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New study redefines *provisioning* in marine wildlife tourism

Philippines, 29 June 2021, [A new study](#) by researchers from the [Southern Shark Ecology Group](#) at [Flinders University](#), [James Cook University](#) and [Large Marine Vertebrates Research Institute Philippines](#), amongst others, has reviewed the current use of provisioning-associated terminology within the marine wildlife tourism sector and has proposed to reclassify *provisioning* into Feeding, Attracting and Modifying habitat.

The team explored the current use of provisioning-associated terminology used by scientists and tourism operators in regard to marine wildlife tourism by conducting a scientific literature search, including the analysis of 110 publications detailing wildlife tourism and stating an activity used to attract wildlife, and a tourism webpage search amounting to 143 webpages, covering 102 tourism sites.

Results revealed that in the scientific literature the term provisioning was used interchangeably with attracting, chumming, feeding, supplementary, and artificial feeding. While the tourism webpage review showed that over half of tourism operators did not even mention attracting in any form on their webpage and operators who did mention some level of attraction being used did not use provisioning but rather the terms attracting and feeding. Interestingly half of shark tour operators, who did not disclose whether they attract sharks, actually used chum (57%) or fed sharks (43%). The inconsistent and unspecific use of provisioning and attracting by both scientists and tourism operators promoted the team to develop a framework outlining new terminology (see figure 1 & 2).

The new terminology provides a clear overview of what activities and attractants are being used during marine wildlife tourism interactions. For example, the provisioning of whale sharks for tourism in Oslob, Philippines would be redefined as the *Direct Feeding* of whale sharks.

This new framework and terminology enable scientists and tour operators to clearly define the activities taking place, whether in the scientific literature or the marketing of marine wildlife tourism activities, reducing the opportunity of misinterpretation and increasing transparency and intent of the operations.

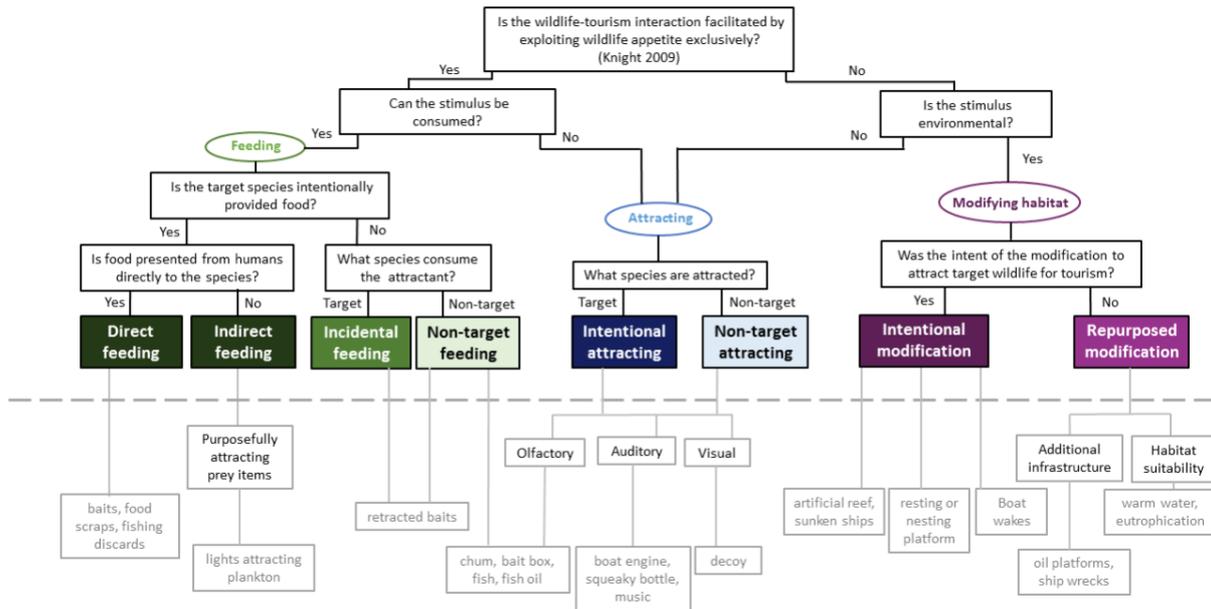
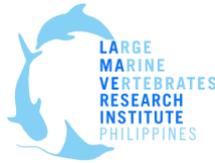


Figure 1. New classification framework to define terminology for provisioning-associated activities. New terminology is highlighted above the dotted line.

<p>DIRECT FEEDING – use of food directly ingested by the target species.</p>	<p>INDIRECT FEEDING – prey species are attracted through the wildlife tourism activity and are consumed by the target species.</p>	<p>INCIDENTAL FEEDING – a target species accidentally receiving food not meant to be consumed (i.e. retracted baits and depredation).</p>	<p>NON-TARGET FEEDING – food aimed to facilitate a tourism interaction ingested by a non-target species.</p>
<p>Redefining Provisioning: Definitions of new terminology (Meyer et al. 2021)</p>		<p>INTENTIONAL ATTRACTING – facilitating interactions with target species with the use of non-consumable stimuli that either exploits wildlife appetite or socialisation.</p>	<p>NON-TARGET ATTRACTING – a stimulus aimed to facilitate a tourism interaction with a target species, attracts (but is not consumed by) a non-target species.</p>
<p>INTENTIONAL MODIFICATION – a modified structure or environmental alteration incorporated specifically for wildlife tourism.</p>		<p>REPURPOSED MODIFICATION – a modified structural or environmental alteration that attracts or aggregates wildlife which has become a tourism destination, but was not installed or created for the purpose of wildlife tourism.</p>	

Figure 2. Definitions of new terminology for provisioning.



Notes to Editors:

The study by Meyer et al., titled 'Redefining provisioning in marine wildlife tourism' is published in the *Journal of Ecotourism* and is available here:

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/14724049.2021.1931253?needAccess=true%20%203>

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Large Marine Vertebrates Research Institute Philippines (LAMAVE) is the largest independent non-profit non-governmental organization dedicated to the conservation of marine megafauna and their habitats in the Philippines. LAMAVE strives for conservation through scientific research, policy and education. For more information visit: www.lamave.org | [Facebook](#) | [Instagram](#) | [Twitter](#).