

# **Ecotourism and Eco-lodge Development on the Egyptian Red Sea Coast**

**S. Khalil**

*Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency, Egypt e-mail: vis2000@link.com.eg*

## **Abstract**

The pressure of human activity on the coastal resources of the Mediterranean and Red Sea are very intense. The Egyptian coasts receive the impact of the major part of the country's population. The enormous urban population, adjacent agricultural land, extensive development, commercial activities, industrial expansion and tourism all contribute to the pollution load in these coastal areas.

Coastal tourism first developed on the Mediterranean coast for the domestic market. Twenty years ago the Red Sea Coast began to attract international attention among Scuba Divers due to the unique marine ecosystem and coral reefs. The pleasant summer and winter climate, the rich marine environment and the proximity to the tourism markets of Europe have provided an incentive to develop the Red Sea Coast to mass tourism which resulted in massive construction and "Concreting" of the entire coastline.

Tourism increases demands on local infrastructure, transportation, power supply, water supply, wastewater collection and treatment, solid waste disposal, and health care facilities. The remoteness of much of Egypt's coastline and the incomplete or non-existent infrastructure poses considerable challenges to planners, engineers, tourist investors and the Egyptian Government. Furthermore, the absence of sewage and solid waste management services require the proprietors of these establishment to look at options for on site or collective systems with other establishment in the area.

This mass tourism policy on the Red Sea Coast entails massive environmental problems including improper handling of wastes, underwater discharge of untreated waste water and brine water from desalination plants, or indiscriminate disposal of solid waste, construction waste and garbage into the coastal and marine environment. These have irreversible consequences on the value and attractiveness of this coastal area of outstanding beauty, as well as destroy this unique coastal environment.

This paper explores a new option for coastal tourism and is divided into four parts: The Coastal Area of the Red Sea & Mass Tourism in Egypt, Ecotourism and Eco-lodge Development on the Egyptian Red Sea Coast, The Eco-lodge Concept, site Visit and Field Trip Report of some selected Egyptian Examples of Eco-Friendly Eco-lodges on south Sinai Red Sea Coast.

1. Salima coffee shop (Sinai Peninsula, Gulf of Aqaba).

Basata Camp (Sinai Peninsula Gulf of Aqaba).

Castle Beach Resort (Sinai Peninsula, Gulf of Aqaba).

Meditation: Sinai' s Creative Center (Sinai Peninsula, Gulf of Aqaba).

Nelson' s Lodge: Taba Hilton (Sinai Peninsula, Gulf of Aqaba).

The field trip report summarized in the poster presentation is supported with extensive photographs focusing on the use of local, eco-friendly, biodegradable material and the preservation and conservation of the natural environment and the local cultural identity.

Hence this paper demonstrates that Ecotourism can be an economically viable alternative for attracting tourism revenue without compromising local community values or degrading the environment. This paper also shows that as ecotourism continues to establish itself in the global economy, and as demand increases for well planned environmentally sound lodging facilities. Eco-lodges are the answer to this demand.