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THE IMPACT OF TOURISM IN THE PROTECTED AREAS FROM VRANCEA MOUNTAINS

Cristina Lupu¹, Gabriel Camară²

Abstract. The present paper attempts to provide a comprehensive view of the impact of tourism in these areas contrary to the rules, establishing acceptable limits for practicing sustainable forms of tourism, so that the ecological balance of these protected areas will not get changed. The Vrancea Mountains, beside its reputation as the second area of large carnivores in the country, has a precious natural tourism potential expressed by the number and diversity of protected natural areas in accordance with the tourist offer of accommodation, which offers potential tourists unique experiences and the tranquility needed for a relaxing holiday. The information and the education of tourists are a key element in the conservation and protection of protected species. The practice of tourism in the protected areas in Vrancea Mountains is a huge opportunity to promote and exploit the natural potential of the area and to increase the prestige of the area to the national level, for primarily economic purposes.

Keywords: ecotourism, impact of tourism, protected areas, sustainable tourism, Vrancea

1. Introduction. The tourism in Putna – Vrancea Natural Park.

Protected areas can receive a real meaning in tourism only by respecting the conditions of their organization for getting visited, by building a competitive tourist offer. This kind of organization gets to increase the force of attraction of the areas, leads to their individualization, resulting in the difference between them and other tourist sights. Tourism in protected areas is represented by visiting and spending time in this natural frame, laying the emphasis on admiring the forms of natural landscapes, noticing the wildlife, knowing the local tradition or practicing sports; but, to fulfill these, tourists have to have a responsible attitude towards nature by traveling in small groups and having control over tourist flows. If there is not a rational correlation between the value of travel resources and the level of organization and tourism planning (unfavorable emplacements, oversized equipment, etc.), in the future disorders of ecosystems may develop and the tourism products that will appear will have a small duration of marketing and a lower competitive level. If protected areas were intensively exploited, exhaustion or environmental degradation might be produced in a short time and in the case of existence of a deficiency in achieving a material base and in revaluation in tourism products, the situation will have a long time impact. The tourism can be effective inside protected areas if it is based on the support and the education of the tourists in keeping clean

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areas and in realizing that a place could present potential and it could be a good place of relaxing if we do not modify it his aspect

There are four types of tourists that are motivated in spending a vacation in the nature according to the following reasons:

- Hard core nature tourists. These ones are represented by scientific researches or members of a specialized organization and are designed to follow educational purposes and to conserve the nature. In this area of tourism, it can be included the scientific tourism even if this is excluding the scientific work in the field. The movement in the nature of the students could be included in the educational tourism.
- Dedicated nature tourists. These kind of tourists are represented by persons that make trips in nature just to see the protected areas and have the desire to understand the nature and the cultural local history. In general, it is stated that these kind of tourists are less destructive with the nature by taking into account their preferences for accommodation, food and recreational equipment.
- Mainstream nature tourists. They are represented by those people that chose wild destinations, in order to make an usual travel. They don't have commitments for wild places and their expectations regarding the accommodation must be equal in comfort with those kinds of usual trips based on "non-environment" destinations.
- Casual nature tourists. Generally, these tourists are represented by people that are randomly participating at nature programs like part of their trip.

Within the last years, it was developed a specific category of the tourism in nature, namely ecotourism. In addition, ecotourism is also integrated in the sustainable forms of tourism, by responding to access requirements to the beautiful protected areas, substantiating the premise that the happiness for the next generation may not be affected by the visitors from the present day. Ecotourism is a way for supplying opportunities for visitors, in this sense they will study and they will understand the nature and the cultural environment, and therefore they will learn about the importance of conservation of biodiversity and local culture, making of it a form of sustainable tourism.

Tourism activity deployed in protected areas is motivated most of the time by the wish of the people to travel in nature. Tourism in nature is in a tight correlation with ecotourism, which is often promoted like a conservation factor of the environment. Tourism in nature includes three main components: adventure tourism, cultural tourism and ecotourism (Adventure tourism, Cultural tourism and Ecotourism – ACE Tourism).

At present, after the direct observations accomplished by the Administration of Putna-Vrancea Natural Park we identified the next types of visitors:

- visitors which prefer the services offered by accommodations (guesthouses and agritourism houses, hotels, children and youth camp), to spend their freetime at the weekend but also in vacations. The maximum number of this type of visitors is recorded on the occasion of the Winter holiday and Easter holiday;
- visitors and tourists which are used to come at the weekend or on free days declared as national days, at picnic or to camp in the areas near the localities Lepsa and Gresu. The next areas which are preferred by visitors to develop this kind of activity but which also requires properly management plans are: Lepsa Monastery and Gresu dam.
- hikers in small groups (2-19 persons) including foreign visitors which use the existing tourism routes across the park;
- users of ATV, groups which have had a negative incidence observed around the localities Lepsa and Gresu. This activity is stimulated by the presence of four companies whose main activity is renting ATV;

- members and contributors of non-guvernamental organizations (eg. ADDA Live Fire-Focsani, A.C.D.B), who come in an organized way inside of a specific educational or research camp;
- families with caravans or personal cars which have been noticed in the area of Lepsa Monastery;
- groups organized by students which are in transit during some big trips, or in a summer camp in children and youth centre Galaciuc or in study tours like students from “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University of Iasi, who are accommodated in Tulnici;
- groups of persons who participate at some diferent meetings, hearings;
- working teams who deploy activities in parquet logging in a prívate or state forest district;
- visitors of Lepsa Monastery;
- visitors of natural sights, like naturals reservations Putna Falls and Tisita Gorge;
- visitors of Lepsa trout farm; etc.

Table 3: Areas used for picnic and camp activities in the area of Putna-Vrancea Natural Park

Areas for picnic and camping	Approximate number of people/year	Observations	Description
Lepsa Monastery	3 000	Citizens of localities from Vrancea, Brăila, Galați, Tulcea, Constanța, Vaslui și Bucuresti county.	Peak activity in sunny days, in days from orthodox Easter, May 1, days dedicated to Monastery Lepsa.
Greșu Dam	1 000	Citizens of localities from Vrancea, Brăila, Galați, Tulcea, Constanța, Vaslui și București county.	In sunny days, May 1, Orthodox Easter
Creek Lepșuleț - limitrophe DN 2L Lepșa-Soveja	500	Citizens of localities from Vrancea, Brăila, Galați, Tulcea, Constanța, Vaslui și București county.	In sunny days, May 1, Orthodox Easter



Figure 1: Putna-Vrancea Natural Park and its protected ares.
 Author: Cristina Lupu, 2014, ArcGIS 9.3

2. The impact of tourism in the protected areas from Vrancea Mountains

2.1. Positive effects of tourism in protected areas

The tourism represents a very important economic source which also has an ecological and cultural impact and precisely for these reasons it should be included in the management plans of the protected areas for long term durability. Through the development of the tourist activities in the protected areas from Vrancea Mountains, these areas have met a way of promoting sustainable development and also the income has increased for these areas. If tourism will activate better in the future for these areas from Vrancea Mountains, the income could contribute to the achievement of some goals like: conservation of biodiversity and ecosystems, substantial development of local economy, the raising of the living standards of the population but also the satisfaction of the tourists. The positive impact of tourism concerning the protected areas is manifested in different ways, having effects in economic and also in physical and social plan.

The economic effects suppose: the growth of income (the localities which have protected areas on their territory can develop in different ways, as for example, from the economic point of view, and it can improve their standard of living; the increase in the number of persons who work directly in tourism (hotels, restaurants, recreation); young people can profit because in this way they can find more easily a place to work, making the emigration in rich localities or cities to decrease; the increase in the number of persons who work indirectly in tourism (agriculture, telecommunications), contributing to the increase of local economy, the jobs in other areas also will increase and indirectly the localities will get modernized.

The physical effects are concretized by the beautification of the environment (with the attraction of the tourists, the environment will be more conserved and cleaner), the restoration of old buildings being necessary because in this way the place would be not only a natural touristic attraction but also an anthropic one; the survival of the historical buildings induce the fact that the historical heritage is very important because the knowledge of the historical past could implement the necessary information for the interested tourists.

Social effects: the increasing of the diversity of touristic activities and for the recreation, the monotony of visiting the protected areas is replaced by recreation activities which produce happiness to the tourists and make them to lose the notion of the time; the growth of the numbers of the services offered and the improving of their quality, the diversification of the services and the improvement of their quality go to qualitative touristic services and for great demand for the tourists.

Regarding the impact produced by the protected areas from Vrancea Mountains and from their near area, it can be say that the development in the last years from touristic activities from Gresu and Lepsa localities had determined a positive effect on economical plan:

- benefits of Local Council Tulnici by charching taxes and by the attraction of the investors;
- the increasing of the number of people who works directly in tourism (hotels, restaurants, guesthouses);
- the increasing of the number of people who works indirectly in tourism (retail sales, work buildings, transport, supply)
- the opening of a marketplace for the local food and handicraft;
- the supply for the opportunities making investment for the local capital (the development of the entrepreneurship), which does not exist before in the area.

Beside the economical impact it can be notice positive changes of the social environment:

- the increasing of the gain and the improvement of the standard of live at the local population;
- the growth of the number of the services and their quality;
- the producing of the new jobs, especially for the young population which it a has secundar effect the reduce of the emigration of the workforce.

2.2. Negative effects of the tourism in the protected areas

The tourism has also a negative impact about the environment, for exemple overcrowding, the improper use of the natural resources, the building and the elements of infrastructure as well as other elements associated with the tourism, it producing a deterioration of the environment and also a decrease of his quality. In general, the tourism varies according the number and the nature of the tourists and also by the characteristics of the place which was visited. Frequently problems appear in the case of a big number of tourists or when the use of the resources it is in a intensive way, the private tourist making an negative relative small impact. Usually, the impact of the tourism of the protected areas could be classify in two categories: direct and indirect. The direct one it's caused by the presence of the tourists and the indirect one it's determined by the development of the infrastructure associated with touristic activities. Generally, the direct impact it's stronger and it's manifesting for all the components of the environment. The enterprise activities of the Putna Vrancea Natural Park have a high aggressiveness, which produce the destruction of some values from natural heritage, the disturb of fauna, the degradation of the landscape by the unchecked storage of the waste produce by the visitors, the destruction of the vegetation, etc. Lepsa and Gresu localities are characterized by the fact that attracts a large flow of visitors in a short time. The direct impact it's caused by the big number of the tourists and it has effects for all the component of the environment:

- Soil degradation – it has like main source the activity of exploitation but also picnic and camping, the practice of some motorized sports;
- The pollution of the surface water – in general it's caused by the activity of exploitation but also the discharge of the used water in the stream Lepsulet and Streiu and the Putna river, the vehicle washing;
- Vegetation degradation – is due to the practice of recreational activity in forbidden places (camp, picnic, motorized sports) and also the breaking and the plucking of plants by the tourists and chopping wood for fire;
- The disturb of wildlife – it's represented by the disruption of the silence of the wild animals (birds and large mammals), by the simple presence of humans, no matter the type of recreational activity or the number of persons which are involved, bu the use of audit equipment and recreational vehicle (ATV).

The attraction of the wildlife to the populated areas it's a phenomenon which is due of the faulty management of the wastes in the area of the park, the abandonment of household waste in forbidden places for camping and picnic. This action contribute at attraction of the species of bear and fox and also at proliferation of common bird species (sparrows), rodents and stray dogs.

The landscape degradation is caused by the abandonment of wastes, vandalism acts about existent travel arrangements, the destruction of information boards and also the

fragmentation of habitats through the extension of building surfaces and the achievement of fencing.

In this moment, in Lepsa and Gresu localities are over 1200 buildings of which just 37 represent units of accommodation and to receive of tourists, the rest are homes of holiday and households of the local population, which overcome 400 persons. It's remarkable the fact that the biggest development it has the household of holiday which are not part of communities. Also the development of the area like a tourist destination had coincided with the decay of the architectural specific traditional and had determined the development of the area, especially for the needs of the investors in detriment of the local communities.

The impact on the geological features

The impact of the tourism about the geological features it's achieving having more plans of actions, like the practice of different sports or forms of tourism and also to collect minerals and geological and paleontological formations having like purpose the inscription of them. In the protected areas from Vrancea Mountains, the possibility to practice climbing, speleology and geotourism lead to exploitation of rock formations and after practice these sports exist the risk that the rock formations to be damage. In general, the climbing has a negative effect like "rock washing", this thing it's critical for the vulnerability of the specify flora and fauna and their ability to regenerate. The lack of education from the part of the tourists could have effects concernong the rock formations by the inscription of them, letting behind an ugly appearance.

The impact concerning the soil

The quality of the soil is very important for the quality of the experiences that the tourists will have and it has to take into account all the variety of them. In Vrancea Mountains, the impact of the soil could have many causes among them, are distinguished the achievement of touristic equipment (infrastructure, specific buildings), or improper management. In most of the cases, a big damage causes the picnic, camps activity, trips making.

The impact concerning the water resources

In the protected areas, the capacity of the resources water to satisfy the recreational interests vary generally according the persons which use a specific area at a given moment, a big number of persons make the risk to be bigger in what concerning the quality of water. The pollution of the water with nutrients and microorganism could be caused by the spill of the waste waters and waste human which it comes from toilets or from the places for camping.

The impact concerning the vegetation

The tourism could have an immediately and direct effect about the species which compose the vegetation having effects especially for the vegetation cover which cover the soil and get to a increase of the diversity of species. In the protected areas from Vrancea Mountains exist the risk that the people who are collecting plants, to snatch the plants and to get at the disappearance of the species from that area. In general, the damages caused by visitors are bigger than the ones caused by camping. It is preferably to minimize the number of the roads in the protected areas and to be sure that the visitors are staying on those roads because the building of other roads in protected areas could destroy the vegetation from the level of the soil (herbaceous).

The impact concerning the wildlife

The negative effects of the tourism concerning the wildlife comes from hunting and fishing, these reflecting in the decreasing of the population of some species. Sometimes, just the simple presence of people it's enough to perturbate the activity of the wild animals. This disruption comes most of the time from the equipments used by the tourists in recreational activities rather than the tourists themselves and the emphasizing the perturbation many

species of mammals and birds will modify their models of behavior. In Putna Vrancea Natural Park the chamoises and the black goats can avoid the areas attended by the tourists during the day, looking for quiet areas.

The impact concerning the landscape

The irresponsible and unchecked touristic activities made in protected areas could have a negative esthetic impact concerning the landscape which undoubtedly will ruin the experience of the tourists who love the nature. The landscape represent a basic element of tourism which guarantee the general framework of development of the tourist activities and that's why it should be protected the beauty of it and also groomed.

The impact concerning the cultural environment

The cultural and archaeological sights are sometimes in the protected areas or near them, thing that could affect the protection of these areas. In Vrancea Mountains, the practice of rural tourism in the areas situated near the protected areas could bring a negative impact through the absence of education of the tourists and their rudeness; they don't care about the negative impact about the protected areas. The rebuilding of the old traditional houses represent a negative effect, in this way it's building mansions which it's not concordant with the montan rustic landscape, the protected areas being disadvantaged for this reason.

Measures to prevent the negative impact

Because of the big number of the forms of the negative impact during many years had appeared the necessity of identification of some preventing measures of them. These preventing measures at the negative effects bring benefits for the future development of the protected areas. Even if exists many problems in the protected areas, the negative effect of the tourism could be efficient administrated only when it has been identified, measured and evaluated the causes that produced him and if that thing it is realized, it could be created types of specify management. In general, for the reduction of the negative effects it is been taken in calculation the factors implicated, the magnitude of the negative impact that has been produced and also the corrective measures that imposing in the sight of the development of some limitation strategy of the impact, usually it is following:

- the restriction of the acces or controlled acces in some areas;
- the awareness and the education of the tourists;
- to apply some rules, regulations and also sanctions for the nonobservance of them;
- to forbidden some activities (the forbidden of some forms of recreation motorization);
- the strictly delimitation of perimeters for visiting, camping, circulation;

In the area of Vrancea Mountains, one of the big problems are the wastes, regularly the food waste, represent a serious problem because it brings an inesthetic image of the landscape and also it's changing the behavior of some animals (for example the bears), which are attracted by this kind of waste. The elimination of this situation could be realize by supplying containers, especially for the places for picnic, and also with campaigns of awareness for tourists (to be distributed ecological guides in Putna-Vrancea Natural Park).

Conclusions

The progress of the touristic activities in Vrancea Mountains had been like an effect the promovation of these protected areas, which they became touristic points more known. Concerning this study it is point out the fact that the protected areas from Vrancea Mountains have a potential valuable touristic, good administrated but with risks regarding the degradation of the environment in the circumstance of practicing irresponsible tourism. The touristic offer of the Vrancea Mountains it is one diversified because beside the protected

areas, near them the antropic potential it is well developed and offer to the tourists the opportunity to experience more forms of tourism.

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