Fennell, 2008). Sometimes known as the invisible export industry, tourism has helped boosting foreign exchange in every country (CBD, 2011).

Tourism has also big benefits in terms of conservation of traditional crafts and the recovery of historical and natural heritage by designating certain areas as natural parks, restoring buildings and historic sites (Jaume, Antoni and Javier, 2006). In addition, tourism sector is also important in maintaining the exchange rate of Malaysian Ringgit, which is a managed afloat against the dollar (Sivalingam, 2007).

According to Newsome, Moore and Dowling, (2006) tourism consists of either mass or alternative tourism (Figure 2.3). Tourism involves short term travel to and from a destination by tourist or travelers. Mass tourism is the traditional or conventional tourism which people seek replication of their own culture in
institutionalized settings with little cultural or environmental interaction in authentic setting. It is the most popular and by far characterized by large numbers of tourists. Alternative tourism, on the other hand, is sometimes considered as special interest tourism or responsible tourism and can be broadly defined as forms of tourism that set out to be consistent with natural, social and community values and which allow both hosts and guests to enjoy positive and worthwhile interaction and shared experiences (Newsome, et al., 2006).

Alternative tourism consists of small-scale, locally owned activities with consequentially low impact, leakages and high proportion of profits retained locally (Holden, 2008). This contrasts with mass tourism which is frequently characterized by large-scale multinational concerns typified by repatriation of profits to offshore countries. Alternative tourism also fosters the involvement of local people in the decision-making process and includes them in the tourism development. Using these criteria, alternative tourism surpasses purely a corner for the physical environment that typifies green tourism, to include economic, social and cultural considerations. Thus, alternative tourism can be viewed as being synonymous with the concept of sustainable tourism development (Newsome, et al., 2006).
Types of tourism

TOURISM
Involves short term travel to and from a destination

MASS TOURISM
• Traditional or conventional tourism
• Large numbers of tourists usually in staged settings

ALTERNATIVE TOURISM
• Specific interest or responsible tourism
• Small numbers of tourists in authentic natural or cultural

CULTURAL
heritage religions

NATURAL
tourism in natural areas

EVENT
sports festival

OTHER
farm educational

*Entotourism
includes education and conservation supporting elements

NATURED-BASED
primarily viewing of natural landscape

ADVENTURE
emphasis on activity

WILDLIFE
primarily viewing of wildlife

ECOTOURISM
includes educative and conservation supporting elements

*additional information to an overview of tourism

Figure 2.3: Adopted from the general overview of tourism (Newsome, et al., 2006).
Natural area tourism is a type of alternative tourism, that is, tourism in natural settings. Tourism in natural areas is nature-based tourism, in which the primary objective is viewing nature or natural environment and adventure tourism which places emphasis on activity like scuba diving or white water rafting and steep mountain slopes (Newsome, et al., 2006).

Ecotourism and entotourism is usually linked with natural resources and environment conservation. These forms of tourism promote the natural areas to enjoy and appreciate nature with low visitor impact and provide the beneficially active socio-economic involvement of local communities. More so, it provides educational benefit for the tourist. Ecotourism and nature tourism attract attention to natural treasure and eventually promotes conservation of such resources. Tourism has positive impacts to conservation and protection of natural resources that it must be of primary concern along with the satisfaction of the tourists (Newsome, et al., 2006).

The development and management of ecotourism and entotourism industries must be guided so as to ensure that the protected areas are not overrun and damaged by tourists. In particular, accommodate and entertain visitors in a way that they are minimally intrusive or destructive to the environment. The natural resources are finite (through renewable) and must be conserved for the future generations.

There are several kinds of tourism which includes mass tourism, medical tourism, education tourism and ecotourism (Figure 2.4). Mass tourism refers to a large numbers of tourists where the main purpose is to visit and enjoy the famous attractions (e.g. Petronas Twin Tower in Kuala Lumpur, Putra Mosque etc. in Putrajaya) and historical building (e.g. cultural heritage) like in Melaka, at the same time shopping. Medical tourism a kind of tourism where people traveling for the purpose of maintaining, improving and restoring health through medical intervention (Suleiman, 2013). Education tourism is a kind of tourism where the purpose of people is acquiring a new knowledge that is related to their discipline (Asnarulkhadi and Maryam, 2013). Ecotourism is about protecting and conserving the environment. Under the ecotourism is nature tourism which consists of activities-based, organism and ecosystem-based. Insect (the basis for entotourism) is a large component of organism in this world and thus entotourism should fall under the organism-based tourism.
Malaysia is renowned in having a wide range of natural flora and fauna as it is situated within the tropical rainforest climate (Jaafar, Marzuki and Mohd Bakri, 2012). Promoting nature tourism, ecotourism and entotourism would have a great potential in Malaysia.

**Kinds of Tourism**

![Diagram of Kinds of Tourism](image)

- **MASS TOURISM**
  - Shopping
  - Culture

- **ECOTOURISM**
  - Orangutan
  - Bird
  - Rhino
  - Anuran
  - Rafflesia
  - Flora and wildlife
  - Insect (Entotourism)

- **EDUCATION TOURISM**
  - Health/herbal

- **MEDICAL TOURISM**
  - Jungle / Parks
  - Beach
  - Sea
  - Mountain

Figure 2.4: Link between ecotourism, nature tourism and entotourism.
2.3.2 Ecotourism

In the 1970s “ecotourism” term was “formulated” or “coined” by conservationists (Shackley, 1996). According to Shackley (1996) Ecotourism Society defined ecotourism as “responsible travel that conserves the natural environment and sustains the well-being of local people”. Ecotourism is the most rapidly growing subsection of tourism worldwide. Because ecotourism aims to protect the nature, preventing natural and cultural destruction so that it can give more attraction for tourists and brings much more income (Hawkins, 1995), and it really constitutes a niche market for environmentally aware tourists who are interested in observing nature. Moreover, it is especially popular among government and conservation organizations because it can provide simultaneous environmental and economic benefits (Shackley, 1996).

Ecotourism is generally used to describe tourism activities which are conducted in harmony with nature, as opposed to more traditional mass tourism activities (Hawkins, 1995), feeding economic profit into local environmental protection; and contributing to the maintenance of the local environment and species diversity through minimizing visitor impact and promoting tourist education (Gale and Hill, 2009).

Fennell (1999) provides his own definition of ecotourism based on what is felt to be the most important aspects of the phenomenon and on the need to be concise in including such principles, that is: “Ecotourism is a sustainable form of natural resource-based tourism that focuses primarily on experiencing and learning about nature, and which is ethically managed to be low-impact, non-consumptive, and locally oriented (control, benefits, and scale). It typically occurs in natural areas, and should contribute to the conservation or preservation of such area.”

In addition, even though these are distinct forms of tourism, ecotourism, nature tourism, and sustainable tourism are often used interchangeably. For example, the public prefer to use the term “sustainable tourism” rather than ecotourism but prior to that, the Ministry of Culture, Arts and Tourism in Malaysia (MOCAT) had endorsed the term “ecotourism” (Jaafar, et al., 2012).
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