

Getting the Price Right:

Rationalizing Park Entry Fees and the Case of Yala National Park

Senith Abeyanayake

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List of acronyms and abbreviations

ASR	SLTDA Annual Statistical Report
CSF	Centre for a Smart Future
CVM	Contingent Valuation Method
CCPI	Colombo Consumer Price Index
DFC	Department of Forest Conservation
DG	Director General
DWC	Department of Wildlife Conservation
FFPO	Flora and Fauna Protection Ordinance
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
LKR	Sri Lankan Rupees
NP	National Park
PA	Protected Area
SANParks	South Africa National Parks
SLR	Sri Lankan Rupees
SLTDA	Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority
SNR	Strict Nature Reserve
SSM	Soft-Systems Methodology
TCM	Trave Cost Method
USD	United States Dollars
WPI	Wholesale Price Index
WTA	Willingness to Accept
WTP	Willingness to Pay

Executive Summary

January 2025 recorded Sri Lanka's highest-ever tourist arrivals for a January, signaling the start of what is expected to be an unprecedented increase in tourism numbers in the next few years. In this context, Sri Lanka is well positioned to reconsider how tourism income is earned, and how pricing can be used as a tourism management tool. This report focuses on fee structures and their role in tourism management with regards to National Parks (NPs), making the case for rationalization of NP entry fees.

NPs remain a key attraction for both local and foreign tourists. Given the government's fiscal constraints, enhancing revenue from NP entry fees—currently the largest source of income for the Wildlife Preservation Fund—is critical for sustainable park management and conservation.

Based on a literature review and historical analysis of fee revisions in Sri Lanka, this report presents four key policy considerations:

1. **Regular Fee Revisions** – Entry fees and related charges should be revised periodically to prevent revenue losses due to inflation. Ideally, fees should be indexed to inflation at least biennially, if not annually.
2. **Demand Management Considerations** – If entry fees are to serve as demand management tools, pricing strategies must account for tourists' willingness to pay. Historical evidence suggests that past fee increases have not deterred visitation, and current LKR-denominated prices may be too low to regulate demand effectively.
3. **Park-Specific Pricing** – Significant variations in visitor numbers and park-specific conditions suggest that a tailored fee structure would better align revenues with conservation needs, starting with Yala National Park (YALA NP).
4. **Beyond Price Adjustments** – Effective fee structures must go beyond pricing alone. Complementary measures such as strategic marketing, educational initiatives, stakeholder collaboration, and benefit-sharing mechanisms are essential for long-term sustainability.

Optimizing NP entry fees is crucial to balancing tourism growth, revenue generation, and conservation objectives. By implementing a more dynamic, park-specific, and strategically aligned fee structure, Sri Lanka can ensure that its NPs remain both financially viable and ecologically sustainable.

1 The Case for Rationalising National Park Entry Fees

Sri Lanka's natural resources are a cornerstone of its tourism offering.¹ Amidst the high expectations for tourism as a driver of post-crisis economic recovery, nature-based tourism is placed as a central value proposition in the short and medium term.² Protected areas (PAs) are a key component in nature-based tourism activities with wildlife parks³ attracting 39.2 percent of total tourist arrivals in 2023.⁴

Sri Lanka's PAs are managed by the Department of Wildlife Conservation (DWC) and the Department of Forest Conservation (DFC).⁵ Among the PAs, the 26 National Parks (NPs) facilitate most of the tourism activity.⁶ There are limited tourist activities offered within NPs with daytime visiting (Safaris) and DWC-operated bungalows being the most significant. Given the rapid growth in visitation since the end of the war in 2009 (see Figure 1), NP entry fees are a critical consideration for tourism and conservation policymakers for two reasons: 1) it is a key source of public-sector conservation revenue; and 2) it is an underutilised tourism management tool.

¹ Senith Abeyanayake, "Re-Defining Destination Identities for Sustainable Tourism in Sri Lanka," Re-defining Destination Identities for Sustainable Tourism in Sri Lanka, accessed December 18, 2024, <https://www.csf-asia.org/re-defining-destination-identities-for-sustainable-tourism-in-sri-lanka/>.

² "Sri Lanka Sees Surge in Tourism Due to Eco-Friendly Initiatives," Newswire (blog), July 29, 2024, <https://www.newswire.lk/2024/07/29/sri-lanka-sees-surge-in-tourism-due-to-eco-friendly-initiatives/>.

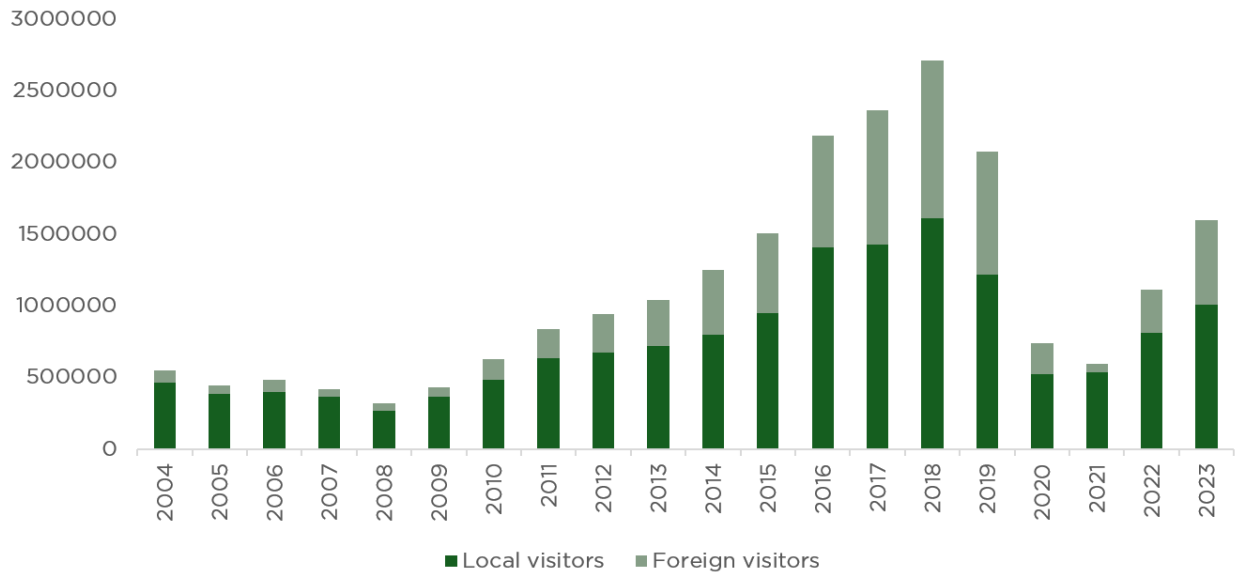
³ Wildlife parks are all parks administered by the Department of Wildlife Conservation including National Parks.

⁴ SLTDA, "Annual Statistical Report 2023," 2023, https://www.slt-da.gov.lk/storage/common_media/Annual_Statistical_Report_2023.pdf.

⁵ Department of Wildlife Conservation, "Protected Areas," accessed February 14, 2025, <https://www.dwc.gov.lk/protected-areas/>.

⁶ SLTDA, "Annual Statistical Report 2023."

Figure 1: Evolution of local and foreign visitors to NPs (2004-2023)



Source: Author’s calculation using SLTDA Annual Statistical Report (ASR) data

1.1 A key source of public-sector conservation income

Income from wildlife parks amounted to 17 percent of total public sector direct revenue⁷ from tourism in 2018, behind only the revenues from the ‘Cultural Triangle’⁸ (33 percent) and the Embarkation Tax on Foreign Tourists (22 percent).⁹ Furthermore, the NP entry fees are the single largest source of income for the Wildlife Preservation Fund of the DWC, dedicated for national wildlife conservation.¹⁰ The rapid increase in visitors have resulted in increasing revenues from entry fees. Given the existing pricing structure (as will be discussed later in Section 3), income from foreign tourists dominate the revenues and generate 29 times the revenue of local tourists in 2023 (see Figures 2 and 3).

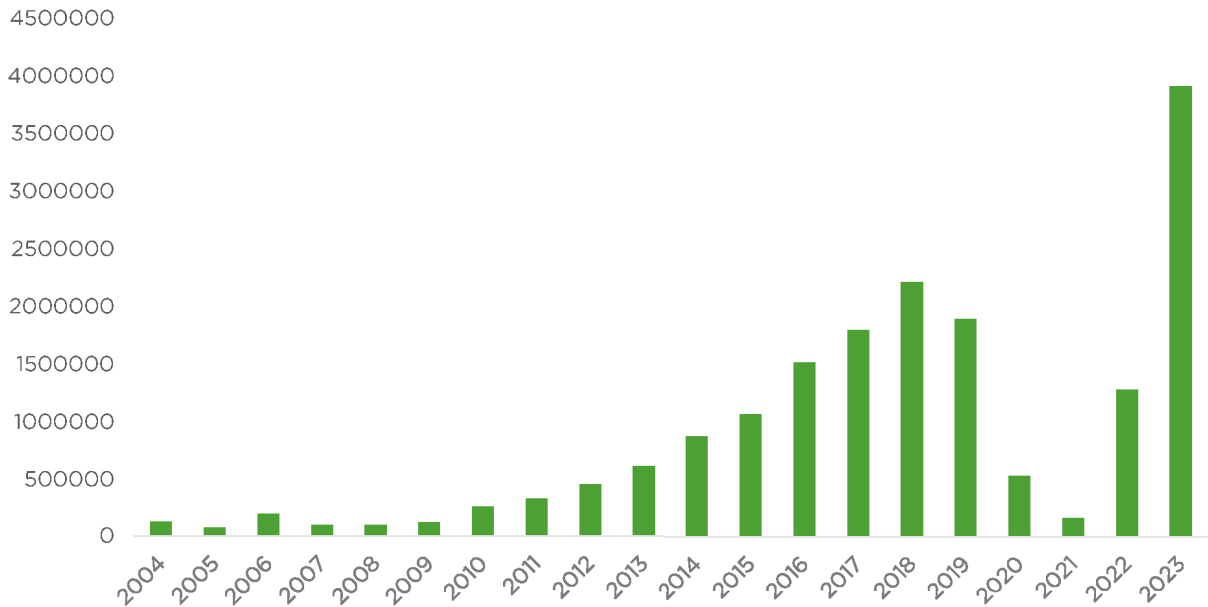
⁷ Indirect public sector revenue from tourism such as taxes from electricity, water, and VAT from tourism services are not considered. See SLTDA, Annual Statistical Report 2018, vol. 50, 2018, https://www.slt-da.gov.lk/storage/common_media/Tourist%20Board%20Annual%20Statistical%20Report%202018_Web784216427.pdf. for further details.

⁸ The Cultural Triangle consists of several world heritage sites including the sacred cities of Anuradhapura and Kandy and the ancient cities of Polonnaruwa, Sigiriya, and Dambulla. The Central Cultural Fund manages some of the sites.

⁹ SLTDA, “Annual Statistical Report 2018.”

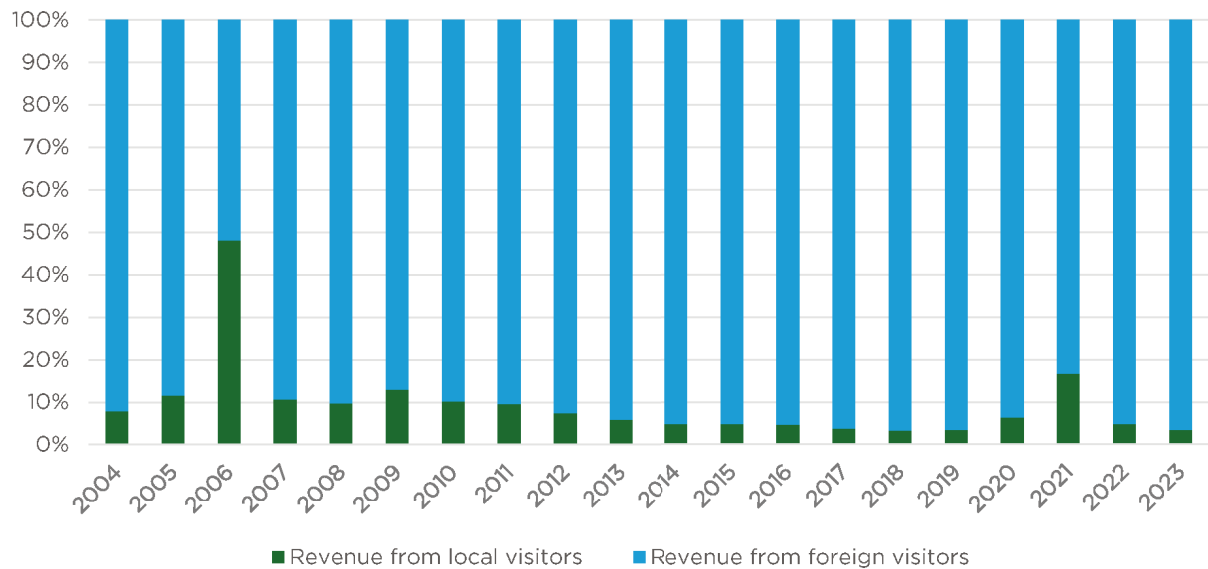
¹⁰ Department of Wildlife Conservation, “Annual Performance Report,” 2022; Department of Wildlife Conservation, “Annual Performance Report,” 2021.

Figure 2: Total revenue from local and foreign tourists in NPs (2004-2023)



Source: Author’s calculation using SLTDA ASR data

Figure 3: Revenue percentage from local and foreign tourists in NPs (2004-2023)¹¹



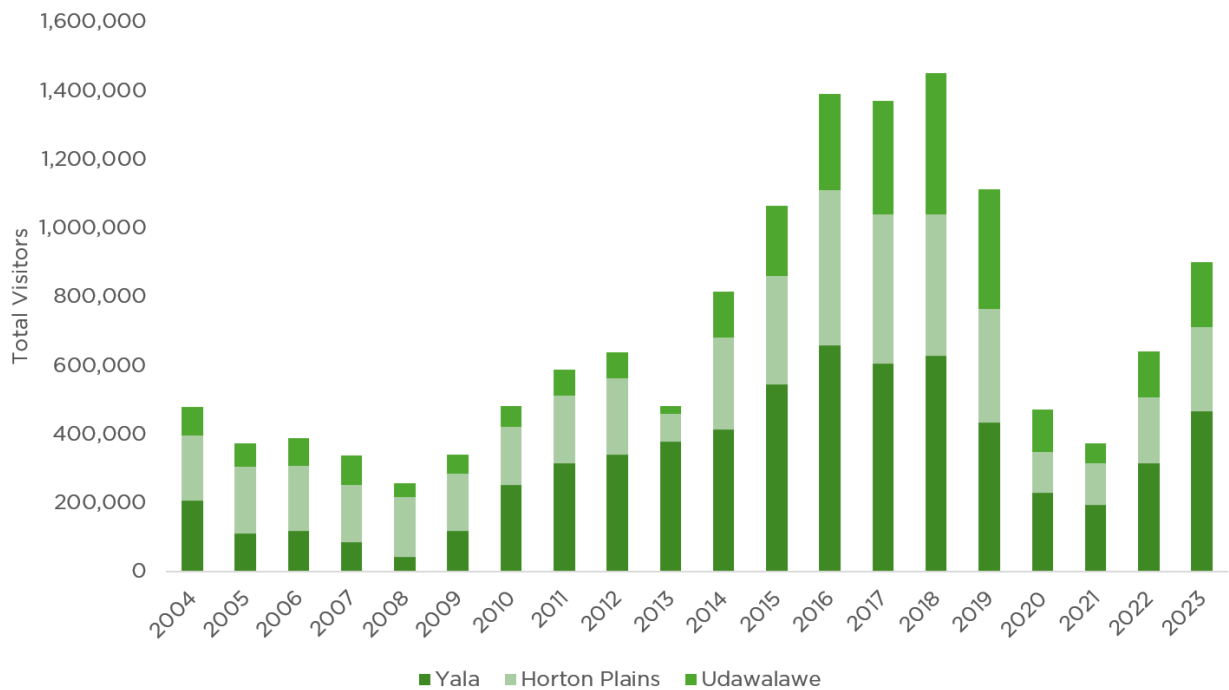
Source: Author’s calculation using SLTDA ASR data

¹¹ The SLTDA ASR 2006 records unusually high figures for local revenues from NPs. For example, it records a revenue of LKR 31,612,372 for Yala NP from 85,608 local visitors averaging LKR 369.26 per person. The local ticket price for an adult was LKR 30. Since the reasons for this effect could not be ascertained, and does not materially alter the findings, the author proceeded with the SLTDA ASR 2006 values for consistency.

1.2 An under-utilised tourism management tool

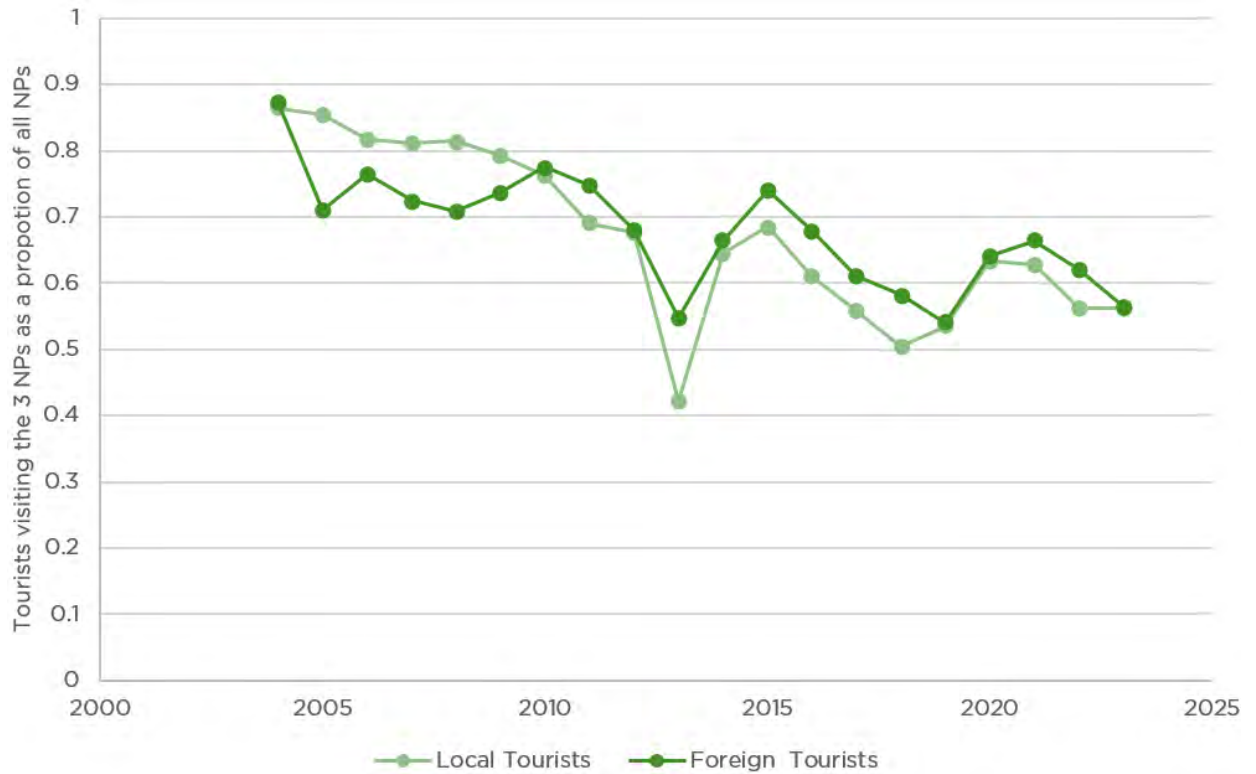
Sri Lanka’s NP visitation is concentrated around three NPs: Ruhunu (Yala), Horton Plains, and Udawalawe. As seen in Figures 4 and 5, visitation in these three NPs account for over 50 percent of total NPs in all but one year since 2004. While the concentration is reducing, it is not due to a reduction in visitation levels in these three parks but rather due to the increase in popularity of others. This highlights the issue of overcrowding, especially in Yala NP - the most visited.

Figure 4: Total visitors to Yala, Horton Plains and Udawalwe NPs (2004-2023)



Source: Author’s calculation using SLTDA ASR data

Figure 5: Concentration of visitors in Yala, Horton Plains and Udawalwe NPs as a proportion of all NPs (2004-2023)



Source: Author’s calculation using SLTDA ASR data

Prices are often used as a demand management tool to ration access to finite depreciating resources.¹² As discussed in Section 2, NP entry fees can be used to manage tourist visitation levels. While such strategies are at a nascent stage in Sri Lanka, there have been repeated attempts to modify the NP entry fee structure to manage visitation levels in the more popular parks due to increasing pressures (see Table 1). However, such interventions have either not been implemented fully or the desired demand-management effects have not materialised.

¹² H. Tezcan, “Using Parking Pricing as a Travel Demand Management Tool at a University Campus: An Example for Istanbul Technical University,” *Transportation Letters* 4 (July 1, 2012): 181-92, <https://doi.org/10.3328/TL.2012.04.03.181-192>.

Table 1: Selected examples of proposed and implemented revisions to NP entry fee structure for visitor management issues

Year	Description of revision
2006	Introduction of NP categories to differentiate entry fees across parks. ¹³
2017	Action Plan to improve tourism in Yala NP Block 1 (2017-2023) proposed two surcharges for entry fees: a surcharge for vehicles' low load factor to discourage empty seats and a surcharge during long holidays. ¹⁴
2017	Consideration of a time-based ticketing system to tackle overcrowding and increase revenue. ¹⁵
2022	Introduction of a higher entry fee for Category 1 parks during the tourist season. ¹⁶

Source: Authors' compilation

This report analyses the entry fee structure in Sri Lanka's NPs, with special reference to Yala NP. It was inspired by findings from an exploratory study conducted by CSF on how tourism interacts with nature in Yala NP and two other destinations.¹⁷

Through four policy considerations, this report makes the case for why the NP entry fee structure should be rationalised to meet economic and environmental objectives, as Sri Lanka prepares to host unprecedented tourist arrival numbers in the short- to medium-term.¹⁸

The remainder of this report is organized as follows. Section 2 provides a theoretical overview into the objectives and methods of PA and NP pricing identified in literature. Section 3 unpacks the current NP entry fee structure and Section 4 presents the four considerations for rationalising NP entry fees.

¹³ Minister of Wildlife and Forest Resources Conservation, "Gazette Extraordinary No. 1428/9 of January 17, 2006" (2006).

¹⁴ "An Action Plan for Improving the Overall Wildlife Tourism Experience in Yala National Park (Block 1)" (Policy Development Office Prime Minister's Office, n.d.).

¹⁵ "Stay More, Pay More at Yala," The Sunday Times Sri Lanka (blog), accessed February 17, 2025, <http://www.sundaytimes.lk/171231/news/stay-more-pay-more-at-yala-275500.html>.

¹⁶ Minister of Wildlife and Forest Resources Conservation, "Gazette Extraordinary No. 2292/11 of August 08, 2022" (2022), http://www.documents.gov.lk/files/egz/2022/8/2292-11_E.pdf.

¹⁷ The two other destinations are Maskeliya and Kalpitiya. For an in-depth discussion on the rationale, methodology, and related considerations of this study, refer to the CSF background and scoping report titled 'How Tourism and Nature interact: Studying perceptions in three sites in Sri Lanka' available at the CSF website.

¹⁸ "Tourism Industry Records Best-Ever January Arrivals | Daily FT," accessed February 17, 2025, <https://www.ft.lk/front-page/Tourism-industry-records-best-ever-January-arrivals/44-772712>.

Key Takeaways:

1. The number of local and foreign visitors were steadily increasing since 2009 until the multiple crises from 2019-2022. 2023 and 2024 display signs of strong recovery.
2. NP entry fees are a key source of public sector conservation income, being the largest revenue source for the Wildlife Preservation Fund.
3. Visitation in NP's display high concentration especially with Yala NP, Horton Plains, and Udawalawe
4. Though NP entry fees have the potential to be used as a visitor management tool, efforts thus far have not been successful.

2 Objectives and Methods of National Park Entry Fee Setting

PAs are bounded locations which are regulated to preserve their natural resources for the benefit of people and nature at large.¹⁹ NPs are one of the seven categories in the internationally accepted IUCN categorisation of PAs.²⁰ The purpose of NPs has evolved over the years.²¹ Though recreation and education were the predominant goals of such parks, the rapid degradation of natural habitats has pushed conservation as a critical objective.²² The IUCN definition of an NP recognizes three core characteristics: the existence of ecosystems not materially altered by anthropogenic activity with features of special interest or great beauty, a material recognition and effort to conserve the area by the highest competent authority of the country, and the admittance of visitors under special conditions for recreation and related purposes.²³

CATEGORY OF TOURISTS		IN TOURIST SEASON	
		ADULT	DAYTIME VISIT
FOREIGN	ADULT	25 US \$	
	CHILD	15 US \$	
FOR CITIZEN OF SAARC COUNTRIES	ADULT	20 US \$	
	CHILD	10 US \$	
OTHER CHARGES			
FEE FOR TOURIST SERVICE (PER VEHICLE)		10 US \$	
ENTRY FEE FOR VEHICLE (VAN/JEEP/CAB)		Rs. 300	
TAX (VAT)		15%	

Image courtesy Anushka Wijesinha, 2024

Given the opportunity costs of resource-rich nature preservation, NPs are caught in-between conservation efforts and the use of such natural resources for commercial gain.²⁴ In addition to the opportunity costs, direct costs must be incurred to maintain NPs adequately.²⁵ Most such costs are generally

¹⁹ National Parks, "National Parks Are Protected Areas-Information Sheet," 2020, <https://www.nationalparks.uk/app/uploads/2020/10/National-Parks-are-protected-areas-Information-sheet.pdf>.

²⁰ Eurosite Management Planning Portal., "IUCN Management Categories of Protected Areas," n.d., <https://mpg.eurosite.org/wp-content/uploads/IUCN-Protected-Areas-Categories-.pdf>.

²¹ "Brief History of the National Parks | Articles and Essays | Mapping the National Parks | Digital Collections | Library of Congress," accessed February 17, 2025, <https://www.loc.gov/collections/national-parks-maps/articles-and-essays/brief-history-of-the-national-parks/>.

²² Nir Becker, "A Comparative Analysis of the Pricing Systems of Nature Reserves," *Tourism Economics* 15, no. 1 (March 1, 2009): 193-213, <https://doi.org/10.5367/000000009787536663>.

²³ National Parks, "National Parks Are Protected Areas -Information Sheet."

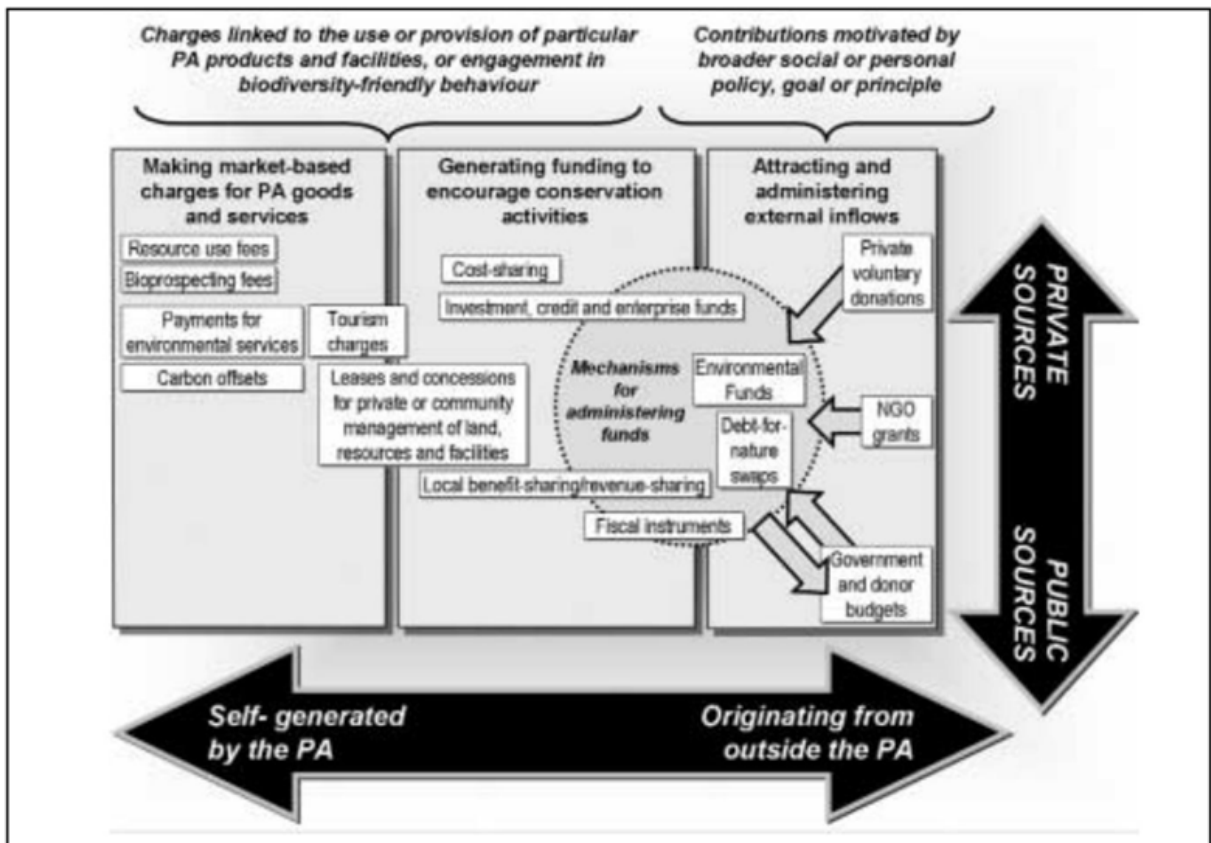
²⁴ Patrick F. Smallhorn-West and Robert L. Pressey, "Why Does Conservation Minimize Opportunity Costs?," *Conservation Science and Practice* 4, no. 11 (2022): e12808, <https://doi.org/10.1111/csp2.12808>.

²⁵ Michael P Wells, "Economic Perspectives on Nature Tourism, Conservation and Development," 1997.

funded directly by governments, via taxpayer money.²⁶ The above factors, along with a booming global tourism industry, have driven governments and NPs to explore generating financial value through use and non-use of natural resources within NPs.²⁷

As highlighted in Figure 6, fees from tourists visiting an NP are just one of many financial streams that can be generated for the conservation and management of an NP.²⁸

Figure 6: A typology of PA financing mechanisms



Source: Extracted from Emerton et al. 2006.

²⁶ Leon Mach et al., "Protected Area Entry Fees and Governance Quality," *Tourism Management* 77 (April 1, 2020): 104003, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2019.104003>.

²⁷ Lucy Emerton et al, *Sustainable Financing of Protected Areas: A Global Review of Challenges and Options* (IUCN, 2006), <https://doi.org/10.2305/IUCN.CH.2005.PAG.13.en>.

²⁸ Emerton et al.

2.1 Types of NP entry fee structures

Given the varied purposes of NPs highlighted above, and the broader universe of financial mechanisms for PAs, NP entry fees can incorporate many different objectives such as attributing a value to nature, revenue generation to cover costs, managing tourist visitation and overcrowding, and considerations of equity and fairness (see Annex 1 for a more detailed overview).²⁹ Table 2 outlines selected NP pricing methods from literature, that are used to design NP entry fee structures. An NP entry fee structure can incorporate one or a combination of such methods to achieve chosen objectives.

Table 2: Overview of selected pricing methods featured in literature

Pricing Method	Description	Objectives
Free Access	Free entrance	Given that nature is a public good, it is argued that beyond fixed costs covered by the government, there is no marginal cost for an additional visitor. Furthermore, rights-based arguments also drive free pricing, especially for taxpayers. Finally, in a broader pricing policy for NPs, introducing free access to NPs with low visitation is a tourist diversification strategy.
Token Pricing	Prices which are less than costs	This approach establishes a pricing policy (i.e. access is not completely free) which may improve data collection and analysis (e.g. on visitor numbers, periods of peak use, etc.). It may also instill a sense of value in the visitor. However, they do not deter use and do not raise significant revenues.
Comparable/going rate pricing	The price is based on the average prices charged at equivalent attractions	This pricing system is often proposed to overcome controversy. Controversy will be eliminated if various parks charge similar prices. However, given park level idiosyncrasies, this pricing does not typically reflect demand and supply side considerations.
Cost-based pricing	Fees are benchmarked to different costs	The objective may be to completely or partially recover costs. Especially given the complexities in calculating different types of costs (financial, ecological), and the subsidization by government and other sources of funds, cost-based pricing are typically under-estimates.
Differentiated pricing	Fees are discriminated based on chosen factors	Differentiated pricing can come in many forms such as by visitor origin (local, regional, foreign), by mode of transport, by volume (single entry, multiple entry), and by visitor attributes (age, education level, income).

Source: Author's compilation based on Laarman et al 1996, Samdin n.d., Becker 2009, and Emerton et al 2006.

²⁹ Jan G Laarman and Hans M Gregersen, "Pricing Policy in Nature-Based Tourism," *Tourism Management* 17, no. 4 (June 1996): 247-54, [https://doi.org/10.1016/0261-5177\(96\)00016-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/0261-5177(96)00016-7).

2.2 Considerations when estimating optimal NP entry fees

Estimating optimal NP entry fees is especially important if such fee structures have objectives of revenue generation and tourist demand management which involve supply and demand-side considerations.³⁰ On the supply side, a key factor is costs. A nuanced estimation of hypothetical cost factors such as average and marginal costs, along with actual fixed and variable financial costs is usually necessary for an accurate cost-based pricing.³¹ Given the complexities of NP governance and financing structures seen in many countries, even a park-level estimation of actual financial costs can be a difficult task.³²

On the demand side, the most popular consideration is the visitors' willingness to pay (WTP) which helps determine the impact pricing has on visitor levels and thereby revenue. There is an expansive body of research on the WTP for NPs around the world. There are many techniques through which WTP is estimated, a selection of which is included in Table 3.

Table 3: Selected techniques to estimate WTP in literature

Technique	Explanation
Travel Cost Method (TCM)	TCM assumes that the time and money people spend traveling to a site can be used as a proxy for the value they place on visiting it. By examining the relationship between the number of trips made and the costs incurred, researchers can estimate the consumer surplus and WTP for access to the site or for improvements in its quality.
Contingent Valuation Method (CVM)	CVM asks individuals directly how much they would be willing to pay for a specific hypothetical change (e.g., improving air quality, conserving a species). This can be framed in terms of WTP for a benefit or willingness to accept (WTA) compensation for a loss.
Choice experiments	Respondents are presented with different hypothetical scenarios (bundles of attributes) and asked to choose their preferred option. From their choices, researchers infer WTP for each attribute, making it possible to value complex goods that have multiple characteristics.

Source: Author's compilation based on Laarman et al 1996, Becker 2009, and Alpizar 2006

³⁰ Francisco Alpizar, "The Pricing of Protected Areas in Nature-Based Tourism: A Local Perspective," *Ecological Economics* 56, no. 2 (February 2006): 294-307, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecolecon.2005.02.005>.

³¹ Alpizar.

³² Laarman and Gregersen, "Pricing Policy in Nature-Based Tourism."

Key Takeaways

1. Entry fees are one of many financing mechanisms through which NPs can generate funds.
2. There are various pricing methods that are used to determine NP entry fees to fulfil different objectives.
3. Supply and demand-side considerations are key when determining optimal NP entry fees.

3 Understanding the Sri Lankan National Park Entry Fee Structure

The NP entry fee structure is regulated by the Ministry of Environment through the DWC³³ as per the mandate stipulated by Sections 2C, 5 and 71 of the Fauna and Flora Protection Ordinance (FFPO). The initial regulation outlining the entry fee structure was published in the Gazette Extraordinary No. 8366 of April 29, 1938. Originally, this regulation stipulated a charge of LKR 0.5 cents for a resident and LKR 1 for a non-resident to obtain a permit to observe fauna and flora in a NP for a period not exceeding 10 days. Since then, the regulation has been revised repeatedly with the currently applicable version published in Gazette Extraordinary No. 2292/11 of August 01, 2022 (see Table 4 for the most recent revisions).

It is important to note that the revisions are not made in a regular frequency. The decision to make revisions is taken by the DWC and the Ministry as and when a need for it is determined.³⁴ A committee consisting of officials and experts may be appointed to guide the revisions.³⁵ Given the bureaucratic and procedural steps in making such amendments, the process of publishing the revisions in the Gazette may take a year.³⁶

The revisions to entry fee levels may typically be guided by prevailing prices of goods and services related to tourism such as accommodation, liquor, and food.³⁷ In addition to the entry fee levels, revisions can also be made on the structure of entry fees, other mandatory fees charged for entry and tourism services, and conditions attached to the use of an entry permit.

Table 4: Most recent revisions to the entry fee structure

Year	Relevant Gazette Extraordinary
2003	No. 1314/16 of November 14, 2003
2006	No. 1428/9 of January 17, 2006
2006	No. 1445/19 of May 18, 2006
2008	No. 1558/8 of July 15, 2008

³³ President of Sri Lanka, "Gazette Extraordinary No. 2412/08" (2024), https://www.defence.lk/upload/doc/2024_11_25.pdf.

³⁴ Interview with senior government official.

³⁵ Interview with senior government official.

³⁶ Interview with senior government official.

³⁷ Interview with senior government official.

2009	No. 1612/37 of July 31, 2009
2022	No. 2292/11 of August 08, 2022

Source: Author’s compilation

The currently applicable NP entry fee structure has several key features. Each feature along with relevant historical developments are briefly outlined below.

3.1 Feature 1: Categorisation of NP entry fee levels

From 1938 until 2005, all NPs were charged the same entry fee levels. However, the amendments published in Gazette Extraordinary No. 1428/9 of January 17, 2006, differentiated between NPs by introducing two categories. Category I contained Yala, Horton Plains, and Udawalawe and all other NPs were in Category II. While the entry fees for local tourists remained the same across both categories, the entry fees for foreign tourists were higher for Category I NPs. In all subsequent revisions, entry fees for Category I would always be equal to or greater than Category II entry fees. In 2022, a third category was introduced which contained the lowest levels of entry fees (see Table 5).

Table 5: Evolution of NP entry fee categories

Amendment	Category I	Category II	Category III
2006 (Jan)	Ruhunu (Yala), Uda Walawe, Horton Plains	All other NPs	NA
2006 (May)	Ruhunu (Yala), Uda Walawe, Horton Plains, Minneriya	All other NPs	NA
2008	Ruhunu (Yala), Horton Plains, Uda Walawe, Minneriya	All other NPs	NA
2009	Ruhunu (Yala), Horton Plains, Uda Walawe, Minneriya, Wilpattu	All other NPs	NA
2022	Ruhunu (Yala), Horton Plains, Uda Walawe, Minneriya, Pigeon Island, Wilpattu, Kaudulla, Yala Region VI (Lunugamvehera) and Adam’s Bridge	Wasgamuwa, Angammadilla, Maduru Oya, Kumana, Chundikulam, Lahugala, Galoya, Bundala, Galwaysland	Other National Reserves and Sanctuaries which do not fall under Category I and Category II specified above. ³⁸

Source: Author’s compilation

³⁸ It is interesting to note that the 2022 amendment seems to increase the scope of this entry fee structure to include other categories of PAs such as National Reserves and Sanctuaries. This distinction was not made in the previous amendments.

The rationale for the categorization is not explicitly stated. As highlighted in Table 6, it appears that the categorization largely follows the trends in visitation since the most popular NPs are in Category I. This is supported by the fact that only Category I has higher entry fees for the tourist season. Yet it is unclear what other considerations determine the categorization criteria.

Table 6: Evolution of NP entry fee levels across categories

Amendment	Differences of entry fees across categories
2006 (Jan)	Foreign tourist entry fees were higher for Category I. All other fees are identical.
2006 (May)	Foreign tourist entry fees were higher for Category I. All other fees are identical.
2008	Both foreign and local entry fees were higher for Category I for the first time.
2009	Both foreign and local entry fees were higher for Category I. Category I had a special fee structure for tourists visiting the park twice on the same day.
2022	Both foreign and local entry fees are higher for Category I. Category I has a special fee structure for the tourist season, which is the highest fee level.

Source: Author's compilation

The determination of the tourist season is at the discretion of the Director General (DG) of DWC.³⁹ Factors such as visitation trends and environmental impacts may be considered.⁴⁰ In this process, it is unclear if different tourist seasons can be considered for individual NPs.

3.2 Feature 2: Multi-level differentiation of entry fees

Since the simple differentiation based on residency in 1938, the entry fee structure has evolved into multi-level differentiation. The currently applicable differentiation is illustrated in Table 7. The prices are determined by the differentiation criteria and the entry fee category. Prices for local tourists are denominated in LKR and USD for foreign tourists. Annex 2 provides an overview of the currently applicable entry fee structure and its evolution since 2003.

³⁹ Minister of Wildlife and Forest Resources Conservation, Gazette Extraordinary No. 2292/11 of August 08, 2022. Section 10.

⁴⁰ Minister of Wildlife and Forest Resources Conservation.

Table 7: Multi-level differentiation of entry fees

Differentiation type	Differentiation criteria	Approx year of introduction
By visitor origin	Local resident (Citizen and resident visa)	1938
	SAARC country resident	2022
	All other non-resident	1938
By visitor age	Above 12 years of age (Adult).	At least since 1973 ⁴¹
	Between 6 and 12 years of age (Child)	At least since 1973
	Below 6 years of age (Free entry)	At least since 2003
By duration of visit	Daytime visit (6am to 6pm)	2006 May
	Overnight visit (Applicable if the visitor is staying the night in a campsite or bungalow within the park)	2006 May
Special criteria	Local students of government-approved institutions	At least since 1973

Source: Author's compilation

3.3 Feature 3: Other mandatory government charges related to daytime Safari rides in Yala NP

Focusing specifically on Yala NP, the following mandatory fees and charges are applicable along with entry fees if a tourist visits Yala NP during the daytime (Table 8). Such charges and fees are also stipulated in and revised by the same regulations as above. See Annex 3 for the evolution of such fees and charges from 2003-2023.

Table 8: Other government charges related to daytime Safari rides

Type of fee	Type of tourists	
	Local	Foreign
Service Charge (Per one vehicle)	400 (LKR)	10 (USD)
Vehicle Fee	Car/Boat	
	Jeep ⁴² , Van, or Double Cab	
	Bus or Lorry	

⁴¹ Due to issues in cataloguing, the only amendment that could be located between 1938 and 2003 in the National Library is the amendment published in Gazette No. 59 of May 11, 1973.

⁴² In Sri Lanka, the term 'jeep' colloquially refers to all types of SUVs. Therefore, any mention of jeep refers to SUVs capable of entering a national park and not the vehicle brand Jeep.

Special fee to enter Yala Block 2 (Per tourist group)	5000 (LKR)
VAT	18%
Online booking fee (Only applicable to all terrestrial Category 1 parks)	2%

Source: Author’s compilation

Among these fees and charges, the service charge and the vehicle fee are specifically analysed in Section 4 for two reasons. Firstly, they constitute a significant portion of revenue to the Wildlife Preservation Fund with the service charge being the second highest revenue stream after the entry fee in 2022 and 2023.⁴³ Secondly, unlike the entry fees, these charges apply per tourist group, creating a semi-fixed cost structure for tourists. The 2022 amendment defines a foreign tour group as a group of tourists with at least one foreign national.⁴⁴ This creates interesting dimensions in the context of maximising visitors per vehicle in crowded NPs such as Yala NP as further explored in Section 4.

The vehicle fee appears in the 1973 amendment, indicating that it has been a longstanding fee component. However, it is unclear whether the fee is imposed due to the environmental cost of vehicle use in NPs or for other considerations. The vehicle fee is denominated in LKR regardless of the tourist origin.

The service charge does not appear in the 1973 amendment but is included in amendments from 2003 onwards indicating that it was introduced in the period 1973-2003. Given that the service charge is denominated in USD for foreigners, it generates high revenue. Senarathne notes that while all other fees and charges flow directly to the Wildlife Preservation Fund daily, 40 percent of the service charge is distributed among all DWC officials in Yala NP as a year-end bonus.⁴⁵ According to their findings, this arrangement is unique to Yala NP.

⁴³ Department of Wildlife Conservation, “Annual Performance Reports” 2022-2023

⁴⁴ Minister of Wildlife and Forest Resources Conservation, Gazette Extraordinary No. 2292/11 of August 08, 2022.

⁴⁵ Dinesha Senarathna, “Managing Protected Area Tourism for Sustainable Community Development: The Case of Ruhuna National Park (Yala), Sri Lanka,” accessed December 18, 2024, <https://openrepository.aut.ac.nz/items/1357f877-c023-4e32-9c75-590b3f2c7f0c/full>.

3.4 Feature 4: Non-price conditions of entry permits

The entry fee structure stipulated in the regulations also highlight conditions applicable to entry permits. The 2022 amendment introduced a speed limit of 20 kilometers per hour as a condition. The failure to comply with conditions may result in a prohibition of the violating vehicle from entering the PA for at least six months.

Key Takeaways

1. Sri Lankan NP entry fees are not revised in a uniform frequency, with the last revision taking place after 12 years.
2. NP entry fees are differentiated based on 3 categories of NPs with the most popular NPs being in Category I.
3. NP entry fees display multi-level differentiation, based on visitor origin, age, duration of visit, and being a local student.
4. The service charge and vehicle fees are two significant mandatory government charges applicable when entering NPs.

4 Policy Considerations for Rationalising the National Park Entry Fee Structure

Inspired by the observations in Sections 2 and 3, a historical analysis of the Sri Lankan NP entry fee structure was conducted.

The following methodological considerations apply for the analysis.

- Unless otherwise specified, the NP level visitation and revenue data are obtained from the SLTDA ASR. The reports began including NP level data only from 2004, so the dataset used for the analysis is from 2004-2023.
- There are occasional discrepancies between the NP level visitation and revenue data provided in the SLTDA ASR and DWC Annual Performance reports. When in conflict, the data from SLTDA ASR were used for consistency.
- There are data gaps in NPs with some NPs such as Wilpattu likely to be inaccessible for tourists during the war. For the time-series regressions, 10 NPs with consistent data from 2005 till 2022 were considered.⁴⁶
- To calculate real LKR values, the Colombo Consumer Price Index (CCPI) was used since it covers the period of analysis (2004-2024). However, during the period, the CCPI was rebased four times (2002, 2006/07, 2013, and 2021). A continuous CCPI index based on 2002 was created by linking the rebased indices using the average ratio of overlapping years. Given that rebasing materially changes the index methodology, this method of linking is imperfect. While there was a Tourism Price Index reported in ASR from 1978, it was discontinued in 2016. The Wholesale Price Index (WPI) is the only index which covers the analysis period without rebasing. Therefore, for the initial analysis, the real price calculation was made using both indices for comparison. Insights did not materially differ.
- Only entry fees for adult tourists are considered in this analysis since an overwhelming majority of tourists who visit NPs are adults (89 percent local and 93 percent foreign in 2018).⁴⁷

⁴⁶ The NPs are Yala, Horton Plains, Udawalawe, Wasgamuwa, Minneriya, Lunugamwehera, Bundala, Gal Oya, Horagolla, and Kaudulla.

⁴⁷ Department of Wildlife Conservation, "Annual Performance Report," 2018

The historical entry fee analysis along with findings from a literature review highlighted four policy considerations that are relevant when revising Sri Lanka’s NP entry fee structure:

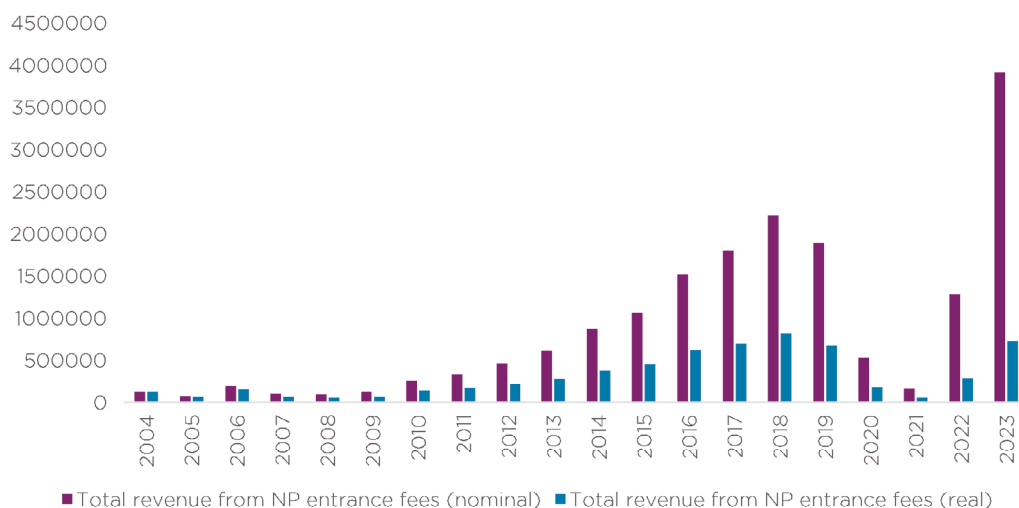
- (1) LKR denominated fees should be revised more regularly to maintain real revenue collection
- (2) Entry fees for local tourists should be revised upwards if fees are to be used as an effective demand management tool
- (3) Establishing a park-level pricing structure may increase efficiency and equity
- (4) The NP entry fee structure should be accompanied by supporting mechanisms

Though a comparative analysis was not conducted, wherever relevant, the insights from the analysis will be compared with the approach taken by South African National Parks (SANParks) and NPs in India.⁴⁸

4.1 LKR denominated fees should be revised more regularly to avoid inflation related losses

As noted in Section 1, the past decade has seen a rapid growth in revenue from NP entry fees driven by high visitation levels. However, as seen in Figure 7, the gains are less pronounced when adjusted for inflation. This is especially prominent from 2022 due to the rapid inflation caused by the economic crisis.

Figure 7: Total revenue from NP entry fees (Nominal v. Real)⁴⁹



Source: Author’s calculation using SLTDA ASR data

⁴⁸ Both SANParks and Indian NPs were selected as they were frequently mentioned as models for local NPs during field research conducted by CSF in Yala NP. See “South African National Parks (SANParks) - Overview,” accessed February 14, 2025, <https://nationalgovernment.co.za/units/view/174/south-african-national-parks-sanparks>.

⁴⁹ The base for the real value calculation is 2004.

A key question that arises is whether entry fee revisions account for inflation. This is especially relevant in the Sri Lankan case since entry fees and related charges are the key revenue source for the Wildlife Preservation Fund which funds conservation costs. Given that most costs such as fuel and salaries are sensitive to inflation, if the revenue streams lag in adjustment, it may exacerbate existing funding gaps for conservation and development of NPs.

4.1.1 Entry fee revisions generally adjust for inflation

To adequately account for inflation, entry fee revisions should make sure the new prices are at least as high as the inflation-indexed value of the previously revised price. Since field insights noted that approving amendments typically take a year, when analysing inflation adjustment, if the revision occurred in year T, the new fee was compared with the inflation-indexed value of the previously revised price in year T-1. The complete calculation of inflation-indexed values for each fee type and revision year is included in Annex 4.

Entry fee revisions for local adult tourists indicate that revised entry fees for Category I NPs have regularly been above the inflation-indexed value of the previously revised price in the year T-1. This suggests that the price revisions have adequately accounted for inflation effects (see Table 9).

However, Category II and III revisions in 2022 were not adjusted to offset inflation effects. For NPs which moved from Category II in 2009 to Category III in 2022, this depreciation of real value is considerable. It is possible that this was a strategy to incentivise visits to the less popular NPs in Category III.⁵⁰ However, for NPs that remained in Category II in both 2009 and 2022, it is unclear whether such a depreciation was intentional and necessary.⁵¹

Table 9: Inflation indexation of entry fee revisions for local adult tourists

Description	2003	2006	2008	2009		2022			
				Cat I	Cat II	Cat I (TS) ⁵²	Cat I (RS) ⁵³	Cat II	Cat III
[a] Revised Price	20	30	40	60	40	150	120	60	40
Previously revised price of the same category	NA	20	30	40	40	60	60	40	40

⁵⁰ Whether or not current prices can influence demand-side trends are discussed in Section 4.2.

⁵¹ The NPs which remained in Category II in 2022 are Wasgamuwa, Angammadilla, Maduru Oya, Kumana, Chundikulam, Lahugala, Galoya, Bundala, and Galwaysland.

⁵² Tourist Season

⁵³ Regular Season

[b] Price of previously revised price indexed to inflation at year T-1	NA	24.19	34.7	40	40	104.85	104.85	69.90	69.90
Inflation adjustment [a] - [b]	NA	5.8	5.2	20	0	15.14	45.15	(9.90)	(29.90)

Source: Author's calculations

Estimating similar adjustments for foreign entry fee revisions is a less straightforward process due to the fee being denominated in USD. Therefore, variations in domestic and USD inflation, along with exchange rate effects influence real value fluctuations. As a rough estimation, revised foreign tourist entry fees were compared with the real LKR value of the previous fee in the year T-1 (see Table 10).

Table 10: Inflation indexation of entry fees revisions for foreign adult tourists

Description	2003	2009		2009		2009		2022			
		Cat I	Cat II	Cat I	Cat II	Cat I	Cat II	Cat I (TS)	Cat I (RS)	Cat II	Cat III
[a] Revised Price	12	14	8	15	10	15	10	25	20	12	5
Inflation indexed LKR price of previous revision in year T-1 [b]	NA	1459	1459	1793.9	1100.5	1624.9	1088.3	5747	5747	3475	3475
Average exchange rate in year T-1	NA	100.5	100.5	110.62	110.62	1624.9	108.33	198.8	198.8	198.8	198.8
[c] USD value of [b]	NA	14.5	14.5	16.2	9.9	15	10	28.8	28.8	17.47	17.47
Inflation adjustment [a] - [c]	NA	(0.51)	(6.51)	(1.21)	0.05	0	0	(3.8)	(8.8)	(5.4)	(12.4)

Source: Author's calculations

Similar to the case of local tourist entry fees, the revisions in Categories II and III have depreciated in real value. While inflation-indexed values suggest that entry fees for Category I and the foreign tourist service charge should have been higher (see Table 11), this consideration must be weighed against possible demand-side impacts from such revisions. This issue is discussed in detail in Section 4.2.

Table 11: Inflation indexation of the service charge revisions for foreign tourists

Description	2003	2006	2008	2009	2022
[a] Revised Price	6	6	8	8	10
Inflation-indexed LKR price of previous revision in year T-1 [b]	NA	729.52	768.84	866.64	2780.56
Average exchange rate in year T-1	NA	100.5	110.62	108.33	198.88
[c] USD value of [b]	NA	7.25	6.95	8	13.98
Inflation adjustment [a] - [c]	NA	(1.23)	1.04	0	(3.98)

Source: Author's calculations

Finally, as seen in Tables 12 and 13, when considering the revisions of the local tourist service charge and vehicle fees for a jeep⁵⁴, the 2022 revisions greatly depreciate the value of the charges in comparison to the inflation-indexed value of the 2009 price.

Table 12: Inflation indexation of the service charge revisions for local tourists

Description	2003	2006	2008	2009	2022
[a] Revised Price	120	200	300	300	400
Previously revised charge	NA	120	200	300	300
[b] Inflation-indexed price of previously revised charge in year T-1	NA	145.17	231.67	300	524.29
Inflation adjustment [a] - [c]	NA	54.82	68.323	0	(124.29)

Source: Author's calculations

⁵⁴ Safari jeeps were chosen as the vehicle since they are the most common form of transportation in terrestrial NPs such as Yala.

Table 13: Inflation indexation of the vehicle fee revisions for a Safari jeep

Description	2003		2006	2008	2009	2022
	Closed roof	Open roof				
[a] Revised Charge	60	100	200	250	250	300
[b] Real price of previous revision in year T-1	NA	NA	72.58 ⁵⁵	231.67	250	436.9
Inflation adjustment [a] - [b]	NA	NA	127.42	18.33	0	(136.9)

Source: Author's calculations

4.1.2 Infrequent price revisions cause real losses between revisions

As shown in Table 14 below, the above exercise only analysed if the fee revisions (highlighted in green) were at least equal to or greater than the real value of the old fee in the year before revision (highlighted in brown). However, the greater concern are the real losses made due to infrequent fee revisions. While the entry fees were revised 4 times between 2003 and 2009, thereafter for over a decade, fees remained unrevised. In this period, steady inflation consistently depreciated the entry fee.

Table 14: Real and nominal value of the entry fee for local adults

Year	Stated (nominal) entry fee	Inflation-indexed entry fee
2009	60	60
2010	60	66.71998629
2011	60	73.80673541
2012	60	76.39121369
2013	60	83.4282613
2014	60	86.07101031
2015	60	86.93821589
2016	60	90.55931566
2017	60	97.25483559
2018	60	100.5510243
2019	60	104.0201091
2020	60	109.6740838
2021	60	115.5971322
2022	150	150
2023	150	207.3958125

Source: Author's calculations

⁵⁵ The closed-roof rate of 2003 was used to calculate this real value.

Assuming that within this period, the entry fee was adjusted once every two years based on the average CPI of year T-2, calculations indicate that on average the revenue from local adult tourist entry fees would be approximately 1.27 times higher. In this scenario, from 2012-2021, the entry fees for local adult tourists alone would have generated an additional LKR 150 million, which covers the daily wildlife tracker expenses for the years 2017 and 2018 or allows an increase of the yearly expenditure on wildlife trackers by 30 percent. Similar revisions to other locally denominated fees such as the vehicle fee and service charge would have made further contributions.

When considering other countries, SANParks entry fees⁵⁶ follow a yearly cycle from November to October, where prices are revised on 1st November of each year.⁵⁷ All SANParks entry fee revisions since 2020 show an incremental increase in all fees (local and foreign) in all NPs. In contrast, Ranthambore National Park does not follow a set revision structure. Though gaps of 7 years between revisions were seen in the last decade, in 2024, the Ranthambore NP fees were revised twice in two months.⁵⁸ Interestingly, both parks denominate the foreign entry fee in local currency.

Even through LKR denominated entry fees are a small proportion of revenue compared to the USD denominated entry fees, the value of the revenue and the real losses due to inflation are large enough to significantly impact the fiscal space of DWC and thereby increase conservation efforts.

Key Takeaways:

1. Adjusting revenues for inflation is key to meet costs when the latter are inflation sensitive.
2. Though entry fee revisions are generally above inflation adjusted levels, vehicle fees and service charges lag behind.
3. The low frequency of revision in the recent past has caused real losses to LKR denominated entry fees.

⁵⁶ SANP entry fees are termed 'Conservation Fees'. See Section 4.4 for more details.

⁵⁷ "Rates & Entry Fees," SANParks, accessed February 17, 2025, <https://www.sanparks.org/travel/book/useful-information/rates-fees>.

⁵⁸ "Govt Raises Safari Rates at Ranthambore National Park," The Times of India, September 25, 2024, <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/jaipur/govt-raises-safari-rates-at-ranthambore/articleshow/113646680.cms>.

4.2 Entry fees for local tourists should be revised significantly upwards to be used as a management tool

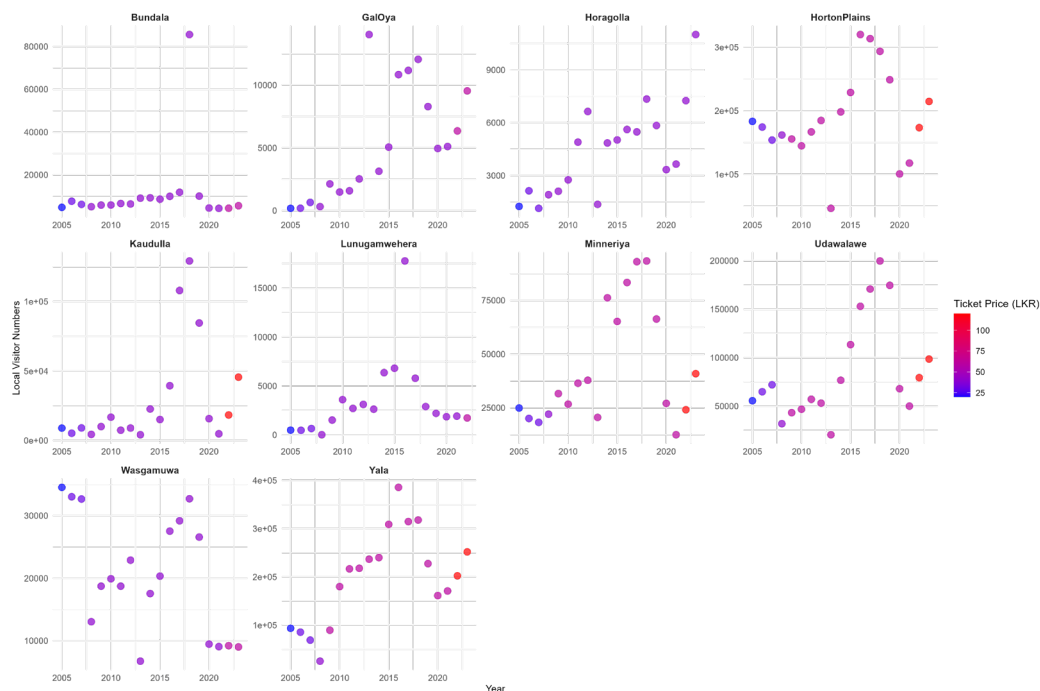
A key assumption made in the analysis in Section 4.1 is that frequent upward revisions of fees will not significantly reduce the visitor numbers. This could be the case in situations where the demand is completely inelastic to price fluctuations, or the price level is too low to materially impact demand.

While it is beyond the scope of this study to conclusively ascertain a causal relationship, empirical trends, literature, and field insights may provide an indication on the relationship between the NP entry fee structure and tourist visitation levels. The identification of this relationship and related conditions is crucial if policymakers are to use the NP entry fee structure as a tool to manage visitor levels within and across NPs.

4.2.1 No significant relationship between NP entry fee revisions and visitor demand

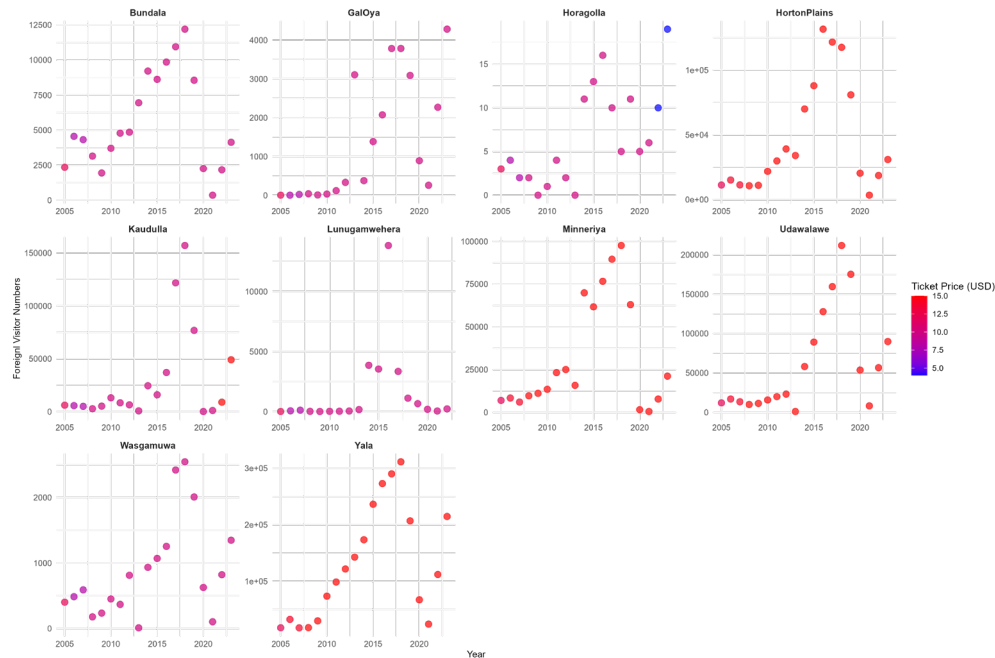
Constructing a time-series dataset of local and foreign visitation level and price changes of 10 NPs from 2004-2022 provides an opportunity to run simple linear time-series regressions to ascertain any apparent correlations between NP entry fee revisions and visitor demand across time. As shown in Figures 8 and 9, most NPs display an increase in both local and foreign visitor numbers across time. Naturally, the ticket prices increase over time as well.

Figure 8: Local visitor numbers and price revisions across time (2005-2022)



Source: Author's calculations

Figure 9: Foreign visitor numbers and price revisions across time (2005-2022)



Source: Author's calculations

NP prices regressed on foreign and local visitor levels separately do not indicate a statistically significant relationship between prices and visitation level. In both regressions, the time variable (Year) was highly significant, suggesting that the increase in both foreign and local visitation in the NPs over time are driven by non-price factors (see Annex 5 for the full regression results).

4.2.2 Literature suggests that local entry fees are consistently under-priced compared to tourists' WTP

Insights from the field in Yala NP indicates that currently the NP entry fee levels are not determined based on tourists' WTP or the estimation of an optimal price to visitation combination which maximises total revenue per NP.⁵⁹ Several studies have been conducted to determine the WTP and the optimal price which maximises revenues for parks under different conditions. Eliminating studies which estimate WTP under hypothetical scenarios with improvements or material changes to the existing conditions of the NPs, five studies estimate the mean WTP and/or the optimal price of specific NPs in their existing conditions (see Annex 6 for the complete list of studies reviewed).

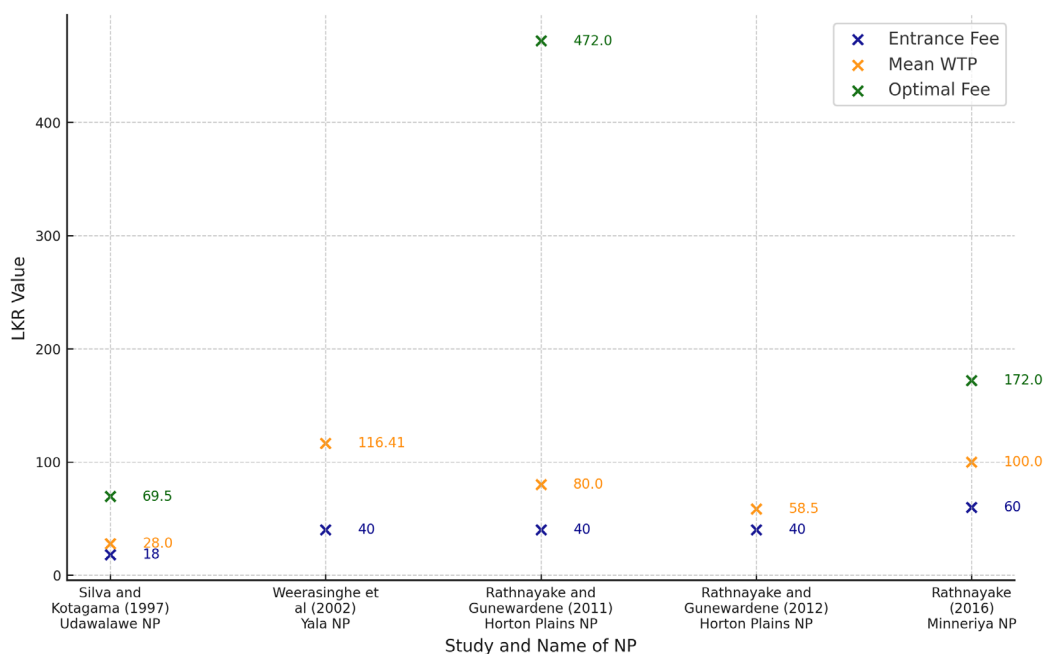
⁵⁹ Field interview with Senior Government Official.

As clear from Figure 10, existing entry fees at the time of each study is consistently below the tourists’ WTP for entry fees and revenue optimising fee. This provided the basis for the assumption that revising the current entry fees to adjust for inflation will not have a significant impact on local tourist visitation levels in NPs.

However, this may not be the case for USD denominated foreign tourist entry fees. Few studies estimate the foreign tourists’ WTP. Findings from Rathnayake and Gunewardene indicate that the foreigners’ WTP to enter Horton Plains was below the existing entry fee.⁶⁰ 35 percent of foreigners interviewed felt that the entry fee was not worth the value provided. A study on global benchmarking on NP entry fees by Zyl et al recorded Sri Lanka’s average NP entry fees for foreign tourists as the 19th highest among 62 countries assessed.⁶¹ Sri Lanka’s fees were above the global average and regional players such as India, Thailand, and Indonesia.

While not conclusive, these insights suggest that there may be greater scope for foreign tourist entry fees to influence demand-side behaviour than local entry fees.

Figure 10: Comparison between prevailing local tourist entry fees and demand-side price estimates in literature



Source: Author’s compilation

⁶⁰ Rmw Rathnayake and Uadp Gunawardena, “Visitor Characteristics and Perceptions: Case of Horton Plains National Park In Sri Lanka,” in *Kelaniya Journal of Management*, vol. 1, 2014, 81-100, <https://doi.org/10.4038/kjm.v1i1.6448>.

⁶¹ Hugo Van Zyl, James Kinghorn, and Lucy Emerton, “NATIONAL PARK ENTRANCE FEES: A GLOBAL BENCHMARKING FOCUSED ON AFFORDABILITY,” n.d.

4.2.3 Local tourist entry fees are overshadowed by other visitation costs

NP entry fees mandated by the DWC are not the only costs borne by a tourist to enter an NP. While costs to get to the park itself such as accommodation and travel are beyond the scope of this paper, given that all NPs except Horton Plains can only be accessed via a vehicle, the cost to procure a vehicle becomes a *de facto* requirement. There are two methods of vehicle procurement for NP such as Yala: using personal vehicles and renting a vehicle. While costs such as depreciation and fuel are applicable when a visitor is using their personal vehicle to enter NPs, given that most local and foreign tourists rent vehicles, this analysis will focus on hired vehicles.

Vehicles for hire are exclusively offered by the private sector, and Safari jeeps are only available through local jeep companies and associations. While the rates for a Safari jeep ride will vary greatly by perceived and actual value-added services provided, for this paper the lowest rate for a half-day safari ride - 'Basic Safari Price' - will be used as a proxy for *de facto* entrance costs.

Scraping trip advisor forum discussions to track the evolution of the basic Safari hire costs⁶² around Yala NP, the NP entry fees to Safari Price ratio was calculated for local and foreign tourists separately assuming 6 tourists are in a jeep. As seen in Table 15, the local entry fees are less than 30 percent of the per person cost of hiring a Safari jeep while foreign entry fees are generally several times the per person cost.

This can also suggest why local tourist entry fees may not significantly affect demand-side behaviour.

Table 15: Local and foreign NP entry fee to per person Safari price ratio if there are 6 adult tourists (full jeep)

Year	NP Entry fee to Safari Price Ratio (Local) - Full jeep	NP Entry fee to Safari Price Ratio (Foreign) - Full jeep
2008	0.276666667	3.6355708
2009	0.2425	2.8936476
2010	0.176363636	2.070049104
2011	0.194	2.22671561
2012	0.194	2.569854554
2013	0.194	2.600194544

⁶² This is the standard rate offered by Safari Operators to local tourists and budget-friendly foreign tourists. Safari hire costs can be significantly higher especially for foreign tourists who prefer value added services in the Safari experience.

2014	0.194	2.629410756
2015	0.194	2.73770428
2016	0.194	2.932327311
2017	0.194	3.070400951
2018	0.194	3.273462385
2019	0.161666667	3.000393077
2020	0.161666667	3.113613367
2021	0.161666667	3.337808406
2022	0.21875	6.547262
2023	0.14583	4.404952611
2024	0.13461	3.811915348

Source: Author’s calculations

Insights from literature suggest that the demographic of local tourists who visit NPs on Safari jeep tours are generally not from the lowest income levels (see Table 16). This may have several implications. Firstly, it may contribute to local entry fees not being high enough to influence visitor behaviour and therefore such tourist segments may be able to afford a higher entry fee. Secondly, it may be a symptom of access issues due to high financial barriers to enter and enjoy NPs. However, field insights highlighted that buses carrying pilgrims and local visitors enter Yala NP and therefore it may not be a significant concern.⁶³

Table 16: Insights from literature on income levels of local tourists visiting NPs

Author	Year of publishing	Year of Research	NP	Observation
Rathnayake	2021	2019	Udawalawe	“Mean household income - The mean monthly household income was LKR 54,618.58, which is much higher than that of the officially announced poverty level for Sri Lanka.”
Rathnayake	2016	NA	Minneriya	“The respondents’ mean monthly household income was more than SLR 53,000.00, which was several times above the official poverty line for Sri Lanka.”
Rathnayake and Gunawardena	2011	2007	Horton Plains	“In the study it is revealed that the mean monthly income of visitors is about Rs 18,000.00. Therefore, visitors are not at the poor level or marginal income level.”

Source: Author’s compilation

⁶³ Field interview with government official.

The considerations in this section are relevant when designing entry fee structures to manage visitation behaviour in NPs. The Yala NP Block 1 Action Plan (2017-2023) proposes two surcharges to alter visitor behaviour: firstly, a surcharge on low load factor in vehicles (one or two passengers) to incentivise more tourists being in a lower number of vehicles and secondly a surcharge on entry fees during long holiday periods to discourage over-visitation.⁶⁴ The above issues apply to both local and foreign tourists since Yala NP hosts a balanced split in visitation among the two groups. Therefore, such fee revisions must be able to materially change the behaviour of both groups for the intended outcome to be realised. Insights from this section emphasise that given the low level of local tourist entry fees, such surcharges must be significant to influence local tourist behaviour. Furthermore, the surcharge must be denominated in USD to impact foreign tourist behaviour.

Key Takeaways

1. Preliminary analysis does not find evidence of a significant relationship between visitation levels and the revisions of entry fees in the popular NPs.
2. Local entry fees seem to be consistently priced below the tourist WTP in existing literature while for foreigners, it may vary across parks.
3. Other costs borne to enter the park such as Safari jeep hires are much higher than the local entry fee.
4. If entry fees and related charges are to be used as management tools (as proposed by the Yala Block 1 Action Plan), close attention must be paid to the relative demand-influencing abilities of LKR and USD denominated fees.

4.3 Establishing a park-level pricing structure may facilitate effectiveness and dynamism

As discussed in Section 3, the current entrance-fee system categorisation is broadly based on trends in visitation. However, three considerations indicate how a more disaggregated pricing structure at an NP level may better suit the complex needs of individual NPs: the high intra-category variation in visitation dynamics, the high intra-category variation in NP-level idiosyncrasies, and the increasing complexity of the overall entry fee structure.

⁶⁴ “An Action Plan for Improving the Overall Wildlife Tourism Experience in Yala National Park (Block 1).”

4.3.1 High intra-category variation in visitation dynamics

Even though the entry fee categorisation of the NPs is broadly based on visitation trends, there is a high degree of intra-category variation in visitation dynamics. As seen in Table 17, when considering 2023 visitation data, while there is relative inter-category variation in the average number of foreign and local tourist visitation levels between Category I and II, there is very high intra-category variation especially within Category I where the gap between the highest and lowest local and foreign visitation levels exceeds 200 000. Foreign to local tourist ratios also suggest that within all categories, there are NPs attracting different groups of tourists.

This suggests that maintaining uniform levels of entry fees even across NPs within the same category (especially in Category I) is inefficient as formulating such a price would inevitably result in compromising optimality at the extremes within such groups: within the same category, either the high demand NPs will be under-priced, or low demand NPs will be overpriced.

Table 17: Metrics assessing intra-category variation in visitation in year 2023

Visitation metric	Category I	Category II	Category III ⁶⁵
[a] Highest Visitor (Local)	251865	21263	31062
[b] Lowest Visitor (Local)	40894	437	766
[c] Difference between [a] and [b]	210971	20826	30296
[d] Standard Dev in Local visitation	81913.6	7352.467	10307.61
[e] Highest Visitor (Foreign)	214572	9384	60900
[f] Lowest Visitor (Foreign)	9384	2	104
[g] Difference between [e] and [f]	205188	9382	60796
[h] Standard Dev in Foreign visitation	71863.13	3696.088	24471.97
[i] Highest Foreign to Local tourist ratio	1.076705	21.47368	3.792266
[j] Lowest Foreign to Local tourist ratio	0.144117	0.00194	0.012079
[k] Standard Dev in Foreign to Local Ratio	0.363382	7.500127	1.503245
Average number of Local Tourists	107820.7	7918	12607.17
Average number of Foreign Tourists	62847.43	3383.5	10969.5

Source: Author's calculations

⁶⁵ Only the PAs featured in the SLTDA ASR 2023. SLTDA, "Annual Statistical Report 2023."

4.3.2 High intra-category variation in park-level idiosyncrasies

Even when not considering visitation dynamics, other NP level idiosyncrasies exist within the same category. For instance, in Category I, there are terrestrial NPs (Yala and Udawalawe) and marine NPs (Pigeon Island and Adam's Bridge). Such differences in NP features will materially alter the conditions which tourists face such as modes of transportation, risks within the park, and demand and likelihood to see charismatic megafauna. Similarly, the financial and environmental costs will also greatly vary.

Due to being accessible by foot, Horton Plains NP has very little non-entry fee costs tourists must bear while Yala NP has very high costs related to Safari jeeps. However, the entry fees are identical. This may lead to access and equity issues in instances where such requirements come with hidden costs such as procuring a vehicle to travel in Yala NP.

Theoretically it is likely that these variations will impact tourists' WTP, thus creating different WTP levels across NPs within the same category. So, for example, assuming that Ratnayake and Gunewardena's findings back in 2012 still holds today, though a USD 25 entry fee might be more than the WTP of foreign tourists visiting Horton Plains NP, the same tourists visiting Yala NP may be willing to pay more than USD 25.

Finally, given issues such as overcrowding, entry fees of NPs such as Yala may have objectives beyond revenue generation such as demand management as highlighted in the Yala Block I Action Plan. For example, differentiating pricing across the different blocks in Yala is often suggested to ease the congestion in Block I and incentivise tourists to other blocks. Additionally, findings from Senarathne suggests that Yala is the only NP for which a portion of the service charge raised is allocated for a year-end bonus to its officials.⁶⁶

As highlighted in Section 3, the NP entrance-fee system has become increasingly complex over the years. As NPs become more popular and tourism demand grows, a general entrance-fee system will struggle to successfully cater to the multiple objectives that individual NPs would need to achieve from a pricing system. Disaggregating NP fees may facilitate better dynamism in NP pricing.

SANParks maintains individual prices for all the parks within its administration.⁶⁷ In India, since the management of NPs are a devolved

⁶⁶ Senarathna, "Managing Protected Area Tourism for Sustainable Community Development: The Case of Ruhuna National Park (Yala), Sri Lanka."

⁶⁷ "Rates & Entry Fees."

subject, NP entry fees are set by the respective state forest departments.⁶⁸ While Sri Lanka may have capacity constraints to implement individual NP fees per park immediately, at least focusing on specific pricing structures for key NPs such as Yala NP will allow for NP entry fees to play a greater role in contributing to demand management, revenue optimisation for conservation outcomes, and equity for segments of local tourists.

Key Takeaways:

1. There is high variation in visitor statistics such as total local and foreign visitors, and local to foreign visitor ratio among different NPs in the same Category.
2. There is high variation in NP specific characteristics among NPs within the same category.
3. High profile NPs such as Yala are likely to use entry fees for tourist management objectives
4. Park-level pricing will facilitate greater dynamism in the NP fee system

4.4 The NP entry fee structure should be accompanied by supporting mechanisms

The process of NP entry fees does not end at the setting of the fees. How such fees are implemented is also a crucial consideration for success. The following are some key practical considerations in implementing an NP entry fee as discussed in literature.

Table 18: Supporting mechanisms for entry fee structures

Consideration	Explanation
Clarity of fee structure	The system of fees and charges should be clear about which persons will pay what amounts; there should be no room for ambiguity.
Clarity of purpose	Visitors are less reluctant to pay fees when they know how their fees are used. Some evidence suggests that visitors are happier to pay when informed that their fees contribute to onsite management. Conversely, visitors should be informed of services that will be discontinued if fees are not collected.
Communication strategy	Visitors are less opposed to fees which offset costs than fees which control entry or ration use. Hence the way that fees are described can shape attitudes.

⁶⁸ Maitreyi Mandal, "Protected Area Management in India: A Perspective," accessed February 17, 2025, <https://www.fao.org/4/xii/O449-b3.htm>.

Collaboration	Collaborating with local stakeholders when setting fees is vital for the sustainability of the fee measure. Examples of protests held against park entry requirements include Costa Rica (1994) and Sri Lanka (2017).
Revision structure	Fee increases are more palatable in regular small increments than in large jumps, even when fees are comparatively low.
Supporting infrastructure	Support for fees increases when they are for 'quality' improvements. Visitors are sensitive to the quality of toilets, trails, maps, signs and other infrastructure.

Source: Author's compilation based on Laarman et al 1996, Becker 2009, and Alpizar 2006

Sri Lankan NPs too can focus more on some of the above-mentioned supporting mechanisms. Currently, though the Gazette Extraordinary No. 2292/11 of August 08, 2022 specifies the NP entry fees, the everyday tourist cannot be expected to peruse through regulations to be aware of the applicable entry fees to a NP. Due to a lack of uniformity in communicating the applicable entry fees, tourists may be unaware of the actual entry fees, creating opportunities for scams as highlighted in the excerpt of a TripAdvisor review of Pigeon Island NP included below.

"Please refer to the government set (gazetted) price list when purchasing entrance tickets to Pigeon Island from the counter in Nilaveli Beach. The person there uses multiple receipt books and quotes multiple times the actual price literally stealing from tourist.

We obviously decided not to proceed with the tour when we heard the price and only found out that he was trying to rip us off after doing research for hours and calling Tourism development authority and tourism police."

- Excerpt of a TripAdvisor Review of Pigeon Island NP, May 2024

In 2003, SANParks renamed their entry fees as 'conservation fees' in order to convey to visitors and other stakeholders that the fees have a larger purpose.⁶⁹ Especially since all NP entry fees directly contribute to the Wildlife Preservation Fund, renaming entry fees to indicate their connection to conservation may facilitate better tourist approval of NP entry fees. This can be supplemented by clear messaging on conservation activities that are taking place in NPs which are funded through tourism related revenue.

However, such rebranding and marketing efforts are sustainable only if conservation and tourist infrastructure efforts are seen to be improving in

⁶⁹ "Rates & Entry Fees."

tourists' eyes. A common complaint raised by tourists, supply-side actors, and public officials around Yala NP is a lack of adequate tourism infrastructure and a chronic erosion of trust in authorities due to lack of enforcement, politicisation, and corruption.

Finally, given the explicit and implicit contributions provided by local tourism stakeholders and local communities surrounding NPs, the setting and revising of entry fees and related charges must be a collaborative exercise sensitive to stakeholder needs and considerations. For example, in 2011, SANParks introduced a 1 percent community levy on all accommodation and activity bookings.⁷⁰ Such proceeds are dedicated to ensuring the development of communities neighbouring the NPs.

Key Messages:

1. Setting and revising entry fees is not merely a price setting exercise but demands many supporting considerations including clear communication of the fee structure.
2. There is potential to increase tourist support for NP entry fees and related charges by explicitly connecting relevant fees to conservation through rebranding and tourist education.
3. For such rebranding and marketing efforts to be sustainable, confidence and trust in the appropriate use of such proceeds must be felt by tourists, tourism service providers, and the local communities.
4. Setting and revising entry fees must be a collaborative exercise among tourism stakeholders.

⁷⁰ "Rates & Entry Fees."

5 Concluding Remarks

Sri Lanka will be hosting unprecedented numbers of tourists in the short-term. NPs will continue to be a key attraction for both foreign and local tourists alike. Especially given the tight fiscal space that the government has to navigate in, it is critical that authorities such as DWC and DFC optimise their revenue streams to manage the increasing tourism activities inside PAs and enhance their conservation efforts. NP entry fees are the largest source of revenue for the Wildlife Preservation Fund of the DWC.

This report makes the case for why NP entry fees should be rationalised. Through a literature review of the theory and practice of NP entry fee pricing along with a historical analysis of Sri Lankan NP entry fee revisions, the report presents four policy considerations.

Firstly, the NP entry fees, and related charges must be revised more regularly to avoid inflation-based losses. To better meet ever rising management and conservation costs such as fuel, machinery, and salaries, entry fees and charges can be indexed to inflation at least once every two years, if an annual revision as done by SANParks is not practically feasible.

Secondly, if NP entry fees and related charges are to be used as tourist demand management tools such as the proposed surcharges in the Yala Block I Action Plan, careful attention must be provided to the local and foreign tourists' willingness to pay. Evidence suggests that price revisions thus far have not impacted visitor numbers in general, and LKR denominated prices may not be high enough to be a credible demand management tool.

Thirdly, high variation of visitation and park-specific conditions among NPs within same entry fee category suggests that moving towards a park specific entry fee structure will allow for fees better suited for park needs. Even if not for all NPs immediately, setting specific prices for Yala NP may be necessary given the management concerns.

Finally, setting and revising entry fees is not purely a price setting exercise but due consideration to non-price factors such as marketing, education, collaboration, and benefit-sharing must be given for an effective and sustainable entry fee structure.

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7 Annexures

7.1 Annex 1: Objectives of NP entry fees highlighted in literature

Table 19: Objectives of NP entry fees

Objective	Explanation
Attributing financial value to nature	The collection of revenue from NPs indicate that natural areas have financial value. Demonstrating through user fees that visitors pay their way wholly or in part is important in political discussions of land use.
Revenue generation	The revenue goal is an obvious one for governments whose budgets are constrained. Even where fee collections must be turned over to a national treasury, budget allocations often reflect the amount of revenue generated.
Park Management	Fees can be a management tool to relieve crowding if fees are elevated during peak times and for congested sites. However, evidence on off-peak pricing to shift use patterns is inconclusive, possibly because even 'high' fees have been modest in most cases to date. In addition a frequent assumption is that visitors are more respectful of their surroundings if they have to pay for them.
Fairness and equity	Fees can be designed to reduce subsidization of groups perceived to receive unfair advantages, eg non-residents who pay no taxes for financing the NBT sites they visit. Conversely, fee policy may deliberately subsidize target groups or activities, especially if natural history is considered a merit good. In each context, defining what is just and meritorious is subjective, resting on political and administrative judgments.
Policy and financial autonomy	If revenues from fees can be made to increase, this may enable public agencies to gain increasing independence from outside influences. In the example of Peru, an estimated 90% of financial input for the country's protected areas is from external sources.
Tourism policy management	Encouraging more or fewer visits to surrounding or substitute sites.

Source: Author's compilation based on Laarman et al 1996, Samdin n.d., Becker 2009, and Emerton et al 2006.

7.2 Annex 2: Overview of the current entry fee structure - NP entry fees as at January 2025 as per Gazette Extraordinary No. 2292/11 of August 08, 2022

Table 20: Local Tourist Entry Fees (LKR)

Category		Category I	Category II	Category III	
Daytime visit	Adult	Tourist Season	150	60	40
		Regular Season	120		
	Child	Tourist Season	100	30	20
		Regular Season	80		
	Student	Tourist Season	20	20	20
		Regular Season	20		
Overnight stay	Adult	Tourist Season	300	120	80
		Regular Season	240		
	Child	Tourist Season	200	60	40
		Regular Season	160		
	Student	Tourist Season	40	40	40
		Regular Season	40		

Source: Author's Compilation

Table 21: SAARC Foreign Tourist Entry Fees (USD)

Category		Category I	Category II	Category III	
Daytime visit	Adult	Tourist Season	20	10	4
		Regular Season	15		
	Child	Tourist Season	10	5	2
		Regular Season	8		
Overnight stay	Adult	Tourist Season	40	20	8
		Regular Season	30		
	Child	Tourist Season	20	10	4
		Regular Season	16		

Source: Author's Compilation

Table 22: Other Foreign Tourist Entry Fees (USD)

Category			Category I	Category II	Category III
Daytime visit	Adult	Tourist Season	25	12	5
		Regular Season	20		
	Child	Tourist Season	15	6	3
		Regular Season	10		
Overnight stay	Adult	Tourist Season	50	24	10
		Regular Season	40		
	Child	Tourist Season	30	12	6
		Regular Season	20		

Source: Author's Compilation

7.3 Annex 3: The Evolution of the NP entry fee structure

Table 23: Evolution of local daytime visit NP entry fees (LKR)

Year	Category	Category I	Category II	Category III	
2003	Adult	20			
	Child	6			
	School Children	2.5			
2006	Adult	30	30		
	Child	20	20		
	School Children	5	5		
2008	Adult	40	40		
	Child	20	20		
	School Children	10	10		
2009	Adult	Day Visit	60	40	
		Two visits during daylight hours of the same day	100		
	Child	Day Visit	30	20	
		Two visits during daylight hours of the same day	50		
	Student	Day Visit	20	10	
		Two visits during daylight hours of the same day	NA		
2022	Adult	Tourist Season	150	60	40
		Regular Season	120		
	Child	Tourist Season	100	30	20
		Regular Season	80		
	Student	Tourist Season	20	20	20
		Regular Season	20		

Source: Author's Compilation

Table 24: Evolution of foreign daytime visit NP entry fees. (USD)

Category		Category I	Category II	Category III	
2003	Adult	12			
	Child	6			
2006	Adult	14	8		
	Child	7	4		
2008	Adult	15	10		
	Child	8	5		
2009	Adult	Day Visit	15	10	
		Two visits during daylight hours of the same day	25		
	Child	Day Visit	8	5	
		Two visits during daylight hours of the same day	12		
2022	SAARC Adult	Tourist Season	20	10	4
		Regular Season	15		
	SAARC Child	Tourist Season	10	5	2
		Regular Season	18		
	Non-SAARC Adult	Tourist Season	25	12	5
		Regular Season	20		
	Non-SAARC Child	Tourist Season	15	6	3
		Regular Season	10		

Source: Author's Compilation

Table 25: Evolution of other government charges related to daytime Safari rides

Type of fee	2003		2006		2008		2009		2022		
	Local	Foreign	Local	Foreign	Local	Foreign	Local	Foreign	Local	Foreign	
Day Visit (Single) Service Change (per group of 10 till 2022, then per vehicle)	120	6	200	6	300	8	300	8	400	10	
Day Visit (Two entries during daylight hours)							600	16			
Vehicle Fee	Car/Boat		30		100		125 (Boats not specified)		125		150
	Van		60		200		250		250		300
	4 wheel vehicle/ Jeep		60		200		250		250		300
	4 wheel vehicle with open roof		100								
	Bus or Lorry		90		300		400		400		500
	3rd additional vehicle	180	360								
Special fee to enter Yala Block II		NA		1000		1500		2500		5000	

Source: Author's Compilation

Table 29: Local Tourist Service Charge Per Group Indexed to Inflation (LKR)

Year	CPI	2003 ratio	2006 ratio	2008 ratio	2009 ratio	2022 ratio	2003 Inflation Indexed fees	2006 Inflation Indexed fees	2008 Inflation Indexed fees	2009 Inflation Indexed fees	2022 Inflation Indexed fees
2002	100										
2003	105.8	1					120				
2004	115.3	1.09					130.78				
2005	128	1.21					145.18				
2006	140.8	1.33	1.00				159.70	200.00			
2007	163.1	1.54	1.16				184.99	231.68			
2008	199.9	1.89	1.42	1.00			226.73	283.95	300.00		
2009	206.8	1.95	1.47	1.03	1.00		234.56	293.75	310.36	300.00	
2010	219.1	2.07	1.56	1.10	1.06		248.51	311.22	328.81	317.84	
2011	226.5	2.14	1.61	1.13	1.10		256.90	321.73	339.92	328.58	
2012	243.5435644	2.30	1.73	1.22	1.18		276.23	345.94	365.50	353.30	
2013	260.4376238	2.46	1.85	1.30	1.26		295.39	369.94	390.85	377.81	
2014	268.9594059	2.54	1.91	1.35	1.30		305.06	382.04	403.64	390.17	
2015	271.3514851	2.56	1.93	1.36	1.31		307.77	385.44	407.23	393.64	
2016	281.5178218	2.66	2.00	1.41	1.36		319.30	399.88	422.49	408.39	
2017	299.9160322	2.83	2.13	1.50	1.45		340.17	426.02	450.10	435.08	
2018	312.7695764	2.96	2.22	1.56	1.51		354.75	444.27	469.39	453.73	
2019	326.3792115	3.08	2.32	1.63	1.58		370.18	463.61	489.81	473.47	
2020	341.2489979	3.23	2.42	1.71	1.65		387.05	484.73	512.13	495.04	
2021	361.4114203	3.42	2.57	1.81	1.75		409.92	513.37	542.39	524.29	
2022	529.0115559	5.00	3.76	2.65	2.56	1.00	600.01	751.44	793.91	767.42	400.00
2023	620.5774704	5.87	4.41	3.10	3.00	1.17	703.87	881.50	931.33	900.26	469.24

Source: Author’s Compilation

Table 30: Foreign Tourist Service Charge Per Group Indexed to Inflation (USD)

Year	USD LKR Exchange rate	2003 LKR price nominal	2003 LKR Inflation Indexed price	2006 LKR price nominal	2006 LKR Inflation Indexed price	2008 nominal fees	2008 Inflation Indexed fees	2009 nominal fees	2009 Inflation Indexed fees	2023 nominal fees	2022 Inflation Indexed fees
2002	95.66										
2003	96.52	579.12	579.12								
2004	101.19	607.14	661.66								
2005	100.5	603	729.53								
2006	103.96	623.76	830.11	623.76	623.76						
2007	110.62	663.72	1023.18	663.72	768.84						
2008	108.33	649.98	1228.08	649.98	922.81	866.64	866.64				
2009	114.94	689.64	1347.99	689.64	1012.91	919.52	951.26	919.52	919.52		
2010	113.06	678.36	1404.81	678.36	1055.60	904.48	991.35	904.48	958.28		
2011	110.57	663.42	1420.27	663.42	1067.22	884.56	1002.27	884.56	968.82		
2012	127.6	765.6	1762.35	765.60	1324.27	1020.80	1243.67	1020.80	1202.17		
2013	129.11	774.66	1906.91	774.66	1432.89	1032.88	1345.68	1032.88	1300.78		
2014	130.56	783.36	1991.42	783.36	1496.39	1044.48	1405.32	1044.48	1358.43		
2015	135.94	815.64	2091.92	815.64	1571.91	1087.52	1476.24	1087.52	1426.98		
2016	145.6	873.6	2324.52	873.60	1746.69	1164.80	1640.38	1164.80	1585.65		
2017	152.46	914.76	2593.11	914.76	1948.52	1219.68	1829.92	1219.68	1768.87		
2018	162.54	975.24	2883.04	975.24	2166.37	1300.32	2034.52	1300.32	1966.64		
2019	178.78	1072.68	3309.08	1072.68	2486.51	1430.24	2335.17	1430.24	2257.26		
2020	185.52	1113.12	3590.27	1113.12	2697.81	1484.16	2533.61	1484.16	2449.07		
2021	198.88	1193.28	4076.23	1193.28	3062.96	1591.04	2876.54	1591.04	2780.56		
2022	324.55	1947.3	9736.71	1947.30	7316.37	2596.40	6871.06	2596.40	6641.81	3245.50	3245.50
2023	327.5330566	1965.19834	11527.01	1965.20	8661.63	2620.26	8134.45	2620.26	7863.04	3275.33	3842.25

Source: Author’s Compilation

Table 31: Safari Jeep Fees Indexed to Inflation (LKR)

Year	CPI	2003 ratio	2006 ratio	2008 ratio	2009 ratio	2022 ratio	2003 (Closed Roof) Inflation Indexed fees	2003 (open roof)	2006 Inflation Indexed fees	2008 Inflation Indexed fees	2009 Inflation Indexed fees	2022 Inflation Indexed fees
2002	100											
2003	105.8	1.0					60.00	100.00				
2004	115.3	1.1					65.39	108.98				
2005	128	1.2					72.59	120.98				
2006	140.8	1.3	1.0				79.85	133.08	200.00			
2007	163.1	1.5	1.2				92.50	154.16	231.68			
2008	199.9	1.9	1.4	1.0			113.36	188.94	283.95	250.00		
2009	206.8	2.0	1.5	1.0	1.0		117.28	195.46	293.75	258.63	250.00	
2010	219.1	2.1	1.6	1.1	1.1		124.25	207.09	311.22	274.01	264.87	
2011	226.5	2.1	1.6	1.1	1.1		128.45	214.08	321.73	283.27	273.82	
2012	243.5	2.3	1.7	1.2	1.2		138.12	230.19	345.94	304.58	294.42	
2013	260.4	2.5	1.8	1.3	1.3		147.70	246.16	369.94	325.71	314.84	
2014	269.0	2.5	1.9	1.3	1.3		152.53	254.21	382.04	336.37	325.14	
2015	271.4	2.6	1.9	1.4	1.3		153.89	256.48	385.44	339.36	328.04	
2016	281.5	2.7	2.0	1.4	1.4		159.65	266.08	399.88	352.07	340.33	
2017	299.9	2.8	2.1	1.5	1.5		170.08	283.47	426.02	375.08	362.57	
2018	312.8	3.0	2.2	1.6	1.5		177.37	295.62	444.27	391.16	378.11	
2019	326.4	3.1	2.3	1.6	1.6		185.09	308.49	463.61	408.18	394.56	
2020	341.2	3.2	2.4	1.7	1.7		193.52	322.54	484.73	426.77	412.54	
2021	361.4	3.4	2.6	1.8	1.7		204.96	341.60	513.37	451.99	436.91	
2022	529.0	5.0	3.8	2.6	2.6	1.0	300.01	500.01	751.44	661.60	639.52	300.00
2023	620.6	5.9	4.4	3.1	3.0	1.2	351.93	586.56	881.50	776.11	750.21	351.93

Source: Author’s Compilation

7.5 Annex 5: Regression results on entry prices and local and foreign visitor levels over time

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>	
	Local Visitors	Foreign Visitors
	<i>OLS</i> (1)	<i>OLS</i> (2)
Local Entry Fee	-39.142 (226.724)	
Foreign Entry Fee		2,836.930 (2,889.644)
Year	2,391.919*** (755.459)	2,300.178*** (569.659)
GalOya	-5,924.684 (13,829.410)	-4,160.684 (13,567.270)
Horagolla	-6,849.930 (13,837.650)	-3,722.729 (13,689.470)
HortonPlains	178,146.800*** (14,553.840)	26,410.500 (19,489.630)
Kaudulla	18,439.840 (13,903.350)	21,707.350 (13,652.250)
Lunugamwehera	-6,539.839 (14,023.060)	-2,839.376 (13,757.300)
Minneriya	32,791.830** (14,553.840)	12,786.810 (19,489.630)
Udawalawe	75,333.730*** (14,553.840)	41,387.920** (19,489.630)
Wasgamuwa	9,411.158 (13,829.410)	-4,644.684 (13,567.270)
Yala	189,377.700*** (14,553.840)	110,229.400*** (19,489.630)
Constant	-4,804,594.000*** (1,515,574.000)	-4,655,109.000*** (1,141,942.000)
Observations	189	189
R ²	0.756	0.508
Adjusted R ²	0.741	0.478
Residual Std. Error (df = 177)	42,625.110	41,817.140
F Statistic (df = 11; 177)	49.971***	16.621***

Note:

* p < 0.1
** p < 0.05
*** p < 0.01

Source: Author's Compilation

7.6 Annex 6: Literature estimating tourists' WTP and optimal prices

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Image courtesy Anushka Wijesinha, 2024

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