

Conflicts in the Rodnei Mountains National Park in Romania

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Abstract

The Rodnei Mountains National Park- Reservation of the Biosphere from Romania is one of the 13 national parks and one of the three reservation of the biosphere from our country that shelter a variety of natural touristic attractions which singularize it as a natural protected area from Romanian territory. In general, the landscape is in a good state of preservation, being altered in some areas through atrophic actions such as land clearing, motorized access in the scientific reservations, poaching, intensive grazing or the construction of the vacation residencies. To these interventions it's added also the mentality of Romanian people concerning the concept of natural protected area, with the type of behavior that should be adopted when travelling inside a national park, with the attitude on the property right of some lands situated inside a national park. Even if the land surfaces owned by the local people are inside the scientific reservation, they don't understand as they were not educated in this sense to protect the biodiversity, the property sense being more powerful than the one to preserve and transmit the touristic resources from this area in the present shape. One of the reasons could be the expropriation for a long period of time during the communist era and therefore this feeling was increased in present. However, this behavior is also determined by the lack of the campaigns that will allow the people to realize the impact of their actions on the environment. By analyzing the conflicts from the Rodnei Mountains National Park, we can notice that the poaching is prominent and it has great effects on the number of chamois's species and also the motorized access and camping in the forbidden areas or throwing the wastes in the area of the scientific reservation. In order to solve these issues we need important financial resources to control and prevent these actions, the ecological reconstruction of the affected areas like the ones where the dumps are deposited, the presence of rangers in the important points from the touristic routes, the assembly of several information panels in the areas of intense circulation because most of them were destroyed. Not at last, the application of the existing legislation in the field of protecting the environment can determine the decrease of offences from the mountain area of Romania.

Keywords: national park, biodiversity, natural environment, over-grazing, poaching



The author in the Rodnei Mountains National Park

Introduction

The Rodnei Mountains National Park is situated in the North-East of Romania, covering a north part of the Oriental Carpathians. It is a natural protected area, declared a national park, founded by the Order of the Ministry of Water, Forests and Environment Protection no. 7/1990 and confirmed by the Law no. 5/2000; concerning the approval of the Plan of arrangement of the national territory - Section III - protected areas. The purpose of founding this national park is to preserve the biodiversity and the landscape, to protect the rare and valuable species, to promote and encourage the tourism, to inform and educate the people to preserve the nature and its values.



The National Park Rodnei Mountains

Photo: Andreea Băltărețu

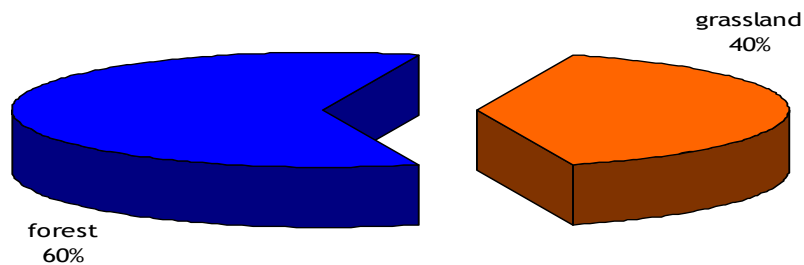
In 1979, the Reservation Pietrosu Rodnei, a component of the Rodnei Mountains National Park, was included in the international network of biosphere reservations, with a present surface of 44 000 ha, and by the Plan of Management (edition March 2008) it is settled that its surface must be identical with the one of the national park which has 46 399 ha.



Lezer Lake

Landscape from Pietrosul Rodnei Peak (2303 m)
Photo: Andreea Băltărețu

The reservation has a special landscape, its particularities are given by the glacial lakes and the glacial craters, the flora (650 species) and the fauna of the reservation, with some Carpathian endemic species or rare species and the specific of the eco-touristic activities developed in this perimeter.



**Figure 1. The actual category of lands used in the Rodnei Mountains
National Park**

Human activities with impact on the biodiversity

The fact that 40, 1% from the total surface of the park is represented by grasslands which, according to the property right, belong to the Municipal Councils, is rising major conflicts in this areas such as land clearings, approvals given for the construction of holiday residencies even in the interior or the limit of the park, the construction of the access roads inside the park etc.. These

grasslands belong to the local communities; the local population is using them during the summer for grazing their animals. In order to avoid an intensive use of these natural resources, we need to find alternatives for the local communities to acquire incomes.



Land clearings in the Rodnei Mountains National Park

Photo: Andreea Băltărețu

In the Management Plan of the park, even if the hunt and the fishing are forbidden, there were registered actions of poaching having as a result the decrease of the specimen number of chamois's which represent a monument of nature (140 species in the Rodnei Mountains National Park -one of the most numerous population of this kind of mammals from the country) and even the threat of their disappearance, being necessary actions of repopulation. To this state of fact it was added the contribution of the large number of dogs at the sheepfolds from the area. More than that, it was pointed out that the poachers have laid out two illegal roads, one of them of 2, 5 km, crossing the scientific research area of the reservation, where any activity is forbidden, especially creating some access roads, the second road being laid out in the exterior of the special protected area.

The access to the Pietrosul Rodnei Peak (2303 m) can be made from the locality Borșa on the road that ends at the Meteorological Station lezer, with a total length of 9 km from which 3, 5 km are found in the interior of the national park. Unfortunately, this road is intensively used by the local people and the tourists to achieve the touristic objectives of the park, or to reach the grasslands they own, to walk during the weekend or even for various enduro competitions. All these transportation means cause serious damage to the flora and fauna from the park and the pollution (gases, wastes, fire hearths, intensive pick of flora etc.) resulted has many irreversible effects on the biodiversity.



Vehicles in the Rodnei Mountains National Park (2129 m altitude) Photo: Andreea Băltărețu

Also, the caves from the park are often devastated in order to extract the the flowers of the mine” and use them for trade.

In 2002, in the Tăului Știol areas have been registered illegal actions of trebling the water surface and create a drainage channel inside an antrophic barrage, changing the subalpine landscape. By expanding the lack a shore was flooded and because of that the juniper trees (monument of nature) that were growing there have died. Every weekend there are a lot of tourists with jeeps that gather around this lake, leaving behind lots of wastes. To these we also add the wasted resulted from housekeeping which is thrown at the borders of the glacial lakes, the sheepfolds which are placed close to the water course, the gathering of wild fruits, medicinal plants, mosses and mushrooms.

Conclusions

In order to attenuate the negative actions of humans against the Rodnei Mountains National Park from Romania, there are several actions that need to be settled, one of them being already applied, such as the implication of volunteers in the management of the protected areas from Europe, offering an educational alternative and contributing to the improvement of the access of those who, indifferent the age, will achieve new competences in the field of nature preservation. It appears the necessity of improving the infrastructure from this park by building some visitation centers and informal points, installing some informative panels. Also, there have been several initiative of report developed in the schools next to the national park, which should be repeated in order to obtain some favorable results and also the implication of the pupils and students in preserving the biodiversity of the park. Not at last, the practice of several actions to prevent the degradation of the landscapes by the co-participation of the custodians, mountain constabulary, police and the representatives of the forest keepers.

References:

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