

**Don't Take Nature Away From Dominica**

**By:**

**Mark Moore  
College of Agriculture and Life Sciences  
Department of Recreation, Parks and Tourism Sciences  
Texas A & M University  
College Station, TX USA**

tourist attraction on the island. Having 100 people show up at a waterfall at one time will detract from its natural ascetics. The most accessible sites are the ones most affected. Also, the local people know that the tourist have money to spend, so they will set up a tee-shirt booth on the trail that leads to the falls, which causes the idea of a natural scene to be degraded. Last, if a person has hiked through the jungle trails to this location, the last thing they want to see is a large group of people standing around it taking pictures then hopping into their vans and driving off. The introduction of the cruise ship could jeopardize Dominica's reputation as Nature Island of the Caribbean.

Other people come to the island by way of plane. There is talk of putting an international airport on the island, taking place of the two smaller airports already established. This idea to many would not work due to the fact that there are already international airports located on the surrounding islands.

"The hotels are 98% owned locally, each hotel consist of a variety of rooms ranging from 2 rooms to 100 rooms" (Appendix 2, question 2). The hotels are home to the employees, in return for services, they live in guest quarters which account for a large sector of the living space associated with the hotels. "Community tourism (everyone working together) is the buzz word for the hotel scene around the island." (Appendix 1, question 2). Since the hotels on the island are all less than 100 rooms they cannot provide the same services the larger hotels can. Because of this, all the hotels rely on each other to help with certain aspects of their business. For instance, if a hotel that has 10 rooms needs a guide to take people to Boiling Lake, they can make arrangements with a hotel that is larger to allow the smaller group to join with them on the hike. Thist is a way to help to keep the integrity of the hotels and business more locally beneficial.



see first hand the beauty of the island, This enables them help promote the island to nature lovers. One of the most detrimental aspects of the island's promotion is the name itself. Dominica sounds much like the Dominican Republic. There have been numerous misunderstandings with regards to travel agents, purchasing tickets and verbal communication about the island. Numerous times people have tried to change the name of the island to Kububli, Patiua (the Carib Indian name for the island), or the Island of Dominica, each attempt has failed. If one of these names were implemented a lot of confusion about the island would be extinguished.

Another reason why tourists flock to the island is because of dolphins, the migration of whales, and sport fishing. More than six types of whales and nearly a dozen species of dolphins have been identified on the coastline of Dominica. Charter boats allow the tourist to venture out to sea and witness the beautiful array of mammals that inhabitant the waters. Sport fishing has become extremely popular with the island hotels. Tournaments are held each year by the Cast Away Hotel, and directed by a man named Kurt Nose. The tournament brings anglers from all over the Caribbean to test their skills against the monstrous Blue Marlins, Wahoo, Yellowfin Tuna or Dolphins a mile off shore. They promote the fishing through other hotels on the various islands surrounding Dominica and with fliers given to the surrounding angler associations. This is one of the most ecologically sound tourist attractions on the island, they use a "catch and release method on fish that weigh up to 300 pounds" (Appendix 3, question 10). This enables the fish population to remain almost intact. No unnecessary fishing is allowed.

Another reason why tourists venture to Dominica is because of the friendliness of the locals. People on the island believe that man and nature can work in harmony, each

superficial attractive schemes, but to keep the integrity of nature as it main tourist promotion.



## Appendix 1

*George - Dill*

Interview with Mona, Springfield Estate, Former Vice-President of DCA (Dominica Conservation Association).

### **1. What is the main purpose of the DCA?**

To Promote Tourism with regards to the public and private sectors. We try to focus on both the business of tourism with regards to ecotourism.

### **2. How many hotels on the island are related to ecotourism?**

All of the hotels are related to ecotourism, that is what we want to represent the island as being, a nature island. All of the hotels are very small, they range from a few rooms up to almost 100. Community tourism is the buzzword for the hotel scene around the island. One problem the island faces is the possible integration of large tourist hotels owned and operated by an investor not associated with the island, they may cause the island to lose the natural beauty associated with it.

### **3. What programs do the hotels have to aid in ecotourism?**

The hotels try and maintain a natural feeling they give services such as nature hikes, guided tours and lectures.

### **4. What is the main tourist attraction promoted by the hotels?**

That is hard to say, each hotel is located around some form of tourist related activity, but I have to say some of the different waterfalls.

### **5. How have travel agents aided in the promotion of the hotels?**

That is done on an individual basis, some hotels are not related with any form of travel agent, just word of mouth. But, others, like Springfield Estate, promotes through travel agents and in pamphlets.

### **6. Have the hotels play a major role in keeping the tradition of Dominica being a nature island?**

Yes, but it is the people who play a bigger role, no one wants to see this island depleted of beauty.

## **Appendix 2**

Interview with Marie-Jose Edwards, Former Tourism Director.

**1. How do you feel about tourism on the island?**

Tourism is very beneficial, but it has its drawbacks. It enables people to generate revenue from the crafts such as woodcarvings, but it hurts the environment having large amounts of people at our natural sites.

**2. How many hotels on the island are directly related to ecotourism?**

All the hotels are related to ecotourism in one form or another, that is what the island is about. The hotels are 98% owned locally, each hotel consists of a variety of rooms ranging from 2 rooms to 100 rooms. That is how we are able to promote services to the island that will benefit the island.

**3. What programs do the hotels have to aid in ecotourism?**

Each hotel varies, but they all try to get one point across, that here on the island we try to be one with nature.

**4. How have travel agents helped with the promotion of the island?**

They have helped a lot, they try their best, but there is a lot of confusion about the name. People get Dominica and the Dominican Republic mixed up. I have tried to get it changed a few times but have been unsuccessful.

**5. Do you feel that the placement of entrance fees to get into ecotourist sites have helped protect the environment?**

A large majority of the funds go to help preserve the environment. For instance, some money has been allotted to the Save the Iguana Foundation.



**9. Do you feel that they tourist have detracted from the early tribal meaning of fishing?**

There are two philosophies to fishing. Sport which is environmentally conscious and food that is a necessity. So we do not allow the tourist to detract from the meaning of fishing.

**10. Do you use any form of catch and release?**

We use catch and release method on fish that up to 300 pounds.





### **Appendix 3**

Interview with Kurt Nose, Director of Fishing Tournaments for Cast Away Hotel and a captain of one of his ships.

**1. How do you promote the tournaments to other islands?**

All the hotels work together when fishing is involved. Also we use other angler associations to get the word out about our programs.

**2. How influential are the hotels with the tournaments?**

We are the ones that put them on, so it is the hotel's responsibility, which means they are the main influence.

**3. What is the presence of tourist compared to locals?**

Locals are growing but it is about 20% now.

**4. Where is the main portion of tourist from?**

They come from all over the Caribbean

**5. Do the tourist have any preference on which type of fish they catch?**

We mainly fish for Marlin during the tournaments.

**6. Where does the tourist stay during the tournaments?**

In the local hotels.

**7. What effect do the tourist have on the ecological state of the island when they come?**

The fishermen are good about it they know that they are in another world on the sea and try not to hurt to bad.

**8. How much do the tourist boost the economy when they come?**

I don't know.

**7. How do the hotels promote their services?**

Hotels use travel agents, but the island is promoted through the use of a man named Steve Johnson. He represents us in New York. He tried to have different governmental agencies see our point of view on different things.

**8. How have cruise ship benefited the island?**

Cruise ships have been introduced to the island with high economic benefits, but detrimental ecological ramifications. People from the ships want to see as much as possible regardless if that means tearing up the ecosystem.

**9. Will more hotels be needed when the Japanese seaport is built?**

The Japanese are not really building a seaport, they are just trying to buy the rights to fish off the coastline.

**10. Where do you think hotel and tourism industry is going in the future?**

Hopefully it will stay the same, but I foresee it growing.



## Bibliography

Pattullo, Polly. 1996. *Last Resorts. The costs of Tourism in the Caribbean*. Cassell Willing House, London.

taking something of importance from another. The vast majority of people welcome tourist into their homes as a member of their family. The cruise ships have pushed this free will of living to its limits. Some locals do not see the tourists as nature loving people, they seem them as a cash cow, ready for the taking. "At the same time, those in villages not yet visited by tourist express their delight at the prospect of tourists and openly welcome them." (Last Resort, 125). In general people on the island are more than happy to help the tourist in any way they can and as often as possible.

Dominica is an island of beauty that has remained virtually untouched for millions of years. This is a place where man and nature live in harmony. Through the use of banana crops the island has survived through the duration of time, until the early 1990s when the crops were in jeopardy. That is when the use of tourism began to play a major role in the economics of the island. However, the people of the island did not want to loose the "natural feeling" of the island, so ecotourism was implemented. With the use of trails, scenic beauty and the friendliness of the locals, Dominica was transformed into an ecotourism powerhouse. People venture from all over the world to witness a natural rainforest grows, water falls, boiling lakes, whales and dolphins and be encompassed by the locals. The untouched island was then mildly transformed into a mass ecotourism site by the invasions of cruise ships. This bold act has hurt the environment around some of the sites and caused a small portion of the locals to resent the tourist. With the use of ecologically conscious hotels and catch and release programs, the island will survive as a natural destination. The task for Dominica is to make ecotourism work for itself on its own terms, and to have the political will not to be deflected by short term gain or



Another way that the smaller hotels are helped is when the government trains local villagers to become tour guides. Not only does this help displace the overcrowding stress on the larger hotels, but also allows for more jobs to be had by the locals. The hotels play a major role with keeping the theme of the island "the nature island", by promoting ecotourism, rather than the stereotypical tourism.

"One problem the island faces is the possible integration of large tourist hotels owned and operated by an investor not associated with the island." (Appendix 1, question 2). So far this problem has been resolved because of two reasons. The first is government intervention, the people of Dominica do not wish to have a large hotel on the island because it will detract from the "nature" feeling associated with the island. If a large hotel is built, an extremely large sector of the rainforest will have to be excavated to make room for the hotel, parking lots, driveways, etc. Henceforth, the government has had major qualms about passing laws to allow investors to build large hotels on the island. The second reason is a lack of investor interest in the island. People have done feasibility analysis of the island and have come to the conclusion that it is not economically ready at this time for a large-scale hotel. To increase the chances of a large scale hotel to be placed on the island more advertising would have to be implemented.

The island is advertised and represented in limited forms. A man named Steve Johnson represents the island in the United States. He is the representative of Dominica in New York. He attempts to convey the message of the island to different governmental agencies in the US. Next, many students from across the world are invited to study and learn about the wide variety of tropical species, vegetation and other educational expenditures on the island. Last, the island brings in tourist agents and allows them to



Dominica is a small island in the West Indies that is mostly known for its bananas. However, a recent surge of interests has been placed on this island for its devotion for ecotourism. This island is home to numerous natural attractions that have nature lovers flocking to the island to witness. Unfortunately, with the new interest in tourism, the ecological state of the island may become damaged.

The tourism sector did not fully develop until the early 1990s when the government saw a possible collapse in the banana industry. "This change in direction is reflected in the tourism budget (salaries, marketing and product development) which rose from EC\$433,000 in 1987 to EC\$2.1 million in 1993, according to Marie-Jose Edwards" (Last Resorts, 123). Because of this change, tourists come to the island to see the natural wonders that have evolved from the ten active volcanoes that produced the island. Such as Middleham Falls, the Syndicate Nature Trail, Boiling Lake and excellent diving and snorkeling.

The tourists come from many different locations of the world and take different routes to get here. Most of the tourists from cruise ships which land once a day and unload hundreds of people to the town of Roseau, these are the people who are willing to spend money and see the sites as fast as possible. "The cruise ships are the closest thing to mass tourism that Dominica experiences." (Last Resorts, 126). There are mixed feelings about the implementation of ports that can house cruise ships. "Cruise ships have been introduced to the island with high economic benefits, but detrimental ecological ramifications" (Appendix 1, question 8). The tourists from the boat want to see the island as quickly as possible, so they hire a local to drive them to some of the easily accessible