

**Description:**

This is an editorial I made last summer. I was inspired by this phenomenon called overtourism because I believe this is a really unique angle when approaching climate change issues. In writing this editorial, my goal was to inform others about the human impacts of climate change, and how leisure activities like travelling can also harm the environment and add to pollution. This particular writing piece is part of my creative writing portfolio.

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# ‘Overtourism’ Attacks Ko Phi Phi, Thailand: A Human Induced Climate Crisis

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Imagine booking your next vacation to the beautiful and luxurious country of Thailand. You're thrilled about your next trip, searching up marvelous places to go, things to see, and what to do and explore. It may even be on your bucket list to visit the island of Koh Phi Phi where they filmed Leonardo DiCaprio's film, *The Beach*. However, you've been recently informed that the island is closed. Good bye clear blue shores, paddle boards, snorkelling and scuba diving. Koh Phi Phi Thailand is scheduled to be closed from June 1 to September 30, 2018. What is the cause of this? The answer may not be clear but evidence points towards a phenomenon called 'Overtourism'.

**What is Overtourism?**

There are two ways to define overtourism. The first definition simply describes the event of an overflow of people visiting a particular tourist destination (Francis, n.d). The second definition is understood as the instance when the surrounding environment, the economy, country's wildlife, and/or city's infrastructure are negatively affected due to an exceeding amount of people visiting the certain area (Francis, n.d). This form of pollution is a growing concern because this is a human enhanced issue that contributes to climate change and greenhouse gas emissions. In addition, it impacts locals and tourists themselves.

**The Problem with Ko Phi Phi**

The Island of Ko Phi Phi Le, has now been a popular tourist destination for over a decade. Sadly, over the years, the accumulation of garbage and waste caused by humans have grown exponentially which has led to the *Thailand National Parks and Wildlife Department*, to enforce laws and regulations prohibiting people from visiting (Ellis-Petersen, 2018). In fact, for two

decades, the wonderful and unblemished island has been abused by mass tourism. Koh Phi Phi is not the only destination that has been affected by overtourism. In Thailand's marine ecosystem, almost 77 percent of coral reefs were damaged - known as coral bleaching, according to Thon Thamrongnawasawat, the deputy dean of Faculty Fisheries in Bangkok (The Canadian Press, 2016). Note that this is not only due to over tourism, but also ocean acidification - once again a product of increasing temperatures due to climate change - and debris. Incoming ships, cargo, and visitors - whether they are locals or foreigners - are aggravating it. This has led to a couple of closures of some islands because these underwater ecosystems need to recover; however, recovering from coral bleaching is not always guaranteed.

**Can this problem be resolved?**

Since this breathtaking island attracts so many people, there's no quick fix. As of this year, 2018 statistics showed that there was an estimate of 38 million visitors (News Desk, 2019). This overwhelming amount does raise concerns with environmental damage, though the government of Thailand is trying to regulate it. Reducing carbon footprints and employing greenhouse gas reduction plans help mitigate the exacerbating effects of climate change. The Paris Agreement and the IPCC encourage countries to come up with a reduction plan to maintain an average surface temperature increase of below 2 degrees celsius.

## Sources

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