

Problems of Sustainable Tourism Development in Strandzha Nature Park

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Abstract: Strandzha Nature Park is the largest protected natural area in Bulgaria, established to preserve unique ecosystems and biodiversity, as well as the cultural heritage of the mountain. Strandzha Mountain is entirely on Bulgarian territory, being included in the five priority conservation areas in Central and Eastern Europe. It is situated on the second largest migratory path of birds in Europe - *Via Pontica*. The total number of species habitats is 121 and in this indicator the park is foremost among the protected areas in Europe.

During the last 15 years, many people in the area started to look for alternative sources of income and at present there are hundreds of tourism establishments that offer accommodation, food and sightseeing in the area. A regional trade mark has been developed and launched to distinguish those accommodation providers and other tourism services suppliers that cover certain requirements for sustainability, developed in a system of principles and concrete criteria, based on the concept of sustainable tourism development.

The current status of tourism development in the park includes tourism supply and tourism demand, the potential and carrying capacity of resources, and some data on resource efficiency. Problems discussed are those of territorial development conflicts in territorial planning and management.

Key words: *sustainable development, carrying capacity, tourism demand and supply*

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