

TOURISM PLANNING IN PROTECTED AREAS. STUDY CASE CEFA NATURAL PARK, BIHOR COUNTY, ROMANIA

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Abstract

Tourism planning is a tool used to shape the geographic space into a tourist area so that the environment suffers a minimum impact but great changes for the comfort of the visitor. When it comes to the protected areas the basics and aims of the tourism planning are geared to the specific of the biocenosis encompassed. The nowadays tourist is no longer just a leisure tourist but one seeking for the wonders of the nature in an remote environment comprising species of wildlife nowhere else to be found. The aim of the present paper is to present highlight the importance of zoning of a protected area.

Key words: tourism planning, protected areas, sustainability, capitalization

INTRODUCTION

Tourism planning is an ongoing that must take into account the particularities of the area to be landscaped, the particularities of tourism demand taking into account motivational factors determining tourist behaviour; training of human resources involved in the development of the tourism phenomenon, involvement and the interest of the authorities and the local community to mentor high quality standards of the tourism product. process (Inskeep 2001; Edgell et al, 2008) Due to many factors and elements involved in the tourist development, it is estimated to be a disciplinary action that requires the efforts of a wide range of specialists in various fields such as geography, environmental sciences, economics, architecture, sociology, and psychology (Berbecaru&Botez, 1977; Neacșu et.al, 2006; Ilieș, 2007).

Each protected area requires a management plan to describe and to esteem the impact of tourism within its area (Nistoreanu et. all, 1999). The tourism planning process involves establishing the accurate sectors within the protected area as following: the sector of full protection, sector of integral protection, buffer sector and sector for deploying sustainable human activities. For each sector are given the activities to be deployed according to its features. When it comes to the protected areas ecotourism is the most used word as it is considered to be the only sustainable forms of tourism suitable for the protected area (Honey, 1998; Weaver, 2001; Gale&Hill, 2012; Duffy, 2013) The International Ecotourism Society has defined

ecotourism as "a responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of the local people" (TIES, 1990).

MATERIAL AND METHOD

In order to elaborate this study we have used both classical and modern geographic methods. The first method to be addressed was the bibliographic documentation in order to give a critical, analytical and scientific approach to the study. The field observation followed as its aim is to increase the understanding of the dynamic geographical research. (Cocean, 2005). The information obtained over the above mentioned methods have been analysed, synthesized and processed in order to define the final conclusions.

RESULTS AND DISSIONS

The Cefa Natural Park has been brought into existence in 2010 over the Romanian Gouvernament decision no1.217 from December 2010. The Cefa natural park is located in the western part of Romania, Bihor county, in Crişurilor Plain. It has a surface of 5002 hectares covering the Sânicolau Român and Cefa communes (figure1).

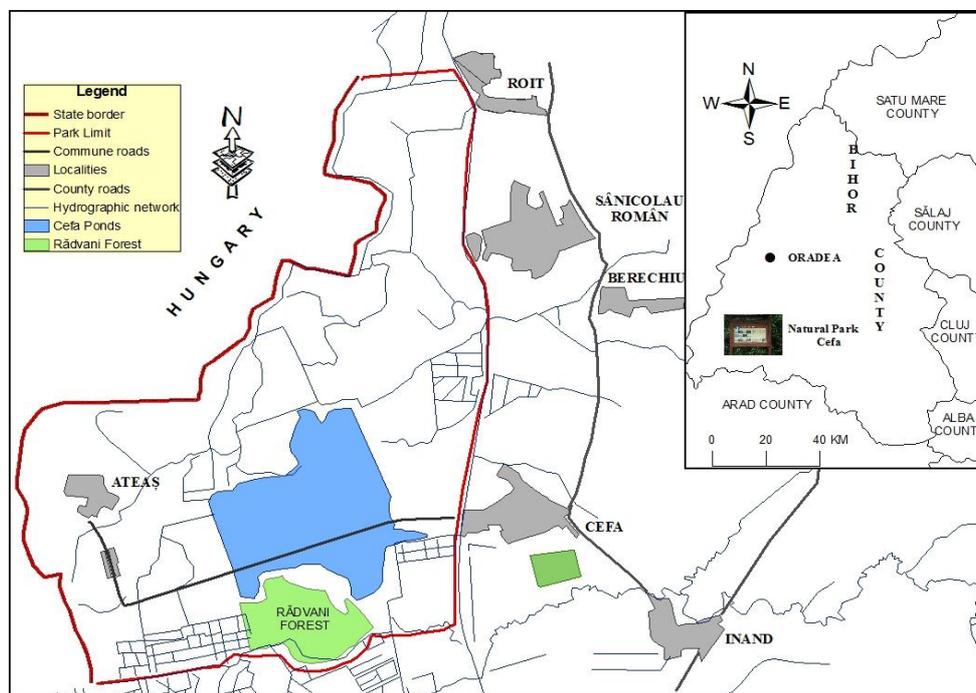


Fig. 1 The geographical location of the Cefa Natural Park
(Source: own elaboration based on the data basis RomaniaUTMWGS84)

The great variety of the habitats was the reason for establishing the protected area. The habitats are characterized by a high level of ecological integrity and of a mosaic disposal. In a confined area there can be found different types of habitat, such as marshlands, piscatorial ponds, channels of many sizes, ditches, puddles (temporary and permanent) of various depths and ways of water flow, with or without aquatic vegetation (submersed, natant, immerse land palustrine vegetation), forest bodies, saline soils, harvested lands, pastures and wet hay lands. ¹The natural conditions are offering shelter for a wide range of species, from different species. From bats to nest and passage birds. There have been identified 12 species of bats of which one's preservation is considered a national priority: pond bat (*Myotis dasycneme*). The Natural Park of Cefa overlaps two Natura 2000 sites: Cefa Site of commutarian interest and the area for the special protection of avifauna "The fishery Cefa – Rădvani Forest" (figure 2).

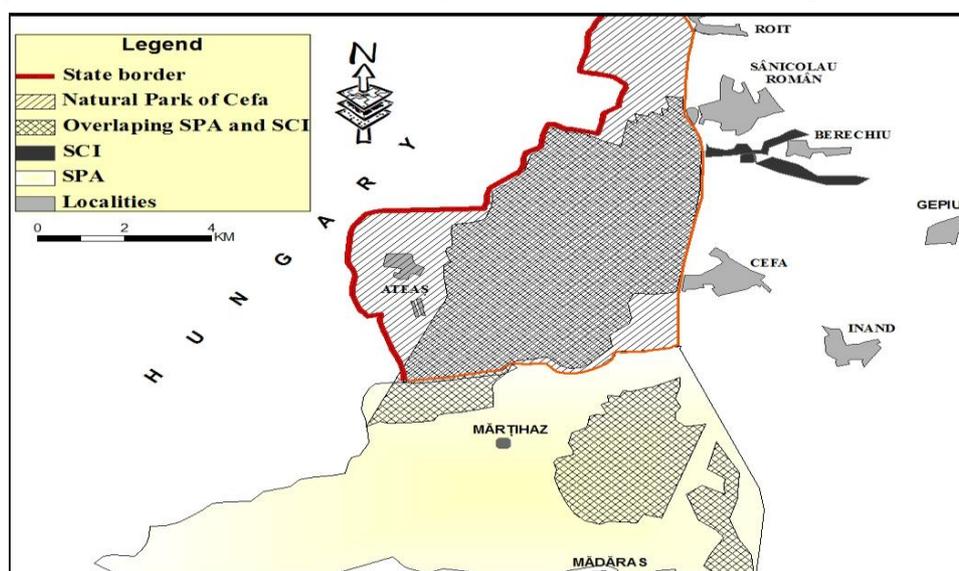


Fig. 2 Natural Park Cefa and the Natura 2000 sites

(Source: <http://natura2000.mmediu.ro/site/109/roci0025.html> with the modification of the authors in ARCGIS)

In order to assure the preservation of the habitats, the park has been zoned in three sectors. Zoning in protected areas is seen as a perspective management act (Eagles&McCool, 2002) or a management tool (Lauche&Burhenne, 2002). When it comes to zone a protected area, the following aspects are taking into account: the habitats to be preserved and its location, the demand for recreational opportunities and tourism services

and the impact over the community overlapping the territory of the protected area (Singh, 2001; Fenell, 2007; Buckley, 2009).

For Cefa Natural Park have been established three zones (figure 3) according to the importance of the habitats and the important species preserved. Therefore, each zone or sector has different level of protection combining the need of protection and conservation with the necessities of social-economical of the local communities.

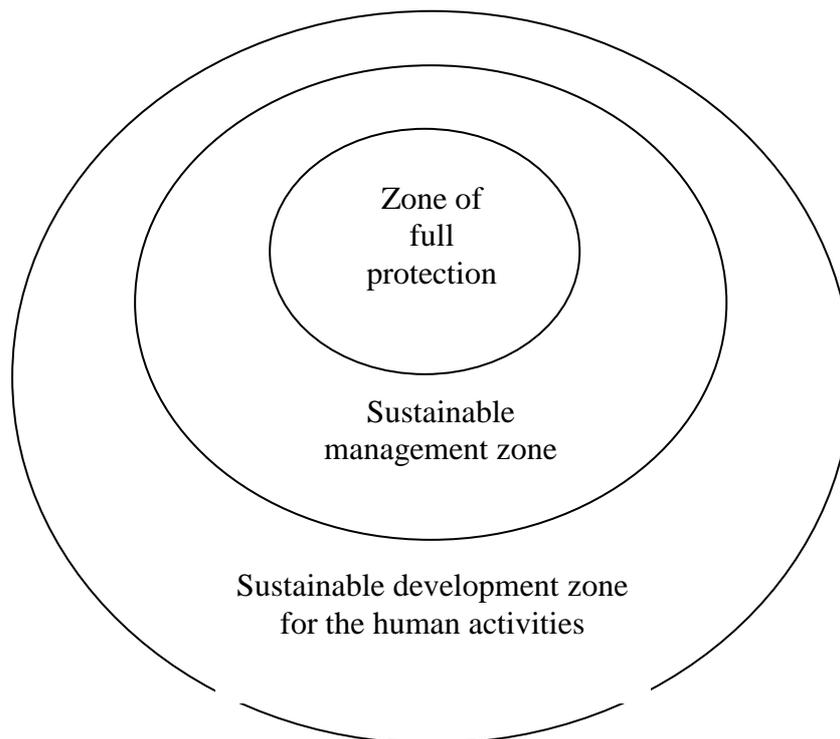


Fig. 3 Zoning of the Cefa Natural Park
(Source: Authors' elaboration)

The zone of full protection overlaps the parcel from Rădvani forest where the grey herons (*Ardea cinerea*), the night herons (*Nycticorax nycticorax*) and little egret (*Egretta garzetta*) are nesting. The inventory of the nests has highlighted a number of 670 nests for the birds species mentioned above located in approximately 100 trees, each tree having 4 to 5 nests. (source: APM BH). The Rădvani forest is home for most of the bats species as well. The zone of full protection covers 11 hectares from Rădvani forest.

Sustainable management zone includes the rest of the parcels from the Rădvani forest as well as the meadows and pastures outside the fishery and it is opened to the visitors. Within this area has been built an information centre (figure 3) and have been set up the observation towers.

Sustainable development zone for the human activities includes fishponds, the channels within the fishponds, the farming areas, and the land within the build area. This zone is opened for the public; exception is the fishponds complex as it is the private property of S.C. Pro-Acva S.A.



Fig. 3 The information centre of Cefa Natural Park
(Photo: Anamaria Liana Lăzuran Giurău)

CONCLUSIONS

Zoning a protected area allows planners to draw the boundaries and to establish activities that can be deployed within (Fenell&Dowling, 2003; Higham, 2007). In Cefa Natural Park, tourism can be developed in the sustainable management zone as it open for the public and has no negative impacts over the habitats. The full protection zone area can be visited but only in the presence of a specialised guide and no specific tourism infrastructure can be developed. Unfortunately, so far the information centre is closed and there is a lack of organizing tourism activities in the park. The infrastructure of accommodation is poor, there is one tourist structure offering both accommodation and nourishment and one restaurant. In terms of the forms of tourism that can be practiced within the area of the Cefa Natural Park we can first mention ecotourism, scientific tourism, cultural tourism, cycling tourism, water based tourism, leisure tourism. Ecotourism is an alternative form of tourism including the following: the product it's having the nature and its elements, the ecological impact and, contribution over preservation, contribution over the wealth being of the local community and ecological education (Declaration of Quebec, UNEP/OMT, 2002). The following ecotourism based activities can be deployed in Cefa Natural Park: horseback-riding tourism, observations of the flora and fauna, visiting the local communities, etc.

The "Delta between the The Crişuri" as Cefa natural Park has been known offers a wide range of tourism possibilities due to geographical its location and the natural resource that can be exploited for tourism purposes. Deploying tourism activities could have a positive impact over the local community in terms of financial benefits. The management plan of the park has not been implemented yet, therefore although the tourism potential of the park is huge, the tourist flow is insignificant. Once the management plan will be implemented The Cefa Natural park could compete Danube Delta, as the curator of it wishes.

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