
ABSTRACT

Golf is a game that is played in natural settings. As a result, golf courses include a built and managed landscape as well as preserved and restored wildlife habitats. Therefore, despite much controversy from environmentalists and other concerned citizens, golf courses have the potential to be enormously beneficial to the local environment. In the future, golf facilities should optimise the playing quality for the game, but not at the expense of environment.

The general aim of this thesis is to determine the current environmental impact of the golf courses in Switzerland and to serve as a reference for those who are interested in a sustainable development of the game of golf.

The study documents current management practices and their apparent environmental impacts, focusing on areas that need improving and proposing various management practices useful for any future work, with the ultimate goal of helping clubs meet the ecological, social and economic issues facing the game today. Environmental Key Performance Indicators are used to assess the present state of the clubs and to assist in prescribing a course of action for improving sustainable club management. In general Swiss clubs are following many good management practices with a strong awareness of fertilisers and pesticide use and safe handling of hazardous products. They are also conservative with fertiliser and pesticide use.

Although it is a great game, golf is not an essential element for human life and therefore from an environmental standpoint it is important for the industry to move towards a sustainable development of the game.

This thesis provides evidence that an increased awareness and adherence to an environmental management programme does contribute to more sustainable club management and to a sustainable future for the game of golf.