

TERRIBLE TOURIST

Tourism, which sells luxury and indulgence, can be a profligate consumer of natural resources

GOOD GOLF GRIEF!

Worldwide, 50 million people play golf. Each year, up to 5,000 hectares of the Earth's land surface — an area the size of Paris — is cleared for golf courses. The planet's 25,000 golf courses use large areas of land and require huge amounts of water (an 18-hole course can consume more than 2.3 million litres of water daily), fertiliser and pesticides to produce the smooth, green surfaces that golfers demand.

- A study in the Philippines found water used on the 19 golf courses it surveyed could have irrigated 1,500 small holdings or supplied 330,000 Manila residents (Social Cost of Golf Courses, Omi Royandoyan, Philippine Peasants Institute, 1997). Another Philippines study found that the average golf course uses 24 million gallons of water per month — enough to irrigate 65 hectares of farmland or to supply a 2,000-room 4-star hotel.

(Philippine Human Rights Information Center, 1999).



- Perhaps the greatest environmental problem of tourism is the contribution of air travel to global warming. Passenger jets are overtaking cars as the primary means of tourist travel. An estimated 43 per cent of international tourists now fly to their destinations, while 42 per cent travel by road and 15 per cent use either rail or ship.

- A large hotel in Egypt uses as much electricity as 3,600 families. *(UNEP)*

- The water used by a tourist in 3.6 days could produce enough rice to feed a villager in the South for a year. *(UN Food and Agriculture Organisation)*

- A Philippines study found that a hotel guest uses as much water in 18 days as a rural family does in a year. Daily consumption per guest was 2,720 litres (including cooking, laundry, swimming pools, showers and watering lawns).

- A tourist in Spain uses 880 litres of water a day, compared with 250 by a local. *(WWF)*

- In 1997, along 2km of beach in Goa, India, there were 50 swimming pools within 300 metres of the sea.

Source: People & Planet 2000-2004