

Press release**Leibniz-Zentrum für Marine Tropenforschung (ZMT)****Andrea Daschner**

07/29/2019

<http://idw-online.de/en/news719911>Cooperation agreements, Research projects
Biology, Environment / ecology, Oceanology / climate, Social studies
transregional, national**Nature-based tourism in the tropics: How can wastewater management be improved?****BMBF funds social-ecological research and a new working group at the Leibniz Centre for Tropical Marine Research (ZMT) in cooperation with the Social Sciences department at the University of Bremen with close to two million euros.**

Joint Press Release Leibniz Centre for Tropical Marine Research (ZMT) and University of Bremen

Imagine yourself walking along a beach, sand beneath your toes, enjoying the fresh tang of the sea. Whether or not you are aware, you are engaging in nature-based tourism. Whether you are enjoying nature on your holidays by hiking, by canoe or bicycle, diving or climbing, you are participating in nature-based tourism – which the World Tourism Organization of the United Nations (UNWTO) estimates is growing at an annual rate of 20%, about six times the industry-wide growth rate. A healthy habitat is a prerequisite for this fast-growing tourism segment. Despite being oriented towards nature, nature-based tourism also creates potential problems to the environment as it grows.

For example, wastewater management is a major problem in rapidly developing nature tourism communities along tropical coasts. The discharge of inadequately treated wastewater from tourist facilities frequently reaches the sea and affects marine ecosystems, human health, and the local tourism industry. Tourism communities see themselves confronted with substantial problems in relation to wastewater. They need to act. But what should they do and what are the best ways of finding out what to do? Those questions are in the heart of the five-year research project “Transdisciplinary Science for Sustainable Tourism” (TransTourism), which is funded by the German Federal Ministry for Education and Research (BMBF).

Dr. Marie Fujitani, a social scientist at the Leibniz Centre for Tropical Marine Research (ZMT) and the University of Bremen, wants to support and exchange knowledge with tourism communities in Tanzania, Indonesia and Costa Rica to improve their decentralised wastewater management. In close exchange with different interest groups of coastal tourism communities such as owners of hotels, restaurants or shops, tour operators, policy makers and environmental organisations, as well as tourists themselves, she uses deliberative and participative methods to support decision-making in order to gain a holistic picture of the tourism-related wastewater load and impacts and to develop solutions for wastewater management.

“The project is comprised of sub-studies that integrate natural and social sciences to help to identify the link between tourism, ecosystem health, ecosystem services and human well-being,” explains Fujitani. “The process of participatory decision-making, indicator identification, and knowledge generation will take into account not only different marine ecosystems, but also different priorities of community members and tourists. “

The research project has a transdisciplinary core. Developing the research questions will involve various stakeholders from science and society in ZMT's tropical partner countries right from the start. Marie Fujitani will now set up a new

junior research group at the Leibniz Centre for Tropical Marine Research (ZMT). Three doctoral students and one postdoc will support her in her work, as will researchers from various natural science working groups at ZMT.

“Our research group ‘Deliberation, Valuation and Sustainability’ investigates decision-support-processes for the management of shared natural resources, with a focus on making nature tourism more sustainable,” says Fujitani. “We study how impacts of deliberation and participation, influences of selected indicators and information sources, and different notions of environmental value can guide our decisions towards socially, ecologically, and economically sustainable paths.”

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URL for press release: <http://www.leibniz-zmt.de/de/forschung/wissenschaftliche-projekte/transtourismus.html>

URL for press release: <http://www.uni-bremen.de>



Nature-based tourism in Costa Rica: The coast of the Nicoya Peninsula
Marie Fujitani, Leibniz Centre for Tropical Marine Research (ZMT)