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The Important Of Description Dive Spot Characteristic For the Development of Tourism Attractions: A Case Study in Bunaken National Park, North Sulawesi, Indonesia

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Abstract

This paper aims to describe the characteristics of diving spots on the island of Bunaken for the purpose of making it a tourist attraction. So far, diving tourists who do diving activities have never received an explanation related to what biota and mammals are located at each dive point. Though this information is very useful for the development of more unique tourist attractions. The method used in this paper is to conduct a survey (non-experimental) combined with direct perception at the writing location and identification by combining knowledge-based methods. Bunaken National Park has 120 dive points with varying depths ranging from 1,344 meters. However, this study only took 16 dive points, specifically around the island of Bunaken. The results showed that each point has unique species of marine biota and mammals, then the average is also in the location of underwater great walls, which are also called hanging walls, or giant vertical coral walls.

Keywords: dive spot characteristic, tourism attraction, Bunaken National Park

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is one of the countries that has abundant biodiversity with complete ecosystems, both on land and water. This abundance of natural resources has the potential for tourism development which, when well developed, will have an impact on the welfare of local communities. North Sulawesi Province is an area that faces the Pacific Ocean, with its capital Manado located on the coast of the ocean, therefore this area really emphasizes the ocean as a basic strength for regional development. Especially for tourism development; almost all districts rely on the ocean and coastal areas as the main attraction for tourism.

Bunaken National Marine Park, is a marine tourism destination located in North Sulawesi Province, which covers an area of 89,065 Ha (Setiawan, 2013; Agusbushro, et.al. 2015). It crosses five district/city government administrations, such as the city of Manado, North Minahasa Regency, Minahasa Induk and South Minahasa. In this area there are 5 small islands inhabited by local people who are mostly from Sangir, but there are also migrants from outside North Sulawesi, namely the Bajo tribe, (Mandulangi, et.al. 2019). The five islands include Bunaken Island as the center of the tourism industry, because there are various resorts and

dive operators, as well as the entrance to the national park, then Manado Tua Island, Siladen, Mentehage Island and Nain Island, (Towoliu, & Takaendengan, 2015; Sambeka, et.al 2023; Sangari, et.al, 2024).

As part of the world's coral triangle, within the Bunaken National Park area live 390 species of various marine life including coral reptiles and various mammals. (Frederick & Kurniawati, 2021). This marine destination has been enjoyed by various foreign tourists in recent years. Before Covid-19, Bunaken was a favorite destination for tourists from China, especially with the existence of direct flights from seven cities in mainland China to Manado, but it had decreased and was even silent during the Covid-19 pandemic. (Handoyo, et.al, 2022) After the pandemic ended, this destination began to be visited by tourists from abroad, it was noted that until now there were three additional direct airlines to Manado, besides China, there were also Korea Air, Kinabalu Malaysia and Japan. According to information from local people, Bunaken is currently filled with foreign tourists, after covid-19.

This tourist destination relies heavily on its underwater beauty with the marine park relying on steep cliffs, and these are scattered at specific dive points, but a description of the characteristics of each dive point cannot be found, which results in the concentration of a number of divers at certain dive points, which will adversely affect the life of marine life in the area due to excessive carrying capacity and will have an impact on coral damage, due to high diving activity. (Kamagi, et.al, 2022; Gumolili, et.al, 2019; 2023). This information is also very useful for the development of tourist attractions, based on the uniqueness that will be found at each dive point in Bunaken and its surroundings.

Different natural resources with their beauty and value with a variety of cultures can be maximized and managed into potential tourist attractions, (Indonesia, 2009). Meanwhile (Zaenuri, et.al, 2021) states that the attraction to be seen and enjoyed is worth selling to the tourism market. In addition, tourist attractions are called tourist objects, which are the potential that drives the presence of tourists to a tourist destination, (Suwartono, 2004). Meanwhile Utama, (2016) states that tourist attraction is everything that is an attraction for tourists to visit a certain area. While Pendit, (2002) states that tourist attraction is everything that is interesting and has value to be visited and seen, basically tourist attractions can be grouped into two groups, namely natural tourist attractions and artificial tourist attractions. This indicates that attractions in the form of nature and social-culture and unique man-made managed professionally can invite tourists to visit while enjoying all the potential that exists.

Terms of tourist attraction include: (1) Attractions that can be seen, this implies that in the area there must be something that is a tourist attraction, or an area should have a special attraction and cultural attractions that can be used as entertainment for tourists. What is witnessed can be in the form of natural scenery, activities, arts, and tourist attractions. (2) Tourism activities that can be done indicate that in a tourist place, witnessing something interesting, tourists must also be provided with recreational facilities that can make tourists feel at home to stay longer at tourist destinations. (3) Something that can be purchased means that tourist destinations provide several supporting facilities for shopping, especially souvenir items and folk crafts that serve as souvenirs to take home to the place of origin of tourists. (4) Transportation means that tourists can visit the tourist destination, what vehicle to use and how long it will take them to arrive at the destination. Finally (5) Lodging to support the needs

of temporary residence for tourists who will visit, tourist destinations need to prepare lodging, such as star hotels or non-star hotels and the like (Utama, 2016).

Broadly speaking, there are four groups of tourist attractions that attract tourists to come to tourist destinations (Yoeti, 2008), namely Natural Attraction, including in this group are seascapes, beaches, lakes, waterfalls, botanical gardens, agro-tourism, volcanoes, also included in this group are flora and fauna. 2. Build Attraction, included in this group are buildings with interesting architects, such as traditional houses and which include ancient and modern buildings. 3. Cultural Attraction, including historical relics, folklore, traditional arts, museums, religious ceremonies, art festivals and the like. 4. Social Attraction, including the way of life of a community, language varieties, marriage ceremonies, tooth cutting, circumcision or bathing and other social activities. Based on this explanation and connected with the importance of describing the characteristics of each dive point, it will certainly have added value for dive tourists when they are educated that only at certain dive points, they can see marine biota or lia mammals that are unique and cannot be found elsewhere.

But until now, each dive point in Bunaken National Park is only a name, and never explains that each name contains any marine biota, or mammal species that are at that point or play at each location. Usually, the name given is based on the location near the community village or close to the resort where the dive point is located or the name of someone who found the dive site. Whereas tourists really need clear information related to the characteristics of marine biota around the dive point, thus each diver will get information in the form of education, what biota will be encountered when diving, things that need to be prepared to anticipate coral damage, or dangers encountered and how to prepare the safety level of divers. In addition, it is also useful for information needs for divers who need the uniqueness of certain biota, divers will be directed to certain dive points, without guessing at the location of the point during which the biota or fish species sought after can be found, (Rouphael, & Inglis, 2001; Roberts, et.al, 2010). Tourists or divers will not feel disadvantaged by dive operators and will not waste their time and money. Each characteristic of this dive point will be an interesting tourist attraction because in the long run this information can be used in developing a separate tour package while maintaining the uniqueness of each dive point. Based on these problems, the purpose of this research is to explain the characteristics of each dive point which is useful for the development of tourist attractions.

RESEARCH METHOD

This paper is located in Bunaken Island which is part of the Bunaken National Park area, located in North Sulawesi Province. The method used in this research is to conduct a survey (non-experimental) through direct observation at the research location. With a purposive sampling technique, which is a purposeful sample, assuming the number of dive spots scattered on the coast of the island of Bunaken, it is estimated that there are currently 120 dive spots, then weather conditions and ocean currents that change at any time and so require a long enough time to make observations as a whole, as well as limited research time constraints. Thus, the researcher assumed by taking 16 dive spots representing each dive spot closest, then middle and farthest from the coast of Bunaken island. The data obtained is then processed through tabulating, then analyzed based on the type and purpose of the user. Analysis includes analysis of object potential assessment and attractiveness. After all the data is collected, an

analysis is carried out using the knowledge-based method, where all data on the characteristics of marine biota taken through underwater videos and images are identified and compared with recommendations from scientific articles to determine the name of biodata and species that exist in each sampling location in this case at a predetermined dive spot, (Azis, 2020).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Bunaken National Park has 120 dive spots with depths varying up to 1,344 meters. Bunaken Island, which is part of the Bunaken National Park area, has 16 dive spots. Most of the 16 dive spots of Bunaken Island are lined up from the southeast to the northwest part of the island.

Figure 1, Researcher Collecting Data
(source, researcher data)

In this area, there are underwater great walls, which are also called hanging walls or giant coral walls that stand vertically and curve upwards. These coral walls are also a source of food for fish in the waters around Bunaken Island. The following data on the species characteristics of marine biota and mammals obtained from each diving spot around Bunaken Island, with the names of the diving spots given by each discoverer, are as follows:

1. Muka Kampung
   The characteristics of the dive point include: vertical coral walls with coral beds of various shapes and colours, but sometimes there are strong currents that make this location not possible for beginner divers.
2. Lekuan
   The attraction when diving towards the face of the village is characterized by a sinuous wall with many steep/vertical cliffs and crevices. In addition, there are groups of fish such as *lolosi (Caesio)*, large and small turtles, candy crap, nudibranchs, anemone fish, scorpion fish.
3. Lekuan II
   The characteristics of the dive spot at this location are that there are stingrays, butterfly fish, rivets, lobsters, angel fishes, red-tooth woodpecker fish, butterfly fish, black snapper, and there are also coral forests such as rock corals and soft corals giant tube sponges, black corals, gorgonian ascidians, and sea lilies. There are also scorpion fish, candy crap, pygmy seahorse, anemone fish, napoleon wrasse, nudibranch, white shark, black tip.

4. Lekuan III
   The characteristics of the dive site at this location are that it has a sandy beach bottom and there are black tip and white sharks, turtles, reef fish, nudibranchs, lionfish, garden ell, cacatua fish, candy crap,
5. Celah- Celah
   Its characteristics are coral walls and between the walls have open gaps, so it will look very beautiful when sunlight enters between the gaps, many reef fish are found butterfly fish, surgeon fish, large fish king smelly fish, anemone scorpion fish, anemone crap, boxer cap, shrimp, turtle, black tip and white shark.
6. Jonson Point
   The dive spot is characterized by its steep inner slopes, and is especially attractive for night diving. Lionfish, soldier fish and others can also be found.
7. Alungbanua
   Characteristics of the point as long as it has sloping / sloping and steep corals, there are several caves on the headland or corner at a depth of 15-20 meters. In addition, there are also butterfly fish, wrasse, nudibranch, crocodile fish, scorpion fish, anemone fish, orangutans, crap blue, sting ray sharp white tip.
8. Fukui
   The dive point location has characteristics in the form of sloping corals, many schooling fish, spade fish, jack fish, triggers, garden reels, 5 big giant clams, there are also mandarin fish that come out in the late afternoon to mate, scorpion fish, anemone crap, turtles, sharks, leaf scorpion fish, stone fish, trigger fish, and octopus.
9. Ron's Point
   The location here has a sandy beach bottom, there are white and black tail sharks, black tip and white sharks, turtles, reef fish and decorated with coral beauty in the form of rock corals, black corals, gorgonians, ascidia.
10. Mandolin
    This location has the characteristics of a dive spot: vertical walls, small caves at depth, many schools of lolosi fish, butterfly fish, damselfish, large stingrays, red goby fish, also has: black coral, large gorgonians, and ascidians.
11. Bunaken Tengah
    The characteristics of the dive point here are in the form of a sinuous wall with many steep / vertical cliffs and gaps. In addition, there are groups of fish such as lolosi, large and small turtles, candy crap, nudibranch, anemone fish scorpion fish.
12. Raymont Point
    This location has point characteristics during which there are stingrays, butterfly fish, keeling fish, lobster, and also coral forests and various types of rock corals and soft corals.
13. Mike’s Point
    The site is characterized by ornamental fish, permit fish and teleost fish, as well as large corals, black corals, giant gorgonians and ascidia.
14. Sachico's point
    The characteristics of the dive sites in this area are that there are many schools of lolosi fish, butterfly fish, damselfish, keeling fish, red-tooth woodpecker fish, large rays, glass fish

(*parambassis siamensis*), also found in shallow caves. It also has black coral, large gorgonians, and ascidia.

15. Bunaken Timur
    The characteristics of the dive point at this location are in the form of a sinuous wall with many steep / vertical cliffs and gaps. In addition, there are also groups of fish such as lolosi, large and small turtles, candy crap, nudibranchs, anemone fish scorpion fish.
16. Bunaken Timur 1
    The location of the dive point here has characteristics such as the presence of doctor fish butterfly fish, parrot fish, and traveling fish. There are also many soft corals nephtheidae, black corals, and ascidia.

Based on the characteristics encountered from each dive point identified, there are several dive points that have similar marine biota and are grouped into one characteristic to make it easier for managers to determine what tourists want when they are interested in seeing certain biota, but the dive point conditions exceed the capacity of diving activities. Thus, the manager can divert to another dive point location that has similar marine biota, so that the wishes of tourists can be answered. With the characteristics of each dive point, this is useful information for dive managers in marketing existing tourist attractions. Furthermore, the need for information on dive locations with marine biota can be easily known by divers. In the end, the tourist attractions offered are attractive to tourists who like diving activities.

CONCLUSION

The coastal island of Bunaken, as part of the National Park, is a major location for ecotourism development in North Sulawesi. Each dive site around the island of Bunaken has its own diversity of types and peculiarities as an object and tourist attraction. Data on the characteristics of each dive point will facilitate the development of tourist attractions by presenting specific market niches. In addition, it makes it easier for managers to arrange tour packages with special interest attractions. In the future, the management of this national park is carried out in an integrated manner involving various tourism business stakeholders.

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