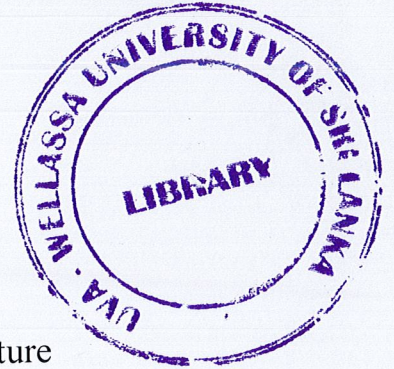


**IDENTIFICATION AND CATEGORIZATION OF
AQUA BASED RECREATIONAL TOURISM
ACTIVITIES IN SOUTHERN COASTAL AREA
OF SRI LANKA**



A dissertation submitted to the
Faculty of Animal Science and Export Agriculture
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In partial fulfillment of the requirement of
The degree of
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By

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ABSTRACT

Aqua based recreational tourism industry is one of the trendiest sectors that contributes amply to the economic progress of a country. Although there is a great potential for aqua based recreational tourism activities in Sri Lanka, the absence of a systematic awareness and flow hinder such advancements within the scope. Thus, the study is designed to identify and analyze aqua based recreational tourism activities and a proper categorization and data base have been created to bridge the above gaps. The research data was collected mainly on the basis of questionnaire surveys conducted among fifty tourists and fifty tourist activity operators (water sport trainers, divers, fishermen, guides, etc.) using stratified random sampling method. The responses were analyzed descriptively using Mini tab software and Excel. The categorization was created using five criteria based on literature and survey results. The data base was created using all the important empirical data obtained from the research. Results revealed that, seventeen of major tourist locations and nearly forty of aqua based recreational tourism activities were identified. Additionally, Boat riding in Bentota is identified as the most attractive tourism activity and more than 50 percent of tourist attractions have been reported from Unawatuna, Hikkaduwa and Mirissa. Moreover, disqualified tourist activity operators, lack of facilities (transport, security) and government support have negatively affected to the development of the industry. Whale watching, deep sea fishing, sailing and sport fishing have been identified as the most destructive activities that impact the coastal ecosystem adversely. Through the study, aqua based recreational tourism activities have been divided in to five categories including water sport activities, traditional tourism, nature tourism, under water activities and beach tourism activities. Among these categories, Water sport (33.4%) has been identified as the most popular category. Furthermore, the data base which comprises the analyzed results were linked to a user friendly website. The study suggests that the priority should be given to the aquaculture sector when implementing proper awareness and regular monitoring to develop the industry.

Key words: Aqua based, Identified tourism activities, Recreational, tourism