

Nuridin Razak, Ecotourism Activist of Baluran National Park

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National park can be used as an attractive tourist destination for foreign travellers if it involves the local community. Through the concept of ecotourism, communities can be empowered to jointly manage the tourist village. Nuridin Razak, lecturer of State University in Surabaya practice his knowledge in managing ecotourism around the Baluran National Park in Situbondo, East Java. Using personal resource, he trains people in the village of Wonorejo, area which is directly adjacent to the Baluran National Park, to manage ecotourism.

Nuridin said that during the last 11 years he has actively promoted Baluran ecotourism to be visited by foreign tourists. One of the tourism packages that he offers is adventure tour to witness wild animals in the national park at night. Besides, he also offers a chance to become a goat herder along with the locals. Travelers will be picked up by ox cart of the villagers. "I want to change the mindset of society, I want them to stick with what they have. Do not let them sell a cow or a goat to buy a car or motorcycle to pick foreign tourists, " Nuridin said at the Centre for Tourism Studies UGM, Wednesday (27/1).

Not only that, Nuridin also coached Sukadi, a local resident, to become tour guide. To encourage foreign tourist to come to the national park, he did not hesitate to pick up the tourists while they are in Yogyakarta. Nuridin said that the foreign tourists he encountered generally had come to Indonesia to enjoy the wild nature in national parks. "Usually they enjoy the national park of Bukit Lawang. After that, they went to Yogyakarta, Malang and Bali. I meet them in Yogyakarta so that they go to Baluran," he said.

According to Nurdin, what he does can be done by others to promote ecotourism. Nurdin hopes that what he has been doing can be followed by others. "I will certainly be getting old and tired, but I want this spirit of Wonorejo to persist in society," he concluded.

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