

An Assessment of Ecotourism and Recreational Activities In Nature Protection Areas: Case of Nature Parks of Sinop, Turkey

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Aim of the study: Interest in alternative tourism types is rapidly increasing. Some of the negative effects of mass tourism on the natural environment have increased the importance of nature-based tourism types. Natural areas and biodiversity in these areas offer a wide range of activities for ecotourism and recreation. Participating in ecotourism and recreational activities in natural areas, the visitors gains a more responsible tourism experience, including knowledge of local cultural values, flora and fauna, natural life and their protection. The aim of this study is to evaluate the present situation of ecotourism and recreational activities of nature parks of Sinop Province of Turkey.

Material and Methods: Turkey is a country with very rich plant and animal species. Regulations for the protection of flora and fauna within its own ecosystem started in 1950s. In this context, various statutory protected areas such as National Park, Nature Park, Nature Protection Area, Natural Site, Wildlife Development Area, Special Environmental Protection Area and wetland with international precaution have been declared. The study area is the Nature Parks and Nature Conservation Area in the Sinop province within the area designated as "ecotourism-focused development zone" in the Turkey Tourism Strategy Action Plan (2007-2013). In this frame, literature review will be done for the Sarikum Nature Conservation Area, Hamsilos Nature Park and Tatlica Waterfalls Nature Park. The current situation of ecotourism and recreation facilities of these areas will be determined. In addition, analyzes of advantages and disadvantages will be made in terms of sustainability.

Results: As a result of the study, information will be provided about ecotourism potential, plant and animal species, recreation facilities, accommodation, food-beverage and transportation facilities for the protected areas of Sinop. The study is expected to contribute to the sustainable planning for the region.

Keywords: ecotourism, recreation, protected area, Sinop.