

Sikkim Wildlife (Regulation of Trekking) Rules 2005

Tourism is an important means of achieving socio-economic development. However if not controlled properly, can have devastating and irreversible impacts on the environment, culture and identity of the people. Realizing these problems and the fact that the resources on which tourism is based are limited and fragile, there is an urgent need to develop the trekking industry based on the principle of sustainability.

There has been a growing concern regarding the impacts of trekking tourism on the fragile ecosystem and forests of the state. Main impacts relate to:

1. Accumulation of non degradable materials
2. Growing use of Rhododendron and Juniper firewood
3. Pollution of water bodies like sacred lakes and streams

Though the trekking companies have adopted an ecotourism code of conduct, possibly due to increased competition and with an objective to maximize profits, often nature has been abused due to the above impacts. A regulation is needed to put the responsibility of the visitors and their support staff including porters, cooks and guides following the code of conduct, on the travel company organizing the trek. This will foster a more responsible tourism, making it binding on the travel agents and the trekkers to follow ecofriendly practices.

Accordingly the “**Sikkim Wildlife (Regulation of Trekking) Rules 2005**” have been framed and are put up below for favour of vetting by law department and notification by the government please.