

ESSAY



Strategies to Develop Sustainable Seagrass-Associated Tourism in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT



Indonesia has significant potential for the implementation of seagrass-associated tourism due to its high seagrass species diversity, large spatial-extent of seagrass meadows and abundant charismatic seagrass-associated species. Seagrass-associated tourism will not only increase the livelihoods of local communities but also have positive impacts on biodiversity within seagrass ecosystems. However, there are specific challenges that need to be addressed as a priority in order to promote sustainable seagrass tourism. These challenges include: (1) lack of awareness among the local communities about the potential of seagrass-associated tourism, (2) potential adverse impacts of tourism activities on natural seagrass ecosystems, (3) lack of standardized parameters for assessing the suitability of sites for seagrass tourism, and (4) lack of safety information for seagrass-associated tourism activities. To overcome these challenges, we propose a number of recommendations that will serve as a basis for promoting seagrass ecosystems as a new nature-based tourism destination in Indonesia.

KEYWORDS

Indonesia; site suitability parameters; societal challenges; sustainable seagrass tourism; tourism impacts

Introduction

Coastal and marine nature-based tourism is a rapidly growing sector that brings significant economic benefits to local communities (Nitivattananon and Srinonil 2019). The number of tourists visiting coastal areas has been increasing globally and, prior

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