

The Economic Value of Marine Protected Areas to Scuba Divers in the Caribbean: A Conjoint Application to Bonaire

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Steve Thur and I estimated the recreational benefits of scuba diving in the Bonaire National Marine Park (BNMP) in the Caribbean. We used stated preference data from a random sample of 211 divers. The core of the survey was a series of conjoint analysis questions examining divers' reactions to hypothetical declines in environmental quality in the BNMP. A mixed logit model was estimated and used to calculate the welfare losses associated with these declines. The models indicated that the BNMP provides significant recreational benefits, even when incorporating the most conservative assumptions of environmental decline in the absence of the marine park. Depending on the magnitude of hypothetical environmental decline, individuals would lose on average between \$29 and \$185 in annual benefits. In aggregate, we estimated that the marine park provides between \$0.8 and \$5.2 million in recreational benefits annually.