

RESEARCH ON ECOTOURISM RESOURCES OF THE NATIONAL PARK RETEZAT – HATEG'S COUNTRY

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Abstract: *Ecotourism can make a substantial contribution to the development of region Retezat-Hateg. Thus, to achieve and to realize the full potential of this area, should make the best possible use of unique mountain's resources, which is the main attraction for ecotourism development, considering the following aspects: natural heritage and biodiversity of the National Park Retezat respect socio-cultural authenticity surrounding communities, especially those that serve as the host and park service centers with cultural heritage and traditional values of the community, and facilitating economic activities viable in the long term, to bring socio-economic benefits equal to all stakeholders.*

Key words: *management, production, organic, agriculture*

INTRODUCTION

Over time, nature conservation issues have been resolved in a manner general and global within each country, region or locality in some areas. Although all nature should be preserved, there are some areas in which they live unique or rare species of flora and fauna, of a great value, and should receive further attention.

Management of national parks provide maintenance of the physical-geographical condition natural ecosystems protection, conservation of genetic resources and biological diversity in ecological stability conditions, excluding all forms of exploitation of natural resources and land uses incompatible purpose assigned.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Ecotourism is a form of tourism in which the main motivation of the tourists is the observation and appreciation of nature and local traditions directly related to nature. Ecotourism must meet the following conditions:

- conservation and nature protection;
- use of local human resources;
- educational purpose, respect for nature through awareness of tourists and local communities;
- minimal negative impact on the natural environment, cultural and social.

Ecotourism activities are developed and promoted nationally by the Association of Ecotourism in Romania (AER), which has developed an extensive program, aimed at different areas of Romania. Among the targeted areas is the number of regions Retezat, National Park Caliman, National Park Apuseni and Biosphere Reserve Danube Delta.

This paper aims to identify ecotourism resources of the National Park Retezat.

According to Law no. 462/18.07.2001 on the protected natural areas, natural habitats, flora and fauna, Retezat National Park aims to "protect and preserve representative samples for national biogeographical area comprising natural elements particular physical-geographical aspect, flora, fauna, hydrological, paleontological, speleological, pedological or other, enabling visits for scientific, educational, recreational and tourism "[2].

RESEARCH RESULTS

International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) is the organization with powers in this respect and that over time concerned especially the development of a classification system of protected areas. Starting in 1992, adopted a new classification system of protected areas based on a range of management objectives that give content to this classification and include: scientific research, wilderness protection, protection of species diversity and genetic diversity, maintaining services, protection of natural and cultural features specific tourism and recreation, education, sustainable use of natural resources, ecosystems, maintaining cultural and traditional characteristics.

The relationship between management objectives and types of protected areas is presented in the table below:

Table 1.

Protected areas and management objectives

No.	Protected area name (IUCN category*)	Target management	Protected area name (Romanian category**)	Target management
I	Strict Nature Reserve	strict protection	Scientific Reserves	management, mainly for scientific purposes
	Area Wildlife			
II	National Park	ecosystem conservation and recreation	National Park	administration, in particular, to preserve natural elements, specific
III	Natural Monument	preservation of natural features	Natural Monument	administration, in particular, to preserve natural and specific elements
IV	Range of Habitats and Species Management	Conservation through active management	Nature Reserves	management, especially for conservation through management intervention
			Biosphere Reserves	
			Wetlands of International Importance	
V	Terrestrial and Marine Protected Landscape	conservation and recreation	Natural Parks	management, mainly for landscape conservation and recreation
VI	Managed Resource Protected Area	sustainable use of resources	Special Protection Areas and Fauna	conservation of natural habitat types and habitats of species

Source: * World Conservation Union - classification 1992

** Governed by Law no. 462 of 18/07/2001

In Romania, in accordance with the laws [3], the purpose and procedure management categories of protected areas that make up the national network of protected areas are:

- a) **Scientific reservations:** protected areas aimed at protecting and conserving natural habitats on land and / or water, including representative samples of scientific interest from flora, fauna, geological, speleological, paleontological, pedological or otherwise.
- b) **National Parks:** protected areas aimed at protecting and conserving representative samples for national biogeographical area comprising natural elements particular physical-geographical aspect, flora, fauna, hydrological, geological, paleontological, speleological, pedological or other, allowing visits for scientific, educational, recreational and tourism.
- c) **Monuments:** protected areas aimed at the protection and preservation of natural elements and environmental significance, scientific, special landscaping, consist of species of plants and rare wildlife, endemic or endangered, secular trees, association flora and fauna, geological phenomena - caves, erosion controls, gorges, rivers, waterfalls and other events and geological formations, fossil deposits and other natural elements natural heritage through uniqueness or rarity.
- d) **Nature Reserves:** protected areas aimed at the protection and conservation of habitats and species important natural flora, fauna, forest, hydrological, geological, speleological, paleontological pedological etc.
- e) **Natural Parks:** protected areas are those whose purpose is the protection and preservation of landscape sets the interaction of human activities with nature over time created a distinct area with significant landscape value and / or culture, often with a biological diversity.
- f) **Biosphere Reserves:** protected areas aimed at protecting and conserving the natural habitat areas of particular biological diversity.
- g) **Wetlands of International Importance:** protected areas are those whose purpose is to ensure the protection and conservation of natural sites with wetland biodiversity.
- h) **Natural World Heritage Sites:** protected areas aimed at the protection and preservation of natural habitat areas across which there are natural elements whose value is recognized as the universal importance.
- i) **Special Areas of Conservation:** protected areas whose purpose is to preserve, maintain and, where appropriate, to restore a favorable conservation status, natural habitats and / or populations of species for which the site is designated.
- j) **Special Protection Areas and Fauna:** protected areas whose purpose is to preserve, maintain and, where appropriate, to restore a favorable conservation status of specific habitats designated for the protection of migratory bird species wild.

Retezat National Park is identified with Retezat Mountains and is one of the most valuable mountain areas in our country. It is located in the western part of the country, Hunedoara county, in area called Hateg's Country. He was recognized as a National Park since 1935, making it the first national park legally established in Romania. The park covers an area of 38,047 ha and is bounded on three areas: Scientific Reserve Gemenele (about 1600 ha), a central area - the park itself - and a buffer zone. Universal value of the park was recognized by the Man and Biosphere Programme (MAB) of UNESCO in 1979, it was included in the international network of biosphere reserves.

Predominantly glacial landscape - home to more than 80 glacial lakes, among which the most deep (*Zănoaga*, 29m) and most extended (*Bucura*, 8.86 ha) - attracts many tourists every year, especially in summer. Largest natural forest in Europe is mixed at low altitudes in the core area. This area, occupying slightly more than half of the park is covered by forests ("molid", "fag", "brad", "mestecă", "zâmbru"), the rest being found juniper trees,

alpine meadows, rocky increases, peaks and slopes covered with debris and stone slabs. The altitude varies from 765m to 2509m on top *Gura Zlata* and *Peleaga*, with another 19 peaks over 2000m. Is particularly rich flora, including many rare species (“garofița”, “flămânzica”, “darie”, “anghelină”, “pelin”, “floare de colț”, “sângele voinicului”), as well as wildlife (chamois, deer, boar, bear, lynx, wild cat, wolf, fox, marten, badger, otter, marmots, eagles, grouse and so on).

Although National Park Retezat is an internationally recognized ecotourism destination in recent years faced many difficulties, which are likely to endanger the ecological balance of the park, in the absence of drastic action. The biggest threats are made by overgrazing, uncontrolled tourism and pollution it generates (especially with waste, and noise pollution). At present, the Romanian tourism are sometimes confronted with serious pollution problems, becoming a victim easily and without great possibilities of defense, as a result of various socio-economic activities taking place in our country[1].

- *Grazing* is the main factor that brings major damage biodiversity through its negative effects, such as land degradation through soil compaction by animal hooves; degradation massive destruction of vegetation and flora, being able to easily see the difference compared to Scientific Reserve Gemele, pollution drinking water slurry, which can lead to illness tourists, irreversible degradation of soil and vegetation in the sheepfolds etc. The idea of the park requires a lower level or even completely prohibiting grazing. However, the National Park Retezat grazing has increased year by year, the park having no legal leverage by which to act to stop this phenomenon.
- *Uncivilized and uncontrolled tourism* is another big problem National Park Retezat. The central area is visited by about 10.000 tourists annually. The negative effects are accumulating waste (metal cans, plastic, glass etc.), Camping in places other than those permitted, leading to failure of supervision tourists on cutting juniper trees for firewood, topsoil destruction by camping waste spread throughout so massive.

Regulation of organization and operation of the park, conducted in 2001, covering a range of activities related to fleet management, scientific research, grazing, construction, forestry, fishing, mountain rescue service, finance and sanctions. Regarding tourism, the regulation provides:

- Access to the park will be only the chalets *Gura Zlata*, *Baleia*, *Pietrele*, *Rotunda*, *Râuşor* and at *Stana de Rîu*, allowing for better monitoring of tourist flow;
- The entire trip to the park, tourists are forced to move only on marked trails;
- Camping is allowed only in specially designated areas near the colony, but is banned to dig trenches around tents job placement;
- Lighting the fire is allowed only in specially equipped fire hearths camping areas with firewood provided by the administrators of these campsites;
- In rivers may not use detergents for washing various household items and bathing;
- Use of different craft in alpine lakes for fishing and recreation, is amended;
- For dogs in the park entrance fee is required in addition to permanent keeping a leash;

- Visit Scientific Reserve Gemenele is only possible with the opinion of the Romanian Academy, through a special permit.

National Park Retezat interest in developing tourism activities has close links with ecotourism. Ecotourism provides sustainable and responsible natural tourism, which is guided by ethical rules and specific practices: respect for natural values (travel charge by nature), support long-term conservation of nature (an income stream to help conserve biodiversity and culture) and contributions to improving the welfare of the local community (through participation in tourism activities).

Retezat Tourism Association unites a group of entrepreneurs and stakeholders of tourism which aims to promote the Hateg's Country and Retezat Mountains. Association training initiative arose in the process of evaluation and certification Pan Parks that National Park Retezat is going through[4]. Following principles of ecotourism have been established and promoted by the Association of Ecotourism in Romania (AER) on two international models: "*Program Accreditation on Nature and Ecotourism*" (developed by the Ecotourism Association of Australia) and "*Nature's Best*" (certification system of the Swedish Ecotourism Association). The AER approach, these principles should be implemented by those who offer ecotourism products, but also the planning of an area-based ecotourism development[5]:

1. Ecotourism takes place in nature and is based on direct experience and personal in nature tourists.
2. Ecotourism contributes to a better understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of discovering and preserving nature and traditional local culture, both for visitors and the local community.
3. Ecotourism offers the best tourism practices and planning in terms of nature conservation and sustainable development. Ecotourism product is conducted and operated so as to protect and highlight the natural and cultural environment in which it is conducted.
4. Ecotourism contributes positively to protect natural areas. Ecotourism provides practical ways for good management and protection of natural areas (eg providing financial aid rehabilitation actions natural areas, waste collection left by tourists or directed contributions to conservation organizations).
5. Ecotourism provides sustainable contribution on the development of local communities. Local benefits can come from using local guides, buying local goods and services and use of local facilities.
6. Ecotourism should ensure a reduction in the negative impact on the local community visited and contribute to conservation of local culture and traditions. Ecotourism activities while providing long-term constructive contributions of these communities.
7. Ecotourism must meet tourists. Potential eco-tourists have a high level of education and expectations, so the degree of satisfaction related to ecotourism product is essential.
8. Marketing ecotourism and responsible offer customers full information leading to the enhancement of natural and cultural environment of the areas visited and the degree of satisfaction of tourists.

To implement sustainable tourism Retezat PAN Parks Group and park administration should embark on an ongoing effort that will require an ongoing process of monitoring the impact of their visitors and will require the introduction of preventive measures and / or appropriate corrective whenever necessary.

CONCLUSIONS

Ecotourism can make a substantial contribution to the development of the region Retezat – Hateg’s Country, but to achieve total potential must:

- take full advantage of the mountain’s resources, which is the main attraction for tourism development preserving ecological processes and helping to conserve the natural heritage and biodiversity of the National Park Retezat.
- to respect the socio-cultural authenticity surrounding communities - especially those that serve as the host and park service centers - and to preserve the cultural heritage and traditional values of the community and contribute to inter-cultural awareness and promote tolerance .
- facilitate long-term sustainable economic activities to bring socio-economic benefits equal to all stakeholders, including stable employment and income opportunities to obtain financial and social services to host communities, and contributing to the removal of poverty.

For ecotourism in National Park Retezat and the surrounding area to reach their full potential must be developed in the following directions:

- **be educational and informative** - are especially interested park visitors to discover and learn things about the park and the surrounding region.
- **to support the region's values** - international tourists coming to the region and the park are particularly interested in supporting local values and resources (architecture, cuisine, heritage, aesthetics and ecology).
- **provide benefits to locals** - turismtrebuie operators to hire and train locals to buy local goods and use local services.
- **to conserve resources** - tourists who are concerned about the environmental compliance prefer to support businesses that minimize pollution, waste, energy consumption, water consumption, chemicals and toxic materials etc.
- **to care for local conditions** - major players anticipate development pressures and apply limits imposed and management techniques to sustain natural habitats, heritage sites, visual appeal, and local culture.
- **to respect the principle of "quality more important than quantity"** - communities in tourism not only measure success by the number of visitors, but by length of stay, money spent, quality travel experience etc.
- **to provide quality travel experiences** - satisfied tourists share experiences and recommend others to experience the same things, which will ensure a steady stream of business Retezat region.

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